

the **Banner** *of Truth*

January 2023
Volume 89, No. 1

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

In this issue...

Alas! How Shall We Do?

Glad Tidings

Of Predestination

For our young readers...

Lost!

Journeys



*“My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O LORD;
in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up.” PSALM 5:3*



Meditation Alas! How Shall We Do? <i>Rev. E.C. Adams</i>	3	Questions & Answers Questions from Our Readers <i>Rev. H. Hofman</i>	13
Bible Study The Life of Moses (14) <i>Rev. C. Vogelaar</i>	4	Current Events	14
A Word in Season Glad Tidings <i>Rev. W.C. Lamain</i>	6	Synod 2023	14
From the Editor A Year in Review <i>Rev. J. den Hoed</i>	7	TIMOTHY – for the Young The Confession of Faith (37) Article XXXII: Of the Order and Discipline of the Church <i>Rev. A.M. den Boer</i>	15
Doctrinal Studies Of Predestination (1) <i>Nicholas L. Greendyk</i>	8	Bible Stories for Little Ones Samson (4) <i>Submitted</i>	16
Church History Guido de Brès <i>Adapted from January 1961 Banner of Truth</i>	9	Bible Quiz Journeys <i>Aunt LenaBeth</i>	18
Commentary The Man Born Blind (10) <i>Rev. H. de Leeuw</i>	10	Letters to My Young Readers	20
For Young & Old Lost! <i>Taken from February 1935 Banner of Truth</i>	12	News & Announcements	21
		Back Cover Hungry, and Faint, and Poor <i>John Newton</i>	24

Cover: Beautiful Country Morning | © John Chambers

THE BANNER OF TRUTH

Publication Number: (USPS 041-540)

Monthly Official Publication of the Netherlands Reformed Congregations of the United States and Canada. Typeset (Archtype Graphic Solutions) at Pompton Plains, NJ; printed and distributed (AlphaGraphics) at Midland Park, NJ.

Subscription rate: \$30.00 in the U.S. and Canada, payable in U.S. funds; \$35.00 to foreign countries, payable in U.S. funds. Rates listed are for one-year subscriptions.

Rev. J. den Hoed, Editor

972 Hemlock Loop, Lynden, WA 98264
Home: 360-354-0210 • Study/Fax: 360-354-0216

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Assistant Editor

14 Longview Drive, Towaco, NJ 07082-1540
973-265-8632 • E-mail: revcvogelaar@gmail.com

James Okken, Managing Editor

3 Joseph Court, Hackettstown, NJ 07840-4664
973-809-2112 • Fax: 973-381-1483 • E-mail: jamesokken79@gmail.com

John Sweetman, Subscription Manager

11 Split Rock Road, Boonton Township, NJ 07005
973-335-4679 • E-mail: nrcbannersubscriptions@yahoo.com

Copy for *The Banner of Truth* is due the 1st of the month prior to month of publication. All copy (including announcements, obituaries, anniversary notices, and ads) should be sent to James Okken. All announcements submitted for publication must be typed and are subject to editorial policy. Communications relating to subscriptions should be addressed to the subscription manager. Change of address should be forwarded to the subscription manager one month in advance of moving date. Please provide both new and old address.

Archived copies of *The Banner of Truth* (1934 to present) are available at Digibron.nl.

PERIODICAL: Postage paid at Mahwah, NJ

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

The Banner of Truth
11 Split Rock Road, Boonton Township, NJ 07005

Additional Denominational Sources for Printed Matter

Other denominational periodicals include: *Paul* (mission periodical), 377 Poldon Drive, Norwich, Ontario, Canada N0J 1P0; *Insight Into* (for young people), Rev. P. Van Ruitenburch, Secretary, 8920-3 Broadway Street, Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada V2P 5W1; NRCEA School Journal *Learning and Living*, Plymouth Christian School, 965 Plymouth Ave. N.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49505.

For a list of denominationally printed Reformed literature write to: Netherlands Reformed Book and Publishing Committee, Mr. Tom Fluit, 0-121 Leonard St. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49534, or e-mail nrcbnp@gmail.com. For a list of Reformed material which embraces additional publishing companies, write to our discount book distributor: Bible Truth Books, P.O. Box 1290, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

For free sermons write to: Treasured Meditations, P.O. Box 2753, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

In all our publications, the Netherlands Reformed Congregations aim to remain true to inerrant Scripture and its Reformed heritage as expounded in the denomination's doctrinal standards: the Belgic Confession (1561), Heidelberg Catechism (1563), and Canons of Dort (1618-1619). The Netherlands Reformed Congregations are also in agreement with the Westminster Standards (1640s): the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. The Netherlands Reformed Denomination in the United States and Canada consists of twenty-seven congregations and approximately 11,000 members. Our sister denomination in the Netherlands has 152 congregations and a membership of approximately 107,000. The North American churches have established a mission post and congregation in Loma Alta, Bolivia, South America.



Meditation

Alas! How Shall We Do?

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

“And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha” (2 Kings 6:15-17).

The young servant of the prophet Elisha has risen early. They were living in a time of war. The Syrians who had been defeated several times already were still warring against Israel. To that end the servant with his master Elisha, being in Dothan, living in solemn and alarming times, had special reasons to rise early to take inventory of the circumstances.

“Behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots.” We also live in a time of wars and rumors of wars. The spiritual warfare declared in Genesis 3 continues in all its intensity. Perhaps on New Year’s Day we, too, have awakened early with great fears concerning the coming year. Then, first, we do well to consider which king we are under and, secondly, which place we occupy under his banner. There are those who fight on the front and those who are more at the back, but all are warring under the same leader. It is an appalling thing when we resemble Benhadad. Ahab, the king of Israel, had been very merciful unto him in sparing his life. Benhadad’s general, Naaman, had been wonderfully cured of his leprosy. Yet, in this chapter he is warring against the God of Israel and His people. My readers, have you begun the New Year as King Benhadad? Then surely it is high time to repent and turn unto the Lord.

“Alas, my master! how shall we do?” During the night the enemy has come and surrounded Mount Dothan. When the servant of Elisha saw the mount compassed with so many chariots and soldiers, his fears have multiplied. Undoubtedly, there are many on this New Year’s Day with the same question, “Alas, how shall we do?” Surely, there are many valid reasons for this question. Alas, how shall we do? How shall fathers and mothers provide for their children concerning their daily bread with costs escalating? How shall they deal with a son or daughter, who more and more with an indifferent heart, is turning his or her back on the church?

How shall they do who are struggling with continual pain and weariness of the body? How shall they do who are struggling with depression? How shall we do as a sinful

people with sinful hearts, surrounded by so many temptations and ungodliness? Surely, we cannot expect to do well when we carry unfiltered Internet in the palm of our hands. How shall they do who are addicted? How shall we do when the world’s enmity is greatly increasing against the Lord, the Creator of heaven and earth? Perhaps this is the question in the midst of family circles where the love is waxing cold.

“Alas, my master! how shall we do?” What an important question concerning our death. There is only a step between us and death (1 Samuel 20:3). How shall we do in the swelling of the River Jordan, when we are ushered into eternity to appear before our Maker (Hebrews 9:27)? Young and old, has this been our question and concern on New Year’s Day?

“And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see.” This servant has already beheld wonderful things when the Lord made the axe head to float. Yet, he looked more on the circumstances of the horses with the chariots than upon what the Lord had done in the past. However, this servant did not despair but went to his master, unburdening his heart. It is still a blessing when we with our many temporal and eternal anxieties are given earnestly to enquire of the Lord. Are there souls who, in addition to the many temporal fears, are surrounded and followed by a thundering law and demanding justice, with not a penny to pay? Elisha has prayed for the opening of the eyes of his servant that he may be given to see the faithfulness, the mercy accompanied by the power and protection of the LORD, the I AM that I AM.

“And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man.” He was given to see that the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. They were the holy angels that appeared in the form of fiery horses and chariots. We read in Psalm 34:7a, “The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear Him.” Paul has written to the Church in Romans 8:31, “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” This is the blessed portion of God’s people. Readers, we would do well to consider when we stand on the threshold of another year whether we belong to this chosen and blessed people. Have we been born again (John 3:3)? Have we become poor, a mourner, one hungering and thirsting after righteousness (Matthew 5:3-6)? Have we come to a saving knowledge of the Son of God (John 17:3)? To the true and living Church Christ has declared in Luke 12:32, “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

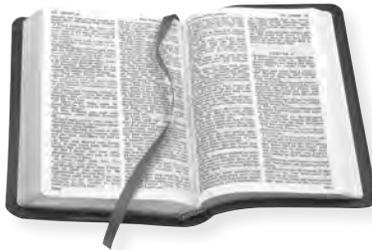
“LORD, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see.” It is necessary, my unconverted readers, to see with a holy jealousy the blessed portion of Elisha. It is needful for all of us to see more the seriousness, shortness, solemnity, and uncertainty of our life, and the certainty of death, judgment, and eternity. It is profitable to see and recognize the signs of the times when the judgments of the Lord are hovering so low over this earth (Psalm 119:120). We need the uncovering of the Holy Ghost to see our sins in the light of the mirror of God’s holy law (Romans 3:20). Our eyes need to be opened to see our great, provoking sins against all the attributes of a majestic God (Lamentations 5:16). We need eyes opened to see and experience that by the works of the law no flesh can or ever shall be justified (Galatians 3:10).

We need the enlightening of the Holy Spirit, by true saving faith, to embrace the promises written in the Scriptures for

those who truly fear Him. We need our eyes opened to see the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ who taketh away the sins of the world (John 1:29); to see Him who is fairer than the children of men (Psalm 45:2); eyes accompanied by light to see who the Lord is when He enables them to trust in Him (Psalm 37:5). With the many cares concerning our daily bread, we need eyes to see that every beast of the forest and the cattle upon a thousand hills are all His (Psalm 50:10)—eyes, at times, to see Immanuel’s Land where the Church may be delivered to praise a Triune God perfectly and eternally.

“LORD, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see.”

To that end in this year may there be many among us, who sitting by the wayside where Jesus passes by in the proclamation of His holy Word, be given to ask and cry loudly as a Bartimaeus of old, “Lord, that I might receive my sight” (Mark 10:51). □



Bible Study

The Life of Moses (14)

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Clifton, NJ

“And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly” (Exodus 19:18).

It was a surprising victory that Israel received in the battle with the Amalekites. It was a fierce battle, but the Lord did not let His people perish. Afterward, Moses built an altar and called it Jehovahnissi, that is, the LORD is my banner. God has sworn that He will continue His fight for them. In Him alone, those who know the true warfare will be more than conquerors, no matter how mighty the enemies are. Christ, the greater Joshua, is also on the battlefield today. He reigns and will safely lead His Church into the land that He has promised them. After this, Israel had been led further in the wilderness of Sinai. There the Lord would reveal Himself to Israel.

The place

Israel had experienced much already. Many difficulties had stood in the way, but God’s counsel would be executed irresistibly. Impossibilities had disappeared like the dew before the morning sun.

- 1) Israel had been made willing to depart from Egypt, and their masters had been glad to let them go.
- 2) The waters of the Red Sea had parted so that the covenant people went upon dry ground.

- 3) Marah’s waters were made sweet to a thirsty people.
- 4) The Amalekites had been slain.

God had manifested Himself in His judgments upon Israel and His power at the Red Sea, in His guiding hand in the pillar of cloud and of fire, in His mercies in giving manna, and in providing living water from the smitten rock. Then they had come to the wilderness of Sinai where there were barren fields, with bramble bushes like the one from which the Lord had called Moses. At the end of the wilderness, was a massive mountain, which was Horeb. It had a special shape with two pillars on the sides and one big pillar in the middle like a pulpit. There the Lord had brought Moses with the people as He had promised in Exodus 3:12b, “*And this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.*” It was God’s confirmation that He Himself had sent Moses. There Moses went up unto God. This we read several times in Chapter 19 (verses 3, 8 and 20). Moses was a mediator between God and the people of Israel, and as such he was a picture of the need of the great Mediator, Jesus Christ.

The manner

The Lord spoke to the children of Israel and called them a peculiar treasure unto Him above all people (verse 5). If only they would obey His voice and keep His covenant, then they should be “unto Me a kingdom of priests, and

an holy nation.” What an undeserved honor for an often stubborn and rebellious people. The people had heard the message from the Lord and answered immediately, *“All that the LORD hath spoken we will do”* (verse 8b). It was an easy promise but showed ignorance. Their promise was good, but they did not know much as to how foolish they were. The Lord said, “After three days I will show those who so rashly promise this who I am.”

Preparations had to be made for the solemn meeting with the Lord:

- a) Their clothes had to be washed.
- b) Bounds had to be set round about the mountain for the people.
- c) They were not allowed to touch the mount or go up into it.
- d) They were not allowed to have marital intercourse.
- e) They were to wait for the sound of the trumpet.

“And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.” The trumpet sounded long, and louder, and exceedingly loud, and we read in Hebrews 12:21, *“And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.”* It all spoke of the majesty and holiness of God. No one could come near to Him.

This is what is experienced in the life of awakened sinners. Yes, the choice to serve the Lord willingly is sincere and upright; however, they do not know themselves and do not know how holy and righteous God is. When the Lord manifests Himself, however, like here in the wilderness to Israel, in His majesty, power, and holiness, then they fear and tremble. The need for a Mediator is also experienced, the One Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ.

The Lord called Moses up to the top of the mountain, and said, *“Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish.”* This applied not only to the people but also to the priests. It seemed that Moses contradicted the Lord when he said, *“The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it”* (verse 23b). Moses dared to contradict the Lord, yet he was not sent away in anger. How faithful and patient the Lord is with His servants. God said, *“Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee.”*

Moses went down and spoke to the people the words of the Lord, *“I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage”* (Exodus 20). What a special place Israel had among the nations!

The purpose

The Lord made a covenant with them, His people, but were they not already His covenant people? Yes, but this was the beginning of a new dispensation for Israel. It was not the Covenant of Works that the Lord made with His people. He did not make a covenant of works with fallen

man. We are born in a broken Covenant of Works, but God did not make another Covenant of Works. Some have said this was a national covenant: it was indeed Israel as a nation whom the Lord addressed, but this was the same covenant that He made with Adam: *“I will put enmity between thee and the woman”*—it was the Covenant of Grace. This can also be shown from Galatians 3:17: *“And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.”* The law, which was given on Mount Sinai, did not disannul the Covenant of Grace, but it was and is still held as a mirror before the people to show them who they are. The purpose of the giving of the law is:

- a) A mirror for the unconverted, for discovering who they are, to show them their misery.
 - b) To be a schoolmaster for a guilty, burdened people to lead unto Christ.
 - c) For those who know Christ and the redeeming power of His blood, it is a rule of gratitude.
- The giving of the law did not take place in the beginning of God’s dealings with Israel, and so it is also often spiritually:
- a) He first opened their eyes to their state of misery in Egypt.
 - b) He then led them out of the house of bondage. Spiritually, the bridge with the world is pulled up behind them.
 - c) Then Israel experienced a time of many changes, of Marahs and Elims, yet, in general, a pleasant time. They were permitted to eat the manna and drink water from the rock, though they did not know much about from whom it came. Spiritually, they were permitted to partake of the blessings that come from Christ without the knowledge of their great need of His mediatorial work to be undertaken for His people, as Hezekiah said.

- d) Then they are led to Sinai where they learn of the great need of a Mediator. We read in Exodus 20:19 of the Israelites, *“And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.”*

God spoke to Moses of a way of blood, of reconciliation. This way is revealed from behind the justice of God. Moses is a type of Christ. His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. All the lightning and thunder came upon Him. Therefore, God’s people do not come to Mount Sinai but to Mount Zion. They are a special treasure to the Lord. We read in Hebrews 12:22, *“But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.”* They are not come to Moses, but *“to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel”* (Hebrews 12:24b). He is the way of atonement for guilty people. □

(To be continued)



A Word in Season

Glad Tidings

Rev. W.C. Lamain (1904-1984)

(Excerpt from the January 1978 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

“For unto you is born this day” (Luke 2:11a).

Oh, may the Lord guide my pen and grant a little light to write something about the right and true meaning of the illustrious event which we now commemorate. We read in James 1:17, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” This gift cannot be expressed in words. By the grace of God, we have been favored for many years to say something about it. Yea, we feel so very low at times. The feeling is very different from what we anticipate. Oh, when we talk about God and divine things, about the mysteries of the gospel, then we become aware of how poor, how ignorant, and how foolish we are. If God did not at times give us something, it would have come to an end many years ago. He that glories, let him glory in the Lord.

If it may be true, then we are only at the beginning, and then we must still start. The miracle of the incarnation of the Son is incomprehensible, yea, infinite. The greatest divines in the world who really have been taught by God must acknowledge that the half has not been told. No, not half; no, not a millionth part do I know of it. We have not a doctrine to be understood but only to be believed. God is great and we know Him not. In our days many tell us that they do not believe what they cannot comprehend. Such a language is terribly blasphemous and God-dishonoring.

God’s poor people may at times rejoice that they believe in a God who is incomprehensible, an adorable Supreme Being. This God is our salvation. We shall never finish praising Him. It was God’s eternal decree and plan, as a fruit and manifestation of God’s infinite love, to send His Son into the world. It never came up in the heart of any man, but it was God’s eternal will and good pleasure. God had from eternity thoughts of peace and not of evil. Because God loves Himself, it pleased Him to elect His Son to be Surety, Mediator, and Head of His elect. God wanted to glorify Himself, to restore His image, and to glorify His attributes in the saving of sinners. He would execute His counsel and exalt His name through the depth of our Fall so that His honor shall be retained, and He forever shall receive the honor from those who are called according to His eternal purpose.

God has wrought everything for His own sake and for His own glory. This can never be comprehended by insignificant dust and ashes as we are, but it may be admired by all those who are partakers of the divine nature and who, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, have become interested in

that glorification which becomes not only their chief aim but also the delight of their life. The angels sang, “Glory to God in the highest,” and the shepherds returned glorifying God for all that they had heard and seen. Yea, in Isaiah 43:21 we read, “This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise.” God’s people are vouchsafed here initially, and by and by perfectly, to end in God with that Gift.

It goes without saying that our life shall be something different from an intellectual contemplation and a historical knowledge. In our days there are thousands and tens of thousands (let me write it as it is) that thank an unknown God for something which they have never received. There are a great many people whose mouths are filled with a dear Lord Jesus, but who never had the faintest notion of who He is or what He is. Oh, what foolishness and blindness there is among so many who have never been quickened from death to life, and who have never been in contact with God, who had never a broken heart and a contrite spirit, who never stood in need of God, who never realized what it is to sin against God, and never felt what it means to be without God. Oh, what a sad condition! The Bible tells us that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto Him, neither can He know them.

In another place we read the testimony of the Lord Jesus Himself that it is hidden from the wise and the prudent but has been revealed unto babes. Truly, by nature, there is no person as concealed from us as the Lord Jesus Christ. Shall we ever know Him personally, then a personal revelation of Him must be given unto us. See Matthew 16:17 and Galatians 1:15&16. Even John the Baptist acknowledged it twice, “And I knew Him not.” Also to him, He had to be revealed from heaven by the inward enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Think of the Samaritan woman in John 4:26, also the one that was born blind in John 9:36: “He answered and said, Who is He Lord, that I might believe on Him?” and Saul on the way to Damascus, “Who art Thou, Lord?” (Acts 9:5).

Moreover, neither is there a person who is less desired than the One given and sent by the Father. “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (John 1:11), and in Isaiah 53:2b&3 we read: “He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised...and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.” The gospel which has Christ as its contents is a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, but unto them which are called, it is a power of God unto salvation (1 Corinthians 1:23&24). Shall it be well with us

on the way to eternity, then we must by the enlightening and uncovering ministration of God the Holy Spirit learn to know that Jew and that Greek in our own heart, to the humiliation and grief of our soul, because of the depth of our Fall and the darkness of our understanding. We know nothing except we are called by God.

In his embarrassment Pilate said, “What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?” Thus, it is with man by nature. Among the religious people there are many that cry much about the Lord Jesus, but how few there are that cry for Him and who really need Him. Oh, it cannot be stressed enough in the days in which we are living that man must first be quickened from death unto life. We must be convinced by God’s Spirit of sin, righteousness, and judgment, that the Law is a schoolmaster to Christ, and that the Spirit of judgment and of learning must be given unto us shall there ever be room in our heart for the Person of the mediator, and for the ministration of the Surety of the Covenant. It is only the precious Holy Spirit who glorifies Christ in the hearts of the elect and who brings us to that blessed knowledge. It is not a fruit from our own field to give ourselves that knowledge. The Lord is free and sovereign in His dealings. Some are brought to that knowledge in a short time while others must wander for years and years, to whom it is applicable, “but Him they saw not.”

Let us not deceive ourselves for eternity. How terrible it shall be if we must appear before God with a lie in our hand;

then Christ shall tell us, “I never knew you: depart from Me.” Something supernatural must be known which is divine and wonderful. If we have never been called out of death unto life, never learned to know that we have sinned against God, that we have transgressed God’s Law, that we have sinned ourselves outside of God, then there can be no desire after Christ. God does not waste His grace. Grace is glorified only in guilty, damnable, and lost sinners. If we have obtained no knowledge of Adam, and we have never experienced personally in our life, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them,” then Christ has no significance for us. Lost in Adam, cursed by Moses—then we shall learn, “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17).

We read in Psalm 65:9: “Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: Thou preparest them corn, when Thou hast so provided for it.” In a very simple manner, but at the same time full of majesty and glory, all this has been fulfilled and confirmed in the birth of the Lord Jesus. Galatians 4:4 says, “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law,” and in Luke 2:6&7a we read, “And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son.” □

From the Editor of *The Banner of Truth*

A Year in Review

Rev. J. den Hoed, Lynden, WA

The year 2022 has come to an end. When together we may have a glance backwards, we may say that the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord have been all around us. No, I do not mean that there are no empty places amongst us. There were loved ones taken away by death. May the Lord remember all those who mourn such empty places in home and heart.

As *The Banner of Truth* committee, we also mourn an empty place. It pleased the Lord to take out of our midst Dr. Edward Nieuwenhuis who for seventeen years served as managing editor of our church periodical. May the Lord comfort his wife and family. May we all remember how frail and short the journey of our life is—a time that lies between the cradle and the grave, a time in which only one thing is important—that God’s Gift from heaven may become our Saviour.

In spite of what we are, the Lord has been good for us. For an entire year the Word of the Lord has come amongst us and for us. How tender were the callings unto the unconverted. There the Lord spoke, “Turn ye, turn ye unto Me, for why would ye be lost?” Oh, what a

wonder when the Lord would give a turning in our life. Then we would come to see something of the breach between God and our soul. Then we would learn to cry, “Oh, Lord, have mercy upon me.” Such a lost sinner may experience that the Lord has never sent such a crying one away. The wonder in their life now is that the Lord began to instruct them who He is, a just and holy God, and who Christ is, an only and precious Saviour. What a great wonder that such a work of God is still with us. May the Lord give that in these dark and difficult times there be many who are stopped and who may find that open door in the blood of the dear Saviour.

Further, there is reason to be grateful for the editorial staff who labored quietly and prayerfully so that each month *The Banner of Truth* was received in our homes. May the printed word be accompanied with the blessing of the Lord for our souls. We, by the grace of God, stand on the threshold of a new year. May the Lord remember us with His undeserved blessings, not only for time, but above all, for the great eternity.



Doctrinal Studies

Of Predestination (1)

Nicholas L. Greendyk (1922-2010)

(Taken from *An Explanation of Rev. A. Hellenbroek's Catechism, Vol. 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."

Rev. Hellenbroek's Catechism speaks only about the election or reprobation of mankind, but since our definition of predestination states that it includes both angels and men, we will first consider briefly the predestination of angels. Concerning angels, the Bible says comparatively little. It does, however, clearly speak of "elect angels" and "fallen angels." Elect angels are mentioned in 1 Timothy 5:21a: "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things..." Fallen angels are mentioned in 2 Peter 2:4: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." They are mentioned again in Jude 1:6, "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." The election of angels, as well as of men, is of God. Some were elected to remain in their first estate, the others left to fall from their former estate, and reserved unto judgment.

The humbling fact for all of mankind is that we read of no covenant, or covenant-head for fallen angels, as with mankind, but each angel stood or fell as an individually created spirit! The fallen angels are in an irreversible state, having no day of grace as fallen man. Since we will consider angels in more detail in Chapter Six, Questions 10-14, we will say no more about them at this time but pass on to consider the predestination of men.

This may be the most appropriate time to mention the two different viewpoints which are held by various divines in the explanation of election and reprobation. It entails whether in the first decree of election if men were considered as fallen or as unfallen, as in the "corrupt mass," through the Fall, or in the "pure mass," created before the fall. The latter of these are called supralapsarians, sometimes called "before-the-fall," or "above-the-fall" zealots; where the former are called either infralapsarians, or sublapsarians, termed by some "after-the-fall," or "below-the-fall" zealots.

It is not our purpose here to enter into the lengthy arguments which learned and godly men have written concerning these terms, each trying to prove his own viewpoint. Perhaps the opinion of Archbishop Robert Leighton (1611-1684) shows the most wisdom of all when

he writes in his lecture on the decrees of God as follows: "...What perverseness, or rather madness, is it to endeavor to break into the sacred repositories of heaven, and pretend to accommodate those secrets of the Divine kingdom to the measures and methods of our weak capacities! To say the truth," he continues, "I acknowledge that I am astonished and greatly at a loss when I hear learned men, and professors of theology, talking presumptuously about the order of the divine decrees, and when I read such things in their works."

Accordingly, we will confine ourselves here to the meaning of the terms "supralapsarian" and "infralapsarian," with a brief statement of the viewpoints of each. "Lapsus" is the Latin word for "fall;" "supra" is the Latin word for "above;" and "infra" is Latin for "below." The difference between the two viewpoints is best illustrated, as Rev. Kersten has done in his *Reformed Dogmatics* and his *Treatise on The Compendium*, by the following:

SUPRALAPSARIANS	INFRALAPSARIANS
Predestination	Creation
Creation	The Fall
The Fall	Predestination

When listed in the order where predestination is above the Fall, we arrive at the term "supralapsarian predestination." When listed in the order where predestination is below the Fall, we arrive at the term "infralapsarian predestination." Thus, the supralapsarian claims that predestination (both election and rejection) precedes the creation of man, or at least before the fall of man, in the decree of God; whereas, the infralapsarian claims that God elected some and rejected others out of fallen mankind. In this point they differ, but in the following cardinal points of doctrine they both agree:

1. They agree that election is personal and particular, of persons by name, whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.
2. They agree that election is absolute and unconditional, not depending upon the will of man, nor on anything to be done by the creature, as Arminian and proponents of free-will teach.
3. They agree that election is wholly owing to the sovereign will and good pleasure of God; not to faith, holiness, obedience, and good works of men, nor God's foresight to these things.
4. They agree that both the elect and non-elect are on equal footing in the decree of predestination. Those who are for the "corrupt mass," that is, the infralapsarians, claim that all were considered as fallen;

whereas those who are for the “pure mass,” that is, the supralapsarians, claim that all were considered as uncreated, and therefore unfallen.

5. They both agree that **it is an eternal act in God, and not temporal, that is, not done in time.** The “after-the-fall” zealots are not of the opinion that God passed the decree of election after men were physically created and fallen, but only that they were considered in the Divine mind from all eternity in the decree of election, **as if** they were created and fallen.

Having stated their differences and their similarities, we close the discussion with a brief statement of historical facts:

1. At the Synod of Dort, in 1618-1619, which included delegates from all the Reformed churches on the European continent and Great Britain, there was much debate over this point. Yet all the delegates,

both supralapsarians and infralapsarians signed the Doctrinal Standards with respect to the point in question and consequently, neither viewpoint was condemned.

2. The symbols of the Westminster Assembly first met in 1643, twenty-five years after the Synod of Dort; they implied the infralapsarian viewpoint yet spoke as to avoid offence to those who favored the supralapsarian view.
3. These differing viewpoints have continued to exist in our Netherlands Reformed denomination also, but with peace, love, and harmony. For instance, Rev. G.H. Kersten was a supralapsarian, while Rev. G. Van Reenen was an infralapsarian. □

(To be continued)



Church History

Guido de Brès

(Adapted from the January 1961 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

Even as King Philip II oppressed the Protestants in Spain and the Netherlands, the writings of Luther and Calvin had found their way into the Netherlands. Notwithstanding the laws, these writings were distributed all over, and the more they were read amongst the people, the greater the number became who rejected the errors of Rome and wished to return to the obedience of the Word of God. These believers soon felt a need to unite with each other, and new congregations originated at many places. Young preachers, who had received their training at the college of Geneva, came to Holland to preach the gospel there also. The congregations welcomed them with gladness and were built up and extended by their service.

The assemblies of the believers had to be kept in the strictest secrecy because inquisitors went through the country to cast into prison all those that were accused of heresy. In spite of all this, the leaders of the different congregations found an occasion to gather together to speak about the interests of the Church. The need was felt to have a Confession of Faith in which the members of the congregation would find the expression of their faith. In Paris, the Reformed leaders had the courage to convene a synod in one of the suburbs while the stakes were smoking. In this synod they composed a Confession which they presented to the king with a plea to judge their cause righteously. A Flemish preacher, Guido de Brès, composed, with the help of some other ministers, a Confession for the Church in the Netherlands. They took the French

Confession for an example and made only such changes as were necessitated by circumstances.

This Confession was sent to Geneva where it was published. In the year 1563, the Protestants sent a copy to Philip of Spain, together with a letter in which they lamented the injustices inflicted upon them. They declared that they would gladly die if they could be justly convicted of stirring up revolt. They likewise requested the king to judge whether the doctrines which they confessed were according to the Holy Scriptures, and if so, to then protect them against the oppression. In the same year they sent a copy of this Confession to all of the authorities of the different provinces of Holland. We know that their complaint was not heard, but their work has not been in vain. The Confession which they composed has remained the foundation or basis of the Reformed Church.

Guido de Brès, whose name is thus connected with the Belgic Confession of the Reformed Church, had been a stained-glass artist, but when he was converted unto the Lord, he felt an earnest need to preach the gospel. For a considerable time, he traveled from one town to another preaching the gospel to friends and enemies. Because he felt that he lacked the necessary training for the office of a minister, he set out for Geneva to prepare himself there for the administration of the gospel. He had scarcely returned to the Netherlands, having been ordained to ministry, when he wrote the Confession of Faith, as we have mentioned before. Sometime later he was called by the congregation

at Valenciennes (France) to be their pastor, and for a considerable time he served that congregation with his gifts.

In the year 1567, Valenciennes was the scene of a severe conflict. The Protestants had taken up arms to resist those who oppressed and persecuted them. The government had ordered her troops to march against them and punish them for this resistance. Their commander, Noircarmes, besieged Valenciennes. Within the city, Guido de Brès and Peregrin de la Grange were strengthening the believers. With increasing fierceness, the city was battered by the enemy until finally the people of Valenciennes could not hold out any longer. Noircarmes had promised to spare the lives of the inhabitants if they would surrender, and trusting his word they gave up and opened the gates.

It was now evident that this promise was not in good faith. When the enemy marched into the city, all those that were suspected as heretics were killed. De Brès and de la Grange had a chance to escape but were pursued and overtaken. They were first taken to Doornik and thereafter to prison back in Valenciennes. Burdened with chains they were cast into a prison and condemned to be put to death on the gallows. They were glad that they were counted worthy to suffer for the cause of the Lord. A noblewoman, Countess de Reux, visited the prisoners on a certain occasion as they lay heavily chained in the dungeon. She wanted to see how such Protestants endured their suffering. In a sympathizing manner she exclaimed, "Poor men, I do not understand how you can stand this any longer, and sleep, eat, and drink with such heavy chains on hand and foot." De Brès replied, "Madame, our sleep in this dungeon is

more restful than the sleep of many a ruler upon his soft bed! Now we are suffering for the name of our Lord, but one day we shall reign with Him. The crown of eternal life is awaiting us above. The noise of these fetters is music in our ears; it is the prelude to the harping of God's angels."

These men had a wonderful peace in their heart. They could not deny the Truth, and their conscience testified that they were faithful to the Lord. Their bands were more welcome to them than golden rings.

When they were led to the place of execution, they rejoiced greatly that the day had arrived upon which they would obtain the blessedness and glory of heaven. May 31, 1567, was the day of their death—their crowning day. On the way they yet admonished the people to remain faithful unto the Lord notwithstanding the threatenings and hatred of their enemies. Even when they had already mounted the ladder (another historian writes that they were beheaded), they turned themselves once more to the bystanders and admonished them to be obedient to the authorities except when God's will was contrary to the commandments of men. They were not allowed to speak to the people any longer. De Brès kneeled to pray but was not allowed to do so. They were cast off the ladder, and a few moments later their suffering had ended. They received grace to remain faithful unto the Lord to the end.

There were now two faithful witnesses less in the land, but the Lord raised up many others in their stead. The work of God's Spirit was not to be resisted. Especially in the Netherlands was this statement verified: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." □



Commentary

The Man Born Blind (10)

Rev. H. de Leeuw, Franklin Lakes, NJ

"But the Jews did not believe concerning him..." (John 9:18a).

The man born blind has made his confession that the Lord Jesus is a prophet. He has clearly testified who the Lord Jesus is for him. By this confession he places the Lord Jesus on the level of the previous great men in Israel, such as Elijah and Isaiah. This stirs the anger of the Jews even more. The effect this has requires our attention. In verse 18 we read, "But the Jews did not believe concerning him." The clear testimony is disregarded, their hardening increases. Instead of believing this credible and persuading confession, they continue in hardening their hearts.

This is a clear description of how the heart is hardened.

Maybe you walk with questions about that: How does the hardening take place, and how does it reveal itself in its continuation? The answer here is very clear. First, let me say that hardening of heart is the greatest judgment on a country, church, school, family, and personal life. Then we willfully continue in our own way; we willfully continue to disregard the warnings and evident tokens of His power. The Jews here willfully do not believe the evidence! This is a serious sin, because those who know better and have the convincing evidence before them are not doing this for the first time. It is a continuation, and the harder the heart becomes, the more it will be given over to its sinful corruption.

This can be a struggle for some. They do not dare say that they are converted. Yet, they know of a time that their heart was tender. Sin was made sin; God had become real. They saw who He was: holy, righteous, and good doing. They remember when they cried to God to be taught. They cried for forgiveness. They remember that the world meant nothing; it had lost all its value. They made a choice—the choice for God, His service, His people, and His day. They thought about it during the night and during the day. The Bible was their delight. They thought to even have seen something of the possibility for their soul to be saved through Another. The Lord Jesus was made precious, but...it seems that it turned around.

They now must admit that it all seems so far away, so unreachable, so dark, so ruined. They are afraid that they are so hardened, and that no matter the callings or the tokens of God's power it leaves them harder. They are afraid that they have been given over to themselves and their evil corruptions. We ask only one question, "Where does it bring you?" Is there then never a yearning in the heart for this to change? Do you always sit cold under the sermons? Is there never a portion from Scripture or something you hear or sing from the psalms of David that makes your heart tender? Is there never a cry with the psalmist, "When will I come again to stand before Thee?" Do you never fall on your knees so defeated and ask the Lord what it was? Do you never have moments in loneliness that you have to cry to Him?

*Recalling days when faith was bright,
When songs of gladness filled my night,
I pondered o'er my grievous woes
And searching questioning arose:
Will God cast off, and nevermore
His favor to my soul restore?*

These souls are not hardened then. They may not have the tenderness as in days gone by, but the Lord will teach His people. What they have confessed must be made true through the way of an exceeding great wonder. Then the Lord will cut off any expectation from self and from previous experiences. He makes room to reveal Himself as the Saviour of lost sinners! The longer it takes, the more

convinced those people become of being a sinner. They are made seekers of the only Mediator who was sent to seek and to save what was lost. The more they hear of Him, the darker it becomes from their own side, and they yearn that He would reveal Himself personally to their heart. The shepherds in Luke 2 knew who they were waiting for, but it was so dark from their side. It was so impossible! It was to make clear the wonder of "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour." The wise men from the East came to Jerusalem but were so disappointed. Yet, it was to make room for the joy they had when the star appeared and led them to the Child. No, they were not hardened; they were led—led by God away from self unto Immanuel: God with us.

I must also say something to hardened sinners—you who under the clearest callings continue in sin; you who always go on after the Sunday, who from Monday to Saturday do not have the least thought of God but just go through the motions. As a child, teenager, younger or older parent, or even grandparent, you are so busy that the busyness consumes you to not even think about your soul. Your life is so evidently a picture of the unregenerate. Oh, hardened sinner, you are one breath away from your eternal destruction—the breath you do not own—the breath God in His longsuffering gives you while you continue to sin against Him.

You are dead in sins and trespasses. You are under the wrath of a just God. The Lord is so holy that He did not spare His own Son under His full wrath, so He will not spare you. Hardened sinners, take the Bible in your hand in the time of grace. Hardened sinners, fall yet on your knees to ask Him for true conversion. Your case is so utterly desperate! The token that He is still able and willing to convert sinners is that He has not cut your life off yet. Maybe you say that it is beyond hope with me. Listen then: The God who you stand in account to is sovereign. The Lord Jesus testified "that the works of God should be made manifest in him"—that was so personal for this healed blind man. That can still be made personal for you. God performs wonders! □

(To be continued)

God is the highest good of the reasonable creature. The enjoyment of Him is our proper and only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here—better than fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, or children, or the company of any, or all earthly friends. These are but shadows, but the enjoyment of God is the substance. These are but scattered beams, but God is the sun. These are but streams, but God is the fountain. These are but drops; God is the ocean.

—Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)



For Young and Old

Lost!

(Taken from the February 1935 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

Hark! a voice sounds in the distance;” “Lost! Lost! Lost!” Was it the echo of a dear father’s own grieving thoughts as he is plodding anxiously and wearily on through the bleating storm, looking for his dear little son? “Lost! Lost! Lost!” Again, he listened and again he heard, “Lost, oh, I’m lost! I’m lost!”

Oh, what a dreadful word is this! My dear young reader, remember that you, even you with the sparkling eye, the merry heart, the rosy cheek, the cheerful tongue, and the active limbs, are, by nature, lost. Sin has cost the children of men the loss of the only true happiness which can be found in the whole universe, namely, communion with God. From their birth they wander farther and farther from God, happiness, and heaven. Thousands do—

*With heedless heart and simpering face,
Dance the downward road apace.*

Reader, dear reader, in love to your immortal and never-dying soul, let me urge upon you the truth that the end of all happiness apart from God is eternal misery. Whilst the words flow from the writer’s pen, his heart goes up to God with an earnest prayer that the solemn truth may be applied with power to the heart of some careless one.

A true story may illustrate what it is to be lost and found, and at the same time enforce the lesson it is desired to impress upon the minds of those young friends who may peruse these lines.

A lad, whose name was Willie, was sent one winter afternoon on an errand to a market town a few miles from his native village. Soon after he started, it began to snow very fast; not discouraged by trifles, Willie plodded on, delivered his message, and was shortly on his way home. He walked fast at first but the snow fell faster, and as it drifted in the wind, in many places it was soon more than knee-deep. His progress, therefore, was necessarily slow; still he did his best to hasten on. Before long, whilst as yet he was far distant from his home, it began to grow dark. Very quickly the night closed in, and meanwhile, being unable to discern the path, Willie had wandered from the track. Willie was lost! He did not as yet know the full extent of his misery. He could not tell which way to take amid the horrors; the darkness, with the bleak wind and blinding snow, rendered it hopeless for him to attempt to set himself right.

Just so by nature we have wandered from the path (we all “have gone astray like a lost sheep”) which leads to heaven and home, and the utmost we can do in our own strength is to get farther and farther away. Our best attempts to save ourselves from perishing prove abortive (unsuccessful).

Willie’s state grew worse and worse. He was beginning to feel his strength fail, for struggling against the storm made

him very weary, when he suddenly got into a deep hollow place where the snow had drifted. There he lay, unable to extricate himself. The more he struggled the deeper he sunk.

In like manner, when we begin to struggle to deliver ourselves from sin, our experience is—

*The more I strive against its power,
I sin and stumble but the more.*

Moreover, he soon found the snow increasing around him—all hope of escape seemed to be taken away. What could he do? Only one thing and this he did—he cried! And what do you think he said? Oh, cannot you fancy you can hear the echo of that half-choked voice crying from beneath the snow-drift, “Lost! Lost! Lost?”

Not knowing whether it would be of any use, in the hour of extreme danger, as loudly as he could with failing strength, he proclaimed his sad case in the hope that someone would hear his cry. This is all the poor, wandering, perishing sinner can do when the Holy Ghost reveals his ruined, lost, hopeless, helpless, hapless state. He can only cry to heaven, “Lost! Lost! Lost!” Is it possible that poor, lost Willie can be saved? Let us see what has been going on at Willie’s home all this time.

Finding he did not return, Willie’s parents became alarmed, and his father set out in search of him. Many anxious, weary hours were spent in vain, and, at length, his father began to fear he must give up poor Willie as lost. Hark! a voice sounded in the distance, “Lost! Lost! Lost!” Was it the echo of his own thought? He looked around, but he could see no one. He listened. He heard the voice again more distinctly, “Lost! Lost! Lost!” Again, he heard it. It was Willie’s voice! He soon found from where it came, and after much labor poor Willie was rescued, but he was greatly exhausted and so escaped death as by a hairsbreadth.

His salvation from death depended upon the love of his father in seeking him and upon his father’s ability to find and rescue him from the snowdrift. Just as lost, perishing sinners are unable to save themselves, their salvation depends upon the love of the “everlasting Father” in coming to seek and to save them, which is what the gospel declares Jesus came to do. The cry of the lost one always reaches His ear, but where Willie’s father might NOT have succeeded in finding or extricating him, we know that Jesus has all power and is able to save “even unto the uttermost” all them who cry unto Him.

That our readers may be shown and convinced of their lost state, and so be brought to cry for mercy, is the sincere prayer of the writer. He knows that such shall be saved, and that their experience in due time will coincide with the testimony of him who said, “I once was lost, but now am found.” □

—E.C.



Questions & Answers

Questions from Our Readers

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

(These two questions were forwarded to me by Rev. H. de Leeuw. They were asked by our youth during the Classis East Youth Conference in July. Due to time constraints that day it was requested that I give an answer via The Banner.)

Could you please explain how decisions get brought forward and decided in consistory meetings?

Any church member has the right to be heard by the consistory. If there are matters that require a decision or may serve the well-being of the congregation, then such a request may be channeled via house visitation, a personal visit with an office bearer, or via a signed letter addressed to the consistory. A visit in person with the consistory when the consistory meets is also possible. This is one of the reasons the monthly consistory meeting is always announced, sometimes including the time when visitors are welcome. It will help the consistory if such a visit is arranged ahead of time because consistory agendas can be full and also office bearers like to be home on time...

In case of a visit in person, the matter will be stated, and the chairman may ask the consistory if there are questions or if further clarification is needed. Then, either the same evening, or at a later meeting, your request will be discussed and decided. Certain decisions may require a vote, others pass or don't pass with merely a verbal indication or even less than that, a nodding or silence...

Of course, if someone is a consistory member, it makes it somewhat easier to propose matters for consideration since every consistory member can submit points for the agenda.

Another way to ask the attention of the consistory in a matter is via a male members' meeting. The policy regarding this channel however may vary per congregation. Some consistories strictly adhere to the 'customary question period' as referring only to matters that were discussed at the meeting. Other consistories may allow questions to be raised and most of the time will be answered as follows: "the consistory will discuss this."

One final remark regarding the "how" of coming to a decision. Certain decisions may be made based on a voice vote or paper vote, but this is not prescribed, unless it involves a person (e.g., nomination for office bearers). Sometimes a vote will speed up the meeting, but I believe it is a healthy sign of unity and stability when decisions can be made based on general consensus without the actual vote.

How involved in politics should we be based on our current and increasingly secular environment?

It is difficult to argue against being involved in politics when the founding father of our sister denomination in the Netherlands was the leader of our Reformed Political Party and a member of Parliament in his day. Granted, times and circumstances have changed drastically, but biblically I can find no argument against someone being involved in politics. Could a minister of the gospel be that person? There is a minister of our sister denomination in the Netherlands who is currently the chairman of the Reformed Political Party, the SGP. However, with the great need we have for ministers in our denomination as well as the description of a minister's task as we find it in Scripture and in the Form of Ordination of the Ministers of God's Word, a minister of the Word should be sure to fulfill his calling as outlined in the form of his ordination.

As much as I would personally desire to see more of our Reformed beliefs being voiced in politics, I think we have to realize that the political arena in North America is quite different and more difficult to participate in than ever before. With basically a two-party system in place in the United States, it would be very hard to run for public office since both political parties leave much to be desired, and running or participating would inevitably compel a candidate for public office to be active on Sunday, to say the least. Not to mention all the worldly show-business through campaigning and modern media which nowadays is involved in running for public office.

To be involved, however, while carefully guarding against Sabbath-day desecration and other ways God's Law and ordinances are trampled upon, I see no reason why a person may not be active in the government of his or her country. Obadiah, Nehemiah, and Daniel are clear examples here. Still, if there are doors opened and ways and means to be influential, please step forward and may the Lord bless the efforts, for the days in which we live are evil beyond belief. May the Lord remember all those laboring in the government of the United States and Canada, who are actively involved in calling our countries back to the truths of God's Word, and may we not cease to remember them in our public and private prayers. □

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



Current Events

Christians Are Now a Minority in England

According to a recent census, fewer than half the people in England and Wales consider themselves Christian. This is the first time a minority of the population has followed the country's official religion. Figures from the 2021 census revealed that Britain has become less religious. Some 46.2% of the population of England and Wales described themselves as Christian, down from 59.3% a decade earlier. More than 1 in 3 people (37%) said they had no religion, up from 25%. The other parts of the U.K., Scotland, and Northern Ireland report their census results separately.

—APNews.com

Respect for Marriage Act Set to Pass in the U.S.

The Respect for Marriage Act has passed the Senate and is expected to pass the House. Complaints from some progressive Democrats are already on the rise because the act will not actually require all states to recognize same-sex marriages. It would require the federal government to recognize same-sex marriages performed in states where they are legal. It also would require states to recognize same-sex marriages in other states for the purpose of distributing benefits; but otherwise, each state would still be able to define marriage as they see fit, and would not be required to issue licenses or permits for same-sex marriages that take place in their state.

—FoxNews.com

Violence Against Christians in India

On a Sunday in November, Christians in India were severely beaten for refusing to deny their faith. A mob of radical Hindu nationalists, along with the village leader, interrupted Sunday worship in the home of a Christian family. The mob burst into the house, took two Christian families and beat them brutally, including the women and children. Among the three who suffered serious internal injuries was a man who was unconscious for nearly an hour. The two Christian families who were attacked came to faith just four months ago. Since then, they have been harassed by radical residents. They were accused of converting to a foreign religion, abandoning their gods, and luring innocent tribal people to Christianity. They went to the police station to report the attackers, but the mob led by the village leader arrived to file a First Incident Report against the pastor. There is little hope for justice for the Christians.

—Persecution.org

A Young Woman's Story of Surviving Her Persecution

A young Indian woman lives with her elderly parents and two sisters. She grew up as a Hindu in a Hindu family within a Hindu community. However, she had always struggled with a chronic illness and could not find healing or peace through her Hindu religion. One day, an uncle invited her to a church service. Soon her entire family went to church, but the whispers in the community were inescapable: *"They all started to attend church...They left the Hindu gods. Stay away from them... She changed her religion—she must be doing it for money..."* She said: *"Their words hurt momentarily, but my unexplainable joy in Christ overpowered all the opposition."* After attending a local prayer meeting the family was stopped in the street by neighbors. This time it escalated into physical violence, and the people began to beat them. The young woman, the worst injured, woke up in the hospital in critical condition. Even the hospital turned against her. The pain does not stop for the persecuted after recovering from injuries; everything came shattering down in her life. She grew weak and was always lying on the bed. She was in constant fear that the attackers would look for them again. She experienced anxiety and panic attacks whenever remembering the attack. Her mother and sister encouraged her with Scripture and worked hard to lift her spirits—reminding her of the hope she has in Christ. She slowly gained strength through prayer, reading the Bible, and writing down her thoughts. She also received support from a Christian organization. *"Surely my cup overflows with blessings,"* she said.

—OpenDoorUSA.org

Military Persecutes in Myanmar

Myanmar's military, which seized power in Buddhist-majority Myanmar in February 2021, has for many years persecuted the country's Christian minority estimated to make up 6.2% of the population. A seven-year-old child was one of three people killed when the Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) launched a joint land and air attack on Mon Hla, a historic Christian village of 3,000 people. More than 200 troops were involved in the assault on November 23 in which a 40-year-old woman and a 30-year-old man also died. Over 200 of the village's 700 buildings, including a church and a Christian school, were destroyed after being engulfed by fires started by the soldiers. This is not new; other villages are also similarly attacked by the military.

—BarnabasFund.org

Synod 2023

The General Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Congregations is scheduled to meet, the Lord willing, Wednesday, January 25, and Thursday, January 26, 2023. Grand Rapids—Covell Avenue will be the hosting church. Rev. A.H. Verhoef has been designated to lead the special prayer service on Tuesday, January 24, at the Covell Avenue Church at 7:30 P.M. We ask the congregations to remember this upcoming meeting in their prayers, both public and private.

May the Lord remember our denomination and grant

His favor and blessing upon it, though infinitely forfeited and undeserved. May the delegates be given wisdom, honesty, meekness, and humility as well as being given traveling mercies, especially in these days. May all the decisions be made with an eye upon the infallible Word of God and the maintenance thereof, even in these days.

On behalf of the calling church,
Rev. H. Hofman
Elder Bill Greendyk, *Clerk*
Beckwith Avenue FNRC



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

The Confession of Faith (37) **Article XXXII: Of the Order and Discipline of the Church**

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

In this article we read about the discipline of the church. Our fathers have seen this subject to be of such great importance that an entire article is given to it. The same subject is spoken of in Lord's Day 31 of the Heidelberg Catechism and in Articles 77 and 78 of the Church Order of Dort. It is not surprising that our fathers have considered discipline to be of the greatest importance, for God is a God of order, and therefore it is indispensable for the church. His wrath is against disorder. When His commandments are not kept, we come into disorder, just as we find in Psalm 89:30-32, "If his children forsake My law, and walk not in My judgments; If they break My statutes, and keep not My commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes."

The Lord cannot tolerate a forsaking of His law, and He will punish it. This was very well understood by our fathers, and therefore they emphasized church discipline. In doing so they acted according to God's Word. In considering this article, two things are discussed: first, the profit of a good order in the church, as commanded by Christ; and second, the purpose of this order and how it should be practiced.

In the previous article it was explained that the Lord has given authority to the offices in the church. The office bearers are called to maintain order, just as it is explained by our fathers, "In the meantime we believe, though it is useful and beneficial that those who are rulers of the Church institute and establish certain ordinances among themselves for maintaining the body of the Church..." In the same manner Paul wrote to the congregation of Corinth, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40). The Lord gave leaders to His church, and they have the responsibility for good order. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus how this should take place, and in other parts of the Bible also it can clearly be found that discipline must

be maintained. Such decisions may not be made by individuals, but by consistories, classis, or synods.

The Lord has given authority to the local church. These local churches, having communion with other churches in a certain region, form a classis. A number of classis together should form a particular synod, as it is called in Holland; all the particular synods form the full synod. (Because of the great distances, this is impossible in North America.) Instead, in Canada and the United States there is this difference that all the classis form the synod. The unity between the churches does not end with this. If there are churches which have the same confession but are situated in other countries, then unity is maintained by correspondence.

Nevertheless, the center of authority lies in the local church. All higher assemblies may have their boards, which have authority during the meetings, but at the end of the meeting these are dissolved. The consistories continue to have authority. Do these higher assemblies then have no real authority according to God's Word? They certainly do. We can find this in Acts 15, which speaks about the first synod of the New Testament church. There the apostles and elders are called together to discuss several matters related with the life of faith in order to maintain the body of the church. In speaking of the body of the church, we should remember that Christ is the Head, and the body is formed by the members. Rule is entrusted to Christ, who is King, Lawgiver, and Judge. The royal jurisdiction of Christ is described, and we may not forget that which Christ, our only Master, has ordered or instituted, "...yet they ought studiously to take care, that they do not depart from those things which Christ, our only Master, hath instituted."

The catechism and church order speak of it in the same way. There it is confessed that Christ Himself executes the authority and discipline in the church.

The discipline is of divine origin. If we had more impression of this, then the use and misuse of discipline would be much less. We should remember that discipline is a medicine and not a means of revenge. It is medical and not judicial!

How can discipline be exercised in the right way? Only when we act according to the Word and command of Christ and are led by His Spirit. This was understood by our fathers as they tried to cleanse the church from the leaven of Rome. Rome laid burdens upon men which were nearly unbearable, and the commandments of Christ were nearly forgotten. What a blessing that the Lord remembered His church and has led them out of the house of bondage, which is Rome. The church of the Reformation is a planting of the Lord, and tries with God's help to live according to the institutions of the Lord. In the beginning of the Reformation the church was blessed with a rich spiritual life, even though it was the church under the cross and many had to pay for their true confession with the price of their life. We must say of Rome that it condemns righteousness and justifies wickedness, and this is an abomination to the Lord. The church of the Reformation returned to God's Word and the discipline which He commanded.

Guido de Brès, who died as a martyr, and also our fathers of Dort have tried to keep discipline pure. In certain places in God's Word, we find the word "key" used instead of discipline, signifying the keys of the kingdom of heaven. This expression is also used in Isaiah 22. The prophet had to announce that Shebna would no longer be the scribe for David and that his place would be taken by Eliakim. Of this Eliakim, the Lord says to Shebna: "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open." The work of Eliakim was to decide who was allowed to enter into the palace of David, or who was to be excluded. As a sign of his office, he would carry a key upon his shoulders.

Christ has also given authority to the church to use the keys of the kingdom of heaven. The Lord willing, we hope to write a little more about this next month. You may now already feel that God, as a God of order, wants to have order in His church. When we forsake His institutions, the Lord will come against us. His displeasure rests upon the sinner. How necessary is the guidance of the Holy Spirit for all of us.



Bible Stories for Little Ones

Samson (4)

(Based on Judges 16)

The Philistines didn't know what to do about Samson. They wanted to capture him more than any other Israelite. Samson had done so much harm. He had killed thirty of their men to get their clothing. He had burned up the fields of their countrymen with foxes whose tails were set on fire. He had ripped their ropes apart when they had finally captured him, and then he had killed a thousand of them with only a jawbone of an ass.

Now—something had happened a few days ago as well. The Philistines had found out that Samson was in one of their cities visiting a wicked woman. They had closed all the gates and guarded all the doors. They thought they surely had him, but, then...? He had gotten up in the middle of the night, picked up the gates, and carried them away on his shoulders! So, he had again gotten away.

The Philistines were desperate to capture Samson. They talked with each other. "How can we capture him?" They began to wonder what made him so strong. Why was he stronger than anyone else, even stronger than any of their mighty men? If they could find out, they could take this special thing away from him and make him weak, but who would know? Then they decided; they should ask Delilah! Delilah was a Philistine woman. She was a wicked woman, yet Samson loved her very much. One day the Philistine rulers came to talk to her.

After they left, Delilah talked to Samson. "Samson, why are you so strong?" she asked him. "You've never told me! What would a person need to do to make you weak?"

"Oh, just tie me up with seven green branches, and I'll be weak like other men," Samson said.

Of course, Delilah quickly hurried to tell the rulers what Samson had said. They brought her the seven green branches and then hid in the next room. Delilah tied Samson up and suddenly called, “Samson, the Philistines are here!” Out came the men, but Samson wasn’t worried. He just stretched his arms, the branches broke like threads, and he was free.

Delilah became angry. “Samson, you lied to me! Now, this time, tell me really—with what can you be tied?”

This time Samson said, “Tie me up with brand-new ropes that were never used, and THEN I’ll be weak”

Again, Delilah told the Philistines. They brought her new ropes and hid in the back room. After tying Samson with them, she cried, “Samson, watch out, the Philistines are here!”

Again, that was no problem for Samson. He just broke the ropes as he had broken the branches.

Delilah became even angrier. “Oh, Samson,” she said, “all you do is lie to me! Please, just tell me. With what can you be tied?” She was really asking what made Samson so strong.

“Weave my hair,” Samson told her. “Weave the locks of my hair on a weaver’s beam.”

She did this while he slept, pinning down his hair. Do you know what happened? When the Philistines came out of the back room, Samson awoke and was able to stand and walk away with part of the loom and fabric into which his hair was woven.

“You don’t love me!” cried Delilah. “How can you tell me you love me when you won’t even tell me what’s in your heart? You just lie to me. You wouldn’t lie to me if you really loved me.”

Day after day Delilah pestered Samson. Day after day she begged him for the reason for his strength. Finally, he became tired of it.

“Okay, I’ll tell you,” Samson said. “The reason I am strong is because I have never had my hair cut. I am a Nazarite, and I have been one since I was born. If my hair were to be cut, I would be weak.”

This time Delilah knew he had told the truth, and she called the Philistines again. They hurried to her house with money to pay her and hid in the back room. Samson didn’t know this. He was sitting quietly next to Delilah. Soon he became very tired, and he laid his head on her lap. Before long he was sound asleep.

Quietly Delilah called a man over to her. Very quickly he cut off all seven of Samson’s braids of hair. Then she called out, “Samson, wake up! The Philistines are here!”

“Oh,” Samson said as he began to wake up, “I’ll just get away as I did the other times.”

This time he could not get away. His hair was cut, and God was no more with him! He was as weak as any other man. He was CAPTURED!

How thrilled the Philistines were to have caught their enemy. Now that they had seized Samson there was no way the Israelites could ever fight against them again.

The Philistines were cruel to Samson. They poked out his eyes, tied him up with chains, and made him work like a slave in prison.

A special day was held for the Philistines. They were planning to have a big feast to their god. They wanted to offer a big sacrifice to him because he had helped them capture Samson, their worst enemy.

Someone had a good idea. Why not bring Samson himself to the feast? Then they could really make fun of him.

A boy was helping in the prison, and he brought Samson out to the feast. Poor Samson was blind, weak, and miserable, and the men teased him cruelly. He was standing between the two big pillars that held up the house where the feast was, and he could only listen as the men and women mocked him. “Look at strong Samson now!” they may have cried. “You were so strong and killed so many people, and just look at you now!”

Samson said to the boy who was with him, “Please help me find the two big pillars, so I can lean on them.” The boy did so.

Samson could not see the people, but he knew there were Philistines all around the room as well as thousands up on the roof. Would God help him just one more time? “O Lord GOD,” he prayed. “O please remember me. Please make me strong again so that I may punish these men for taking my two eyes!”

God answered Samson’s prayer. His strength came back to him. Probably no one noticed as Samson leaned upon the two pillars. With his mighty effort the pillars began to bend in the middle. “Let me die with the Philistines!” Samson said, and the house fell upon all the Philistines. Thousands were killed, but also Samson.

Samson was used by God to save His people from the Philistines. In fact, he had killed more people in his death than in his whole life. In his death, Samson was like Jesus who saved His people by dying for them.

*Teach me to live, that I may dread
the grave as little as my bed.*

—Thomas Ken (1637-1711)



Bible Quiz

Journeys

Dear Boys and Girls,

On the first day of school, teachers quite often ask their students to draw a picture or write a story about their summer vacation. Some children don't have to think for long. "I got a new puppy," or "I stayed at my grandma's house for a whole week," are the events that immediately come to their mind as the most important part of their summer. Others mull it over in their mind for some time. One boy doesn't know if he should write about the tree fort he built, the cows that escaped a dozen times, the exciting books he read, or the fish he caught in the river. Another boy remembers his camping trips. He recalls how often someone would see the packed car and ask, "Where are you going?" or "Where are you from?"

Perhaps you also heard this question a few times last summer. Maybe your friends wanted to know what your vacation plans were. "Where are you going?" Maybe you traveled far and the people around you could tell that you were unfamiliar with the surroundings. "Where are you from?"

Your answer could have been, "I'm going to a cabin in the mountains," or "I'm going to a hotel near the Great Lakes." Now the vacations are past, and you are back in school, but still... still someone could ask you, "Where are you going?"

Going? Nowhere, right? You are just at home and at school. You are not going on a trip at all. Going?

Yes, you ARE going somewhere. While you are sitting at your school desk, while you are doing your homework, yes, even while you are sleeping, you are going somewhere. You are always on a journey. That journey began when you were born. We can ask the question, "Where are you from?"

"Well," you might say, "my parents are the Van Vliets, and I live in Tannersville," but that is not what I mean. Where are you from—where did your journey begin? I read the answer in the Bible. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). Your journey of life began as a small baby, and that baby already had a sinful heart. You did not come into this world with a clean heart.

Where are you going? By nature, each and every one of us is on the wrong way. That little baby's journey will continue, whether for a shorter or

longer time, no one knows. Some people grow to a very old age. Others' lives are much shorter, but each life has an end. That end is the final destination of the journey. Where will it end up?

Do you know where you are going? To eternity. No one can escape it. You cannot live on earth forever. No, you cannot, but after death, your soul will spend eternity in one of two places, and that place is forever. The one place is heaven. The other is hell. Heaven is where the Lord lives. Hell is where people suffer agony, torment, and pain for their sin. There, the devil will laugh at them and say, "Why are you here? Did you never hear of a way to be saved?"

If every baby is born with a sinful heart, doesn't that mean they will all die one day and be in this awful place with the devil? Will anyone be in heaven where there is only joy and happiness and where the Lord lives? Yes, the Bible tells us that there will be a great multitude in heaven one day. This means a crowd too big to count. How did they come there? They came there because God chose them and saved them. He does not see any sin in them because Jesus Christ, His Son, has paid for those sins Himself. God sees His people through His Son and speaks, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee."

Where are you going? Do you know? The Lord said of the Israelites, "Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book." The Lord is holy. He cannot look over sin as if it is not there. David prayed, "Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities." You may pray this prayer too, boys and girls. Ask the Lord, often, if He will place you on the right way and make your heart clean.

* * * * *

Complete the crossword puzzle on the next page. Answers found in Genesis 6 & 49, Acts 1 & 5, Luke 2, 10, 11, 15, & 16, Ecclesiastes 8, 2 Chronicles 24, Deuteronomy 2, 1 Kings 19, Matthew 25, Mark 6, John 4, 1 Corinthians 16, and 2 Corinthians 11.

Across

1. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had _____ on him.

3. And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no _____ in their purse:

7. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being _____ with His journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

9. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and _____ took his journey.

11. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with _____ living.

12. But they, supposing Him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they _____ Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

14. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the _____ called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

15. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her _____, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

17. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried _____.

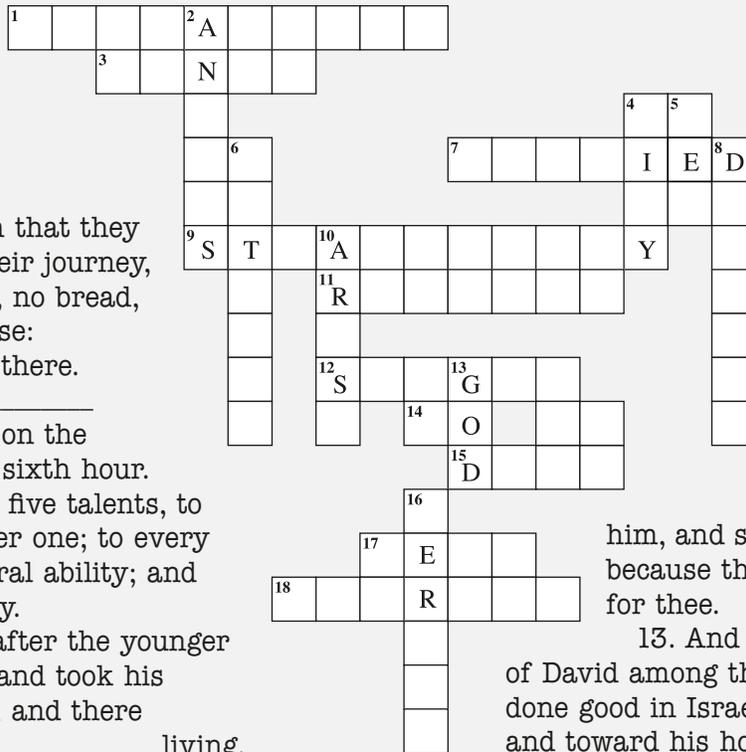
18. And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my _____ whithersoever I go.

Down

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

4. And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the _____ where they had so done: this is also vanity.

5. Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the _____ sea, as the Lord spake unto me: and we compassed mount Seir many days.



6. For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have _____ to set before him.

8. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will _____ them with the earth.

10. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, _____ and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.

13. And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward _____, and toward his house.

16. In journeyings often, in _____ of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea.

Complete Psalter 274 and color.



Before my journey is _____

My vigor fails, my _____ decline;

My God, O _____ me, I entreat;

The days of _____ are wholly Thine.

For the Older Children

Draw a line from the person to the place to which he journeyed.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 19. Jonah | Damascus (Acts 9) |
| 20. Cornelius' servants | Spain (Romans 15) |
| 21. Jesus | Nineveh (Jonah 3) |
| 22. Saul | Joppa (Acts 10) |
| 23. Paul | Jerusalem (Luke 13) |

For the Younger Children

24. Draw a line from each name to the picture which shows something of their journey.

Abraham



Israelites



Jacob



Queen of Sheba



Eleazer,
Abraham's servant



Joseph's brothers



Paul



Joseph and Mary



Jonah



Answers to December's "Builders" quiz:

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. Masons | 2 Kings 12:12 |
| 2. Timber | 2 Kings 22:6 |
| 3. Cedars | 1 Chronicles 14:1 |
| 4. House | 1 Chronicles 22:2 |
| 5. Brass | 2 Chronicles 24:12 |
| 6. Lebanon | Ezra 3:7 |
| 7. Stones | 1 Kings 5:18 |
| 8. Oversight | 2 Kings 12:11 |
| 9. Carpenters | 2 Kings 22:6 |
| 10. Artificers | 2 Chronicles 34:11 |
| 11. Sword | Nehemiah 4:18 |
| 12. City | Hebrews 11:10 |
| 13. Figure | Isaiah 44:13 |
| 14. Smiths | Jeremiah 29:2 |
| 15. Seas | Ezekiel 27:4 |
| 16. Anger | Nehemiah 4:5 |
| 17. The carpenter, Mary, James, and Joses,
and Simon, and Judas, God | |
| 18. 22 + 42 + 10 + 17 + 11 + 7 | |

Letters to My Young Readers

Welcome to our new members:
 Lisa & Heather den Hollander,
 Josie Ymker, Joseph Blom, Levi &
 Asher Spaans, Jacob Ekema, Molly &
 Christian Koepsell

Love,
 Aunt LenaBeth

Esther VandenBroek
 Thanks for your note, Esther. I'm glad you like having quizzes to do besides reading. Do you have a puzzle you like best—word searches, cross words, secret codes, fill-ins, matching, or something else? Are you practicing a Bible verse or poem for Christmas time? Ask the Lord, often, if you may receive the true meaning of Christmas in your heart.

See page 22 for names of those answering previous quizzes received in October.

Please send your answers to the address shown below:

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

News & Announcements

■ Ministerial Calls

Extended:

To Rev. G.J. Baan of Rotterdam, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

To Rev. H. de Leeuw of Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, by the congregations of Brant County, Ontario; Lethbridge, Alberta; and Sioux Center, Iowa.

To Rev. J.J. Witvoet of Rock Valley, Iowa, by the congregations of Grand Rapids–Covell Avenue, Michigan, and Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

To Rev. C. Sonneveld of Alblasserdam, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Declined:

By Rev. G.J. Baan of Rotterdam, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

By Rev. H.D. den Hollander of Fort Macleod, Alberta, to the congregation of Markham, Ontario.

By Rev. H. de Leeuw of Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, to the congregations of Sioux Center, Iowa, and Sunnyside, Washington.

■ Obituaries

KAMP, Helen – Age 94, November 23, 2022; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Siblings – Gertrude Westrate, Richard & Ruth Kamp, Martina Feyter, Henry & Lena Kamp; In-laws – Emeline Kamp, Henry Bloem; many beloved nieces & nephews; predeceased by siblings John & JoAnn, Peter, Jane & Dan DeMeester, Ada Bloem and 3 brothers-in-law. (Rev. H. Hofman, Isaiah 40:6-8.)

NIEUWENHUIS, Dr. Edward R. – Age 84, November 19, 2022; Wanaque, New Jersey; Wife – Lois (nee Struck); Children – Dr. Edward Jr. & Lori, Marc & Dorothy, Drew & Fleur, Leanne & Robert Baum; 13 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren; Siblings – Garret & Florence, Neal & Janet, Everdina & William O'Connor, Richard & Gertrude; Brother-in-law – Jacob & Teresa Struck; predeceased by sister and her husband. (Rev. H. de Leeuw, Romans 6:23.)

ROZEBOOM, Hermina (nee Zomer) – Age 96, November 16, 2022; Rock Valley, Iowa; Husband – Dick (deceased); Children – Harry & Diane, Herman & Cheryl, Leonard & Evonne, Larry & Tammy, Richard & Lynnette, Harlan & Carol; 17 grandchildren; 44 great-

grandchildren, 2 great-great-grandchildren; Siblings – Nellie, Betty, Clarence & Marlene Zomer; Sisters-in-law – Jeane Zomer, Joane Zomer, Jackie Rozeboom, Dena Erickson; predeceased by grandchildren Paige Renae and Carmen Lynn, grandson-in-law Leslie Spaans, great-grandchild Crystal Dawn, 2 brothers, 5 brothers-in-law and 2 sisters-in-law. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, 1 Chronicles 4:9&10.)

THIESSEN, Lucretia (nee Vroegindewey) – Age 88, November 16, 2022; North Haledon, New Jersey; Husband – Thomas (deceased); Children – Thomas D. & fiancé Carol Ann Decker, Diane Egan & David (deceased) Graham; Siblings – Cornelius & Rita, David & Marilyn, Maryann & Ronald Hasko; predeceased by her sister. (Rev. H. de Leeuw, Psalm 90:12.)

VAN BEEK, Anden Neal – Age 62, December 2, 2022; Fairview, South Dakota; Wife – Mavis (nee Richters); Children – Nicole & Troy Landegent, Christy & Jeffrey Polk, Ashley & Cameron Van Beek, Brandon; 13 grandchildren; Parents – John & Gertrude; Siblings – Alma & Gus De Wit, Joann & Leland Hoekstra, Terry, Jason & Julie, Tricia & Nate; predeceased by parents-in-law Bert & Gertrude Rus, in-laws Richard Richters, Lucille (Richters) Dorhout, and Dick Dorhout. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, John 11:25&26, 41&42; Rev. H. de Leeuw, Luke 7:13.)

VAN BEEK, Gloria Jean (nee Van Veldhuizen) – Age 80, November 15, 2022; Rock Valley, Iowa; Husband – Albert M. (deceased); Children – Shar & Carlin Groeneweg, Marvin, Paul & Dawn, Randall & Karen, Carolyn & Jamie, David & Melissa, Jeffrey & Jolene; 27 grandchildren; 32 great-grandchildren; Siblings – Arlene Van Beek, Doris & Keith Boer, Don (Festus) & Gwen Van Veldhuizen; In-laws – Irene & Henry Ter Wee, Ron & Crystal, Peter & Linda, James & Donna, Harriet & Dick Bonnema, Priscilla & Harlan Driesen, Mary & Rog DeGroot, Ruth & Allen DeJager; predeceased by grandson Kyle Dreke, brother Gerrit Van Veldhuizen and 3 brothers-in-law. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Matthew 3:10.)

VAN DEELEN, Wijnand – Age 66, December 10, 2022; Norwich, Ontario; Wife – Beppie (nee van Ee); Children – Gereke & Evert Vermeer, Rieni, Johan & Anneke, Gerwin & Anneliese, Wijnand, Annette & Henry van Ravenhorst; 13 grandchildren. (Rev. E. Hakvoort, Isaiah 40:6-8.)

VAN KLEI, Lies – Age 83, December 8, 2022; Chilliwack, British Columbia; Wife – Jacoba;

Children – Jackie & Derk Vossebelt, Art & Joni, Carol, Nellie, Les & Ria, Gary & Christie, Mark & Christa; 27 grandchildren, 34 great-grandchildren; Siblings – Gary, Ali, Art; two sisters-in-law; predeceased by infant brother and several in-laws. (Rev. P. Van Ruitenburg, John 14:2&3.)

VAN WINGERDEN, Brenda (nee Willekes) – Age 43, December 10, 2022; Oak Ridge, New Jersey; Husband – Leonard; Children – Caleb, Jacob, Kevin, Alanna, Noah; Siblings – Laura & Jeff Prol, Robert & Brenda Willekes, Linda & Mark Van Grouw, Donald & Hendrieka Willekes, John & Anna Willekes, David & Amy Willekes, Abraham & Beverly Willekes, Kevin & Konnie Willekes, Barbara & Joseph Negrotto; Parents – Jacobus (Joe) & Margaret; In-laws – Parents Len & Marjan, brothers & sisters Case & Star, Mike & Mandy, Ben & Allison, Josh, Rianne & Zack Vander Groef, Lydia. (Rev. H. de Leeuw, 2 Samuel 18:33.)

In Memoriam

Dr. Edward Nieuwenhuis

On November 19, 2022, it pleased the Lord to remove Dr. E. Nieuwenhuis at the age of eighty-four from his wife, family, and our congregation. With the help of the Lord, he served our congregation with diligence as a deacon for twenty-eight years. He also was the managing editor of *The Banner of Truth* for seventeen years. Dr. Nieuwenhuis was buried on November 22, 2022. May the Lord remember the families and sanctify the calling in the midst of the congregation.

—Franklin Lakes ENRC Consistory

In Memoriam

Mr. George Gysbrecht Feyter

On October 7, 2022, it pleased the Lord to remove Mr. George G. Feyter from the midst of his family at the age of ninety-four years. He labored much in the formative years of the congregation and most years until 1995. May the Lord sanctify this call in the midst of his family and the congregation.

—Fort Macleod NRC Consistory

■ New from Bible Truth Books

The Letters of J.C. Philpot—After being out of print for nearly a decade, we are glad to see these Philpot letters return to our shelves. The book begins with a short biography of Philpot, often told by means of his letters. The latter four hundred pages of the book are filled with Philpot's letters, arranged chronologically. We cannot recommend these letters heartily enough. The book itself is a page-by-page re-image of the original 1871 printing. As such, the print may be a bit obscured on certain pages due to the copying process, but on the whole, it is very readable. Hardcover, 560 pages, \$50.25.

The Fountain Series—by C. van Rijswijk. A series of simple Bible instructions for teens that explore portions, characters, or special histories from the Bible through short devotionals. They are written to be used as Bible study material by a family with growing children but, of course, also may be read by teenagers themselves. Each portion is about 3-5 pages in length and explains the time and situation in which a Bible portion took place. There is a spiritual and practical lesson to ponder in each piece. Hardcover, approx. 80-90 pages, \$11.25 each volume.

Volume 1: The Lord is My Shepherd—Readings from Psalm 23.

Volume 2: Until Shiloh Come—Readings from Jacob's Inheritance (Genesis 49).

Volume 3: Fleeing to the Safe City of Refuge—The Meaning of the Cities of Refuge.

He Both Hears and Answers Prayer—This collection contains thirty-four historical stories for children about well-known and not-so-well-known persons. Several stories do not even mention a name, while others are taken from the lives of God's people and servants. However, the names of people are not important. The most important thing in this collection is the work of the Lord in the lives of His people. Hardcover, 141 pages, \$9.50.

Wonders is the Strife: Stories from the time of the Eighty Years' War—by J. van Reenen. The Eighty Years' War between Spain and the Netherlands took place between 1568 and 1648. During this time the Spanish Inquisition arrested and killed many of God's people, and as a result the people of the Netherlands were not safe anywhere. "But the LORD will send salvation..." Hardcover, 149 pages, \$9.50.

Please note that the prices above do not include postage.

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

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.**

■ 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

Answers to previous quizzes were received in October from:

Brianna Aleman (2) 2
Erin Aleman (2) 2
Clay Bakker (2) 20
Paige Bakker (2) 3
Eryn Bisschop 16
Sara Bisschop 16
Britni Blom (2) 37
GaryJon Blom (2) 15
Jenina Blom (2) 29
Joseph Blom (2) 2
Lawrence Blom (2) 23
Martena Blom 40
Tiffany Blom (3) 12
Willem Blom 17
Ilyce Bosch 2
Carly Brouwer (2) 16
Derek Brouwer (2) 35
Thomas Brouwer (2) 34
Brooklyn DeJager (2) 2
Laurel DeJager 1
Jaxon DeKorne (2) 10
Juliette DeKorne (2) 12
Sarina Den Bok (5) 29
Heather den Hollander 1
Lisa den Hollander 1
Cody Driesen 33
Ethan Driesen 5

Toby Driesen 33
Lindsey Driesse 24
Allison Ekema (2) 8
Jacob Ekema 1
Kaylynn Ekema (2) 39
Geraldyn Engelen 24
Trevor Engelen 25
Jennica Flokstra 1
Jodilyn Flokstra 1
Ronna Geuze 8
Kyal Grinich 19
Kynlee Grinich 4
Logan Grinich 21
Taryn Grinich 17
Kari Groen (2) 27
Kurtis Groen (2) 28
Weston Hoogendoorn 36
Evan Kaat (3) 19
Logan Kaat 6
Shane Kaat 7
Brooklyn Klop (2) 4
Sienna Klop (2) 4
Anthony Knibbe (2) 15
Ashley Knibbe (2) 28
Jarynne Knibbe 26
Meredy Knibbe 8
Whitney Knibbe (2) 28

Joey Koenen (2) 11
Lydia Koenen (2) 13
Christian Koepsell 1
Molly Koepsell 1
Jakayla Loedeman (2) 3
Kari Mans (2) 20
Abraham Mol 5
Lydia Mol 28
Madeline Mol (2) 20
Olivia Mol (2) 24
Teddy Mol 30
John Murphy (2) 29
Andrew Murphy (2) 9
Colin Overbeek (6) 20
Jayden Overbeek (6) 34
Bryelle Painter 2
Blake Pannekoek (4) 21
Lauren Pannekoek (4) 33
Andrew Remijn (2) 30
Daniel Remijn (2) 10
Lauren Remijn (2) 26
Nevaeh Rozeboom (2) 13
Alex Rus (2) 30
Jessa Rus 24
Kaela Rus (2) 13
Lakia Rus (2) 21
Asher Spaans (2) 2

Jacob Spaans 13
Levi Spaans (2) 2
Samuel Spaans (2) 3
Tessa Spaans (2) 8
Colin Ten Hove 27
Hannah-Jo Ten Hove 14
Almonzo Timmer (2) 3
Hunter Timmer (3) 29
Kadin Timmer (3) 29
Laurencia Timmer (3) 22
Sierra Timmer (3) 27
Wyatt Timmer (3) 26
Gerard Van Deuveren (3) 5
Hendrick Van Deuveren 8
Janetta Van Deuveren 1
Maurice Van Garderen (3) 34
Emmalyn Van Garderen (3) 36
Sadie Van Lagen 3
Alana Van Manen 3
Travis Van Manen 3
Kaiven Van Middendorp (2) 40
Konner Van Middendorp (2) 38
Brett Van Velthuisen (3) 16
Kason Van Velthuisen 16
Kenna Van Veldhuisen 1
Trent Van Velthuisen (3) 15
Ellie Van't Zelfde 15

David VanDeMoere (2) 5
Jake Vande Stouwe 13
Jonah Vande Stouwe 13
Joelle Vande Waerdt (2) 3
Wyatt Vande Waerdt (2) 24
Aubrey Vanden Berg (3) 19
Heidi Vandenberg (3) 34
Kristen Vandenberg (3) 21
Esther Vanden Broek (2) 20
Ian Vanden Broek 18
Shara Verhoef 17
Caleb Vogelaar (2) 16
Matthew Vogelaar (2) 18
Jayden Weeda (2) 24
Nathan Wesdyk (2) 30
Rebekah Wesdyk (2) 34
Josie Ymker 1
Julia Ymker 11
Lane Ymker 7

27 Bibles were sent to Bolivia this month. The total is now 651—thank you, boys and girls!

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

Administrators Needed

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

Relocation expenses and financial incentives will be discussed upon inquiry. For more information or to apply, please contact Tim Mol (education chairman) at 973-204-5677 or email timjmol@yahoo.com, or John Van Der Brink (administrator) at 973-628-7400 email nrcs_office@nrcsnj.org.

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

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!**

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, CHILLIWICK, 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.

NERIAH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL—The NRC branch in Calgary, Alberta, is working to establish a new Christian school, opening September 2023, D.V. We require a teacher/principal to help setup and teach in a small multi-grade elementary school. The candidate's tasks include: supplying input on school

structure, providing our children with a Christian education, maintaining relations with the school board, students, parents, and community, and performing administrative tasks. Applicants must be eligible for Alberta certification and be a member of the Netherlands Reformed congregations or a closely related denomination. To apply, or for more information, contact the school board president, Daniel Visser, at 403-554-1097 or at visser.daniel@outlook.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.

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.

From **THE BANNER OF TRUTH**
Publication Number (USPS 041-540)
11 Split Rock Road
Boonton Township, NJ 07005

Hungry, and Faint, and Poor

Hungry, and faint, and poor,
Behold us, LORD, again
Assembled at Thy mercies' door,
Thy bounty to obtain.

Thy Word invites us nigh,
Or we must starve indeed;
For we no money have to buy,
No righteousness to plead.

The food our spirits want
Thy hand alone can give;
Oh, hear the pray'r of faith, and grant
That we may eat and live.

—*John Newton*

the
Banner
of Truth

January 2023
Volume 89, No. 1

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