

# *the* **Banner** *of Truth*

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The Official Periodical  
of the Netherlands Reformed  
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at the End of the Year

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A Blessed Anticipation

*For our young readers...*

David Escapes from Saul

Cattle

*"This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." PSALM 118:24*



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## Meditation

### A Serious Admonishment at the End of the Year

Rev. J. den Hoed, Lynden, WA

***“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption”*** (Ephesians 4:30a).

Again, a year lies behind us—a year filled with blessings and sorrow but also full of God’s mercy and goodness. Is it not His goodness that we—compared to so many others who have been taken away by the cold hand of death—may still be in the day of grace? What a labor of love the Lord has bestowed upon us. How faithful He has been in admonishing us unto true conversion. Then, for one final time, He comes with a serious, loving admonishment: “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God” (Ephesians 4:30a).

What a wonderful but serious admonishment Paul sends to the congregation at Ephesus. “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” The Holy Spirit, true and eternal God, is the first to begin when a work of grace is made manifest from heaven. He comes to those dead bones who have never asked for God, saying, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead.” He is the last to be known in the life of spiritual pilgrims when they may come to know Him as the sealer of the salvation obtained by Christ.

In the first wonderful coming, the Holy Spirit comes to make His abode in a sinner’s heart, never to leave again. His sole objective is to make that sinner’s heart accessible for Christ. Upon that way His work is to uncover the sinner, laying bare his entire polluted life. Every garment is taken away which has been woven by the sinner’s hand. This is needed so that the righteousness obtained by Jesus Christ upon the cross for His people may become ever more desirable as the only garment that can cover their nakedness—that can clothe them in the sight of a holy and righteous God.

“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” You understand that with these words Paul addresses God’s people. That wonderful Spirit is a teacher in their life; that is His great office. We read in John 16:12&13a, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.”

There is no greater blessing than to have a teacher who bears with such a slow learner. How slow we are to learn. How much we must unlearn. We always think we know so much, but what a blessing when we may become as one who knows nothing and as one who hungers to be instructed concerning that only way unto salvation. May there be a

hunger so that the Holy Spirit may show the way unto the blood of the Saviour—a hunger to be brought there as a lost sinner, as an empty vessel. When the Spirit does that and then points to Christ, the Saviour becomes necessary, precious, and the One whom we cannot miss anymore. That work of the Spirit gives lively exercises in the heart of sinners. They are taught to bow their knees, saying, “Oh, Lord, may we come to know Him in His suffering and dying?” They there stretch forth their empty hands crying, “One drop of that precious blood is enough to cleanse my sins away.” With David they cry, “From the end of the earth will I cry unto Thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.” Paul is saying, “The Spirit seals unto me—that which is doubted so many times—that it, indeed, is God’s work in my heart.” The Spirit comes and seals in my life that the gateway opened in the blood of Christ is now also my way. Although it is so true that we ruin everything time and again, nevertheless, God is ever faithful and unchangeable.

Therefore, that redemption obtained by Jesus Christ is now waiting for the Church of God. Here below, the one may learn more of this than another. God is free, but one day all may know what it is, the day of redemption.

Now dear reader, do you know anything of the Spirit of God?

The world cannot receive Him. If you are of the world, you cannot receive Him. Do you know anything of the Spirit-making groanings within you which cannot be uttered? Nothing? Then dear reader, you miss the one Friend who can bring you and keep you upon the right way.

What does it mean to grieve the Spirit? We are told when Christ looked on Peter that Peter wept. We are not told what manner of look that was. Without a doubt it was a look full of love implying: did I deserve this, Peter? Have I been an enemy to thee, Peter? Have I offended thee, Peter? Peter went out and wept. He saw in the eyes of His Master a deep, sorrowful grief.

How do God’s people grieve the Spirit? By putting the Spirit’s work in the place of Christ. We become satisfied with a change in our life, satisfied with the knowledge of our misery, satisfied with our conversion. Oh, if the Spirit were a selfish Spirit, He would rejoice at this, but He is not a selfish Spirit; therefore, He is grieved. Notice what the office of the Spirit is; His office is to glorify the works of Christ. “He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine,

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and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you” (John 16:14&15). This is the office of the Spirit. He delights not to show Himself, but Christ.

Is that why it is so dark in God’s church and amongst God’s people today? We grieve the Spirit so much with being so satisfied with self. Is the Spirit grieved because the people in whom He dwells are so rich outside of knowing Jesus? We are seldom poor and needy. It is true, we have nothing of self; all things must be taught from above. What is the reason that there is so little teaching? Is it because we grieve the Spirit by the hardness of heart? “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” The great work of the Holy Spirit is to make God’s people holy. God promised in Ezekiel, “And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them” (Ezekiel 36:27).

Now, as long as by God’s grace His people may lean upon the Spirit of the Lord, He will be their faithful Guide. Why is it that those people always strike out on their own, leaning on and trusting their own understanding? What a wonder of God’s faithfulness when again they may fall with their face in the dust with the cry, “Show me Thy way, O Lord.” When we step forth in our own strength, leaning upon our own understanding, we grieve the Spirit. He is grieved when we do not follow His leadings. No, I do not mean that we can always understand His leadings. When He leads us by way of that dark and barren wilderness

where, by times, it is so dark, we groan, “Oh, Lord, this is a dark way. Speak only one word that I may hear it is Thy way.” When it is so barren that it causes groanings within, then the Spirit is leading. When He sees us run into temptation, He warns us, He touches your heart, and yet we go on. The Spirit is then grieved. He is grieved when we despise the ordinances of the Lord. Ordinances are the attendance of the preaching of His Word and the Holy Sacraments which have been given. They are the channels through which the Holy Spirit pours all blessings into the believing hearts.

Do you despise the ordinances by not bowing before them and accepting them as God’s hand that feeds His Church? Then you grieve the Spirit. Consider how in grieving the Holy Spirit you have lost your peace with God. No, I do not mean that all is well with the Church. We, as a people, need to be very concerned when we observe that the Lord holds His hand so still in the life of His dear people, when we miss so much of the growing in grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to be very concerned when we observe among and within ourselves the hardening of hearts. May it be given unto us what David had when he prayed, “And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.”

Have we grieved the Spirit? May we, then, by His grace come upon our knees confessing that we cannot miss Him on the journey to eternity. We need to stretch forth our empty hands, pleading, “Lord, prepare me to meet God in righteousness.” Soon He will fill that soul and leave nothing in it but Himself. It is a blessed day that awaits the people of the Lord, the day of their redemption. ◻



## *Bible Study*

### **The Names of the Mediator (1)**

*Rev. C. Neele (1962-2022) & Rev. A. Schot, Nunspeet, the Netherlands*  
(Translated from the 2010 issues of *De Saambinder*)

#### **Introduction**

One of the key questions in Rev. Hellenbroek’s question book is: “Wherein must the Mediator be known?” Many of us will know the answer: “In His names, in His offices, in His natures, in His states, in His benefits.” Often our thoughts are limited to the most familiar names of the Mediator, but did you know that there are as many as two hundred names for Christ in the Bible? The Lord willing, in this translated series, we want to define these names. (We will follow an English alphabetical order. So, in this way we will differ slightly from the order of the Dutch series).

You will understand that this is only a selection from the extensive list of names of the Mediator. Did we already come to that experiential knowledge of which Hellenbroek

speaks? “For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” It is the desire of both ministers who provided this rubric that His name may be glorified in our lives.

#### **Advocate**

*“And if any man sin, we have an **Advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous”* (1 John 2:1b).

John uses the Greek name Paraclete in his letter. The translators translated this as “Advocate.” The apostle speaks of the exalted Mediator. John also uses the name Paraclete in his gospel. There it is translated as “Comforter” and refers to the Holy Spirit. The root meaning of the word Paraclete is “one called alongside to help.” The Holy Spirit is at the

side of God's children to help and comfort, to encourage and strengthen them in the battle. He is the Paraclete in the heart, but God's people also have a Paraclete in heaven. That is Christ, and of Him John writes in his letter.

What comfort to those who have no strength, wisdom, and right to bring their case to God. They have an Advocate in heaven. Christ defends their case before the Father. He is the Intercessor for a people who have no rights. The marginal note refers to Romans 8:34: "Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." This Advocate is so necessary, for we have provoked the Father to anger through our sins. Christ continually displays His merits before the Father so that the Father would regard guilty sinners in His finished work. The Holy Spirit is an Advocate of consolation and Christ is an Advocate of reconciliation.

Has this become a miracle for you? By nature, we manage our own affairs and even think we can do so. It is painful and shocking when we find out that we are unable to plead one case with God. Then we remain alone, and who can exist before God? God is just and we must be silent. Christ steps forward and takes up our case. His name is "Advocate." He will perform that name for a people who must remain silent according to justice. What He speaks is always accepted by the Father. Christ will never leave nor forsake His people and inheritance.

—November 25, 2010, Rev. C. Neele

### Alpha and Omega

*"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last"* (Revelation 22:13).

May one discuss the names of the Mediator in the order of the alphabet? Yes, Christ Himself set the example in this.

From Him came the image of the alphabet. He compares Himself here to the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. If He may be compared to the first and last letter, that includes all the other letters. He is the beginning, the end, as well as everything in between. In my hometown there used to be a small store called A to Z. By this the shopkeeper wanted to say: here everything is available. In Christ everything can be found. He is the Alpha. Nothing precedes that first letter. Thus, Christ is the beginning. He has no beginning, but He is the beginning. He is the Alpha in His decree and in His work. He was first in the work of Creation. He is also first in the work of re-creation. He was first in interceding with His Father in eternity. He is also the first when He picks up a sinner. Many place the beginning of salvation in man, but such tarnish the name Alpha. He also remains first. That is a great lesson.

Christ is also the Omega. It does not say He has an end, but He is the end. He accomplishes the goal before Him. Paul says of Him, "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things." In the realm of Creation, Christ has the last word. He will soon come as Judge. He is also the Omega in the work of re-creation. He has promised His Church, "And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The poet could see that He is the Omega when he sang, "Yea, Thou wilt finish perfectly what Thou for me hast undertaken." What comfort this word must have been to John on Patmos. Often God's children cannot see it. As a small child must learn to read, so must God's people learn to spell His names, letter by letter. Only the teaching of the Spirit can teach that. Will He be the last in your life? Will He be the Omega for us? Then He must also be the Alpha.

—January 7, 2010, Rev. C. Neele

*(To be continued)*



## *From Our Inheritance*

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### **A Blessed Anticipation**

*Rev. J. van Haaren (1933-1983)*

*(Taken from the December 1978 issue of The Banner of Truth)*

*"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"* (2 Peter 3:13).

We are again at the beginning of a new year. What this year will bring us we do not know. What we do know is that one generation is coming while another is going. Perhaps there are some among us whose thread of life will be cut off this year. Perhaps you are among those for whom this year it will become eternity. After all, we do not know the day of our death. This applies not only to old or sick

people but also to young and strong people. Have we taken into account that our end might not be peace? No, we do not know what will happen to us this year. It is all determined by God's eternal counsel, but if we look at the circumstances, then we have difficult times ahead of us. How wretched are those who have to go through life alone, who have no Refuge or Helper.

On the other hand, may we not pay too much attention to circumstances, knowing that—in everything that happens—it is God who rules. May we therefore commend one

another to Him, that He may supply all our needs according to body and soul in glory. If we may look to Him and take refuge with Him, we need not be gloomy despite the darkness of the times. After all, there is expectation for God's Church. The Apostle Peter speaks of this blessed expectation in our text when he says: "Nevertheless we...look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Peter does not mean by these words that there will be new heavens and a new earth but that the heavens and earth will be *renewed*. God will recreate them. What will be new is that the heavens and earth will no longer be separate as they are now because of sin. After all, in Adam, we have torn ourselves loose from God. Because of this there has been a breach not only between God and us but also between the heavens and the earth. In heaven is a God who is wroth because of sin, and on the accursed earth is a hell-worthy sinner who cannot exist before God. Therefore, this earth has become a valley of tears. Yet, says Peter, it will become different. It will not remain as it is now. There will be "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Now the earth is full of unrighteousness and is inhabited by unrighteous people, but soon there will be no more sin or sinners.

Then the glory of Christ's Surety work will be seen. Surely, He is the Ladder of Jacob, which connects heaven and earth. It is He who not only bore the iniquity of His people and atoned for their sin but also acquired for them a righteousness valid before God so that they can dwell with God again and God with them. In this dispensation it is still only in part, but one day His people will be perfect in body and soul. Then the fear of God will rule all and everything, and that will never change. After all, righteousness will "dwell" there, which points to durability. There will be no more sin, nor will the consequences of sin be found there. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain" (Isaiah 11:9a). Then even "the mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness" (Psalm 72:3). Oh, who will be able to describe the salvation that awaits God's Church? It will be a salvation that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man" (1 Corinthians 2:9a). What a blessed expectation for those who have learned to hate sin and who have received a delight in God's law.

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One day they will no longer have to grieve because of the iniquities around them and in them. No wonder they yearn for it. Peter says: *We look for!* And looking for is quite different from *waiting*. It actually means to look forward to with longing (with anticipation and expectation). Yet, will they not be disappointed in this expectation? How many expectations are not fulfilled? It is true, but this expectation is well-founded. This ground is solid because it rests on God's promise. Peter says we look for it *according to His promise*.

It is a very old promise. Isaiah already spoke of it: "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isaiah 65:17). That promise was later confirmed to John. On Patmos he saw "...a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea" (Revelation 21:1). Oh, the expectation of God's Church rests on God's promise. Therefore, it does not disappoint. For it is not a promise of man, but of God, and He will not alter the thing that is gone out of His lips. No matter how the world mocks or how the doubting voices rant, a better portion is prepared for you.

Your salvation is dawning!

In view of this expectation, Peter goes on to say, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Peter 3:14). On the basis of this blessed expectation, he calls for a pious walk. It is as if he wants to say: if you may have this blessed expectation, let

this also be seen in your life. Let your conversation be in heaven to look for Christ for salvation. Then do not live as the heathens who are absorbed in the things of this age and only ask: what shall we eat, what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed? You do not need to be anxious. Your life is in God's hand. He will take care of you. If we believe this, then we may be thankful in prosperity, patient in adversity, and trusting concerning the future (Lord's Day 10). We will strive to win Christ and through Him taste that peace which passes all understanding and keeps your heart and mind. We shall put our affection on things above and find our delight in them, saying with Simeon, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation" (Luke 2:29&30). ▣

The knowledge of Christ is profound and large. All other sciences are but shadows; this is a boundless, bottomless ocean. Though something of Christ be unfolded in one age, and something in another, yet eternity itself cannot fully unfold Him.

—John Flavel

## From the Editor

# David's Prayer Standing upon the Threshold of a New Year

*"Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not"* (Psalm 17:5).

We, as *The Banner of Truth* Committee, want to wish for you, our readers, the Lord's indispensable blessing for this newly begun year. We do that by drawing your attention to the above-quoted Scripture verse. For a moment we ask you to glance back upon the year 2023 to see how swiftly it has passed away. In that year, we experienced the undeserved mercies of the Lord. In our congregations the Word of God continued to be the Lord's gift. For our young people there was the Christian education in many places. May the Lord bless this to their hearts.

We know that also sorrow was experienced. May the Lord remember those who mourn loved ones who have gone from time into eternity. May those empty places be a constant reminder to all of us that we do not have a continuing city here upon earth.

The year 2023 has come to an end. We, by the grace of God, stand upon the threshold of a new year. What the coming year will hold for us is unknown to us. For some of us it will be the year of our departure. Then the tree of our life will fall. Will it fall to the north or to the south? Where it falls it will lie forever. Seeing the solemnity of this, the earnest warning that lies in these words, the most important thing in our life is not that we may do well in the world but that by God's grace we may know something of the prayer of David, "Hold up my goings in Thy paths."

What a privileged person you may be when in this year your goings may be in His path. That is a path opened in and through the blood of Jesus. That will not always be an easy going, but that will be a going for

His account. Such a going has only one end, the eternal praise of Him who has upheld you.

"That my footsteps slip not." In this going, how many times we fear that our footsteps will slip away, but for the Lord's children, those footsteps can never again slip away from His paths. It is possible that we will stumble in the darkness of the night, but His promise is that those called out of darkness by free and sovereign grace, those gathered by divine love, will never walk alone. He, the eternal King of His Church, will uphold them. "That my footsteps slip not." How many footsteps have slipped away from sound doctrine in these days?

May the Lord bind us to His Word and by His almighty, gracious power continue to bless His Word—for young and old—unto the saving of our soul. This is the hope and prayer of our committee. In this year, may our *Banner of Truth* continue to have a place in your homes and your hearts. There are many who labor faithfully and selflessly to make this publication possible. Many are not named in the pages, but we wish for all of them the same as for our readers, the hope that He may continue to bless His Word unto the saving of their soul.

Through all the busyness of this fast-paced life, may the Lord give you the prayer of David. "Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." May He bless you with goings that are the work of His hands. Those goings lead from darkness to light, from self to Christ.

On behalf of *The Banner of Truth* Committee,  
Rev. J. den Hoed

## Divine Contentment

There was never any man or woman so contented as a self-denying man or woman. No one ever denied himself as much as Jesus Christ did. He gave His cheeks to the smiters; He opened not His mouth; He was as a lamb when He was led to the slaughter; He made no noise in the street. He denied Himself above all and was willing to empty Himself, so He was the most contented that ever any was in the world. The nearer we come to learning to deny ourselves as Christ did, the more contented shall we be, and by knowing much of our own vileness, we shall learn to

justify God. Whatever the Lord shall lay upon us, yet He is righteous, for He has to deal with a most wretched creature. A discontented heart is troubled because he has no more comfort, but a self-denying man rather wonders that he has as much as he has. "Oh," says the one, "I have but a little"; "Aye," says the man who has learned this lesson of self-denial, "but I rather wonder that God bestows upon me the liberty of breathing in the air, knowing how vile I am, and knowing how much sin the Lord sees in me." That is the way of contentment, by learning self-denial.

—Jeremiah Burroughs



## A Word in Season

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### Coming to Christ

Rev. G. Hoogerland, Kruiningen, the Netherlands

(Translated from *De Saambinder*, August 24, 2023)

Is the expression “coming to Christ” a scriptural expression? We believe it is. In God’s Word we read the invitation, the call to come to Christ.

We call the familiar words in which that invitation sounds, both the general, indefinite invitation as well as the addressed invitation. We think of Isaiah 45:22: “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” In John 7:37b, Jesus says, “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.” In Isaiah 55:1a it sounds, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.” Finally, we mention Revelation 22:17b: “And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

We also read in God’s Word that there are those who do come. We read in Jeremiah 31:9a, “They shall come with weeping, and with supplications I will lead them.” In the gospels we read it several times. The Canaanitish woman came to Jesus, as did the woman with the issue of blood, and the leper. In John 1:47a it says, “Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him.” Thus, the call, the invitation to come to Christ, does not remain unfruitful.

#### Elder Avinck

Now the question arises whether a person can just go to Jesus. To answer this question, we would like to let one of our ancient writers speak, Theodorus Avinck (1740-1782). Avinck was a friend and a student of Dr. Alexander Comrie. Avinck himself was not a minister, but an exhorter and elder in the city of Utrecht, Netherlands. His treatises are balanced and scriptural. Avinck wrote the following in his book *Practicale verhandelungen (Practical Treatises)*: “Will a poor lost sinner come to Christ, that is, believe in Him unto salvation, three things must be found in him. He must have a right to be allowed, power to be able, and an affection to want to come. If one of these three matters is lacking, no one will ever come to Christ; but if they all go together, then one will come immediately.”

As this godly writer elaborates on this, he shows that the right to come is given to the sinner by the external call, or sincere offer. This comes to all who live under the ministry of the gospel. Further, he writes: “Meanwhile the sinner is mortally impotent, therefore he cannot come.” Also, “The external calling must be accompanied by an internal and effectual calling. If this is lacking, the first is without fruit.” So, for the power to come, the wonder of regeneration is needed. Theodorus Avinck writes, “Man is wickedly

hostile, therefore he will not come, however earnestly and sincerely he may be called and invited.” In the sequel, he then shows “how man must be uncovered and stripped of everything before he will come to Christ.”

#### The right balance

What a responsible task the faithful preacher has. For if these three things are absolutely necessary, these three things will also have to be addressed and explained in the preaching. What a struggle it always is for the preacher to find the right balance.

If we preach only the broad invitation to Christ, then the danger is very great that the hearers will think they have to come in their own strength, with a natural faith. Thus, it is as we read in Matthew 7:22&23a: “Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you.” If we preach only the necessity of God’s work in regeneration and the way to Christ, then we deprive hearers of the emphasis of the responsibility and strengthen them in their passivity.

#### The zeal of a student

A student somewhere, full of zeal and fire in his “sermon,” had bound the responsibility on the people’s hearts and proved man’s unwillingness. In the consistory room, a fatherly elder shook his hand. That elder said, “I heartily agree with your sermon. The great miracle for me is, I did not want it either, but God wanted it.” The student always remained grateful to that elder. It helped him in his efforts to bring balanced preaching.

#### A spiritual infant

A troubled soul will say, “How can I ever come to Christ? My soul thirsts for Him, but I have no feet to go to Him.” Christ knows the desire of the thirsty soul, as a mother knows the desire of her infant. He knows of the inability, as a mother knows that her little one cannot come to her. Jesus acts like the mother who bends over her little weeping darling and says, “You come, my child.” She knows her child cannot, but as she says it, she reaches out her loving motherly hands, takes the child to herself, and puts it to her breast. This is how Jesus wants to deal with His spiritual infants. □





## Commentary

### The Man Born Blind (20)

Rev. H. de Leeuw, Brant County, ON

*“Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee...Lord, I believe” (John 9:37b&38b).*

The healed man has uttered his confession. “Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?” It has been heard by the Lord Jesus Himself. Now the time has come to reveal Himself to one of His. The time was appointed; the healed man was guided upon the way to Christ. The fruits of his healing could not save him, his healing could not either—the Person of the Mediator, He saves. He reveals Himself. The true Church will receive lessons in free and sovereign grace to know their Saviour. A great change, some outpouring of love, some remarkable dealings and deliverance are not saviours, dear reader. They are all too short for the guilt you have incurred to the justice of God. The Father has sent His Son to heal and to reveal Himself as who He is for His Church. The restoration of a sinner will not skip the justice of God. Under that justice God is a consuming fire. It is learned; it is experienced.

There I must also point to what is lacking nowadays in the churches, in the schools, and in our homes. So many are satisfied with remarkable changes and deliverances. So many have texts or passages that have become special. I warn you, dear reader, they are no ground for eternity. The arrow lies further. Why is it that there is so much rest outside of Christ in our days? Why is it that the leadings are missed of how under the justice of God this rest is declared in the Lord Jesus and that there the Father reveals His Son as the propitiation for the satisfaction of your sins, and how that His satisfaction becomes yours by faith? Many rest in the fruits of the love of God. Then be honest with your soul. When that sweetness of the fruit goes away, how stands your case with God? In true conversion the debt that has been incurred and not paid for becomes reality. The fruits of God’s love are sweet, but under the justice of God, the sweetness of the fruits of His love are consumed because it has not given a payment to His inflexible justice.

“Thou hast both seen Him...” Do you hear it? Christ makes everything true. Dear reader, the Mediator is true, and all His work is true. In all the struggles this man has, the true Messiah reveals Himself. The strife because of the

work of God in his life receives an answer in the revelation of the Person. Here the Lord confirms in the revelation of the Person that His work is true. Dear reader, because of the revelation of this Person, everything becomes new and true in this man’s life for Christ’s sake. He was healed for Christ’s sake; He was cast out for Christ’s sake; He was found by Christ for Christ’s sake. The reality of the matter being true receives an answer in the revelation of the Person.

“And it is He that talketh with thee.” This man receives an encounter with Immanuel. The two natures of Christ receive value for this man in how Christ reveals Himself. Christ assumed the human nature to heal the breach between God and his soul. Christ assumed the human nature to reveal Himself in the man’s place of being cast out. He comes to seek His wandering sons. Christ’s divine nature is the power in this miracle of his healing. He was healed for Christ’s sake. The Mediator reveals Himself as the one who sought him. “We love Him because He first loved us.” The wonder here cannot be accurately described! Christ was hidden but now associates with the once-blind man. Here the Mediator has fellowship with him who was cast out. Dear reader, you will never forget the place where Christ reveals Himself in his Person and associated with you as an outcast. That is a wonder so great!

The fruit is remarkable—faith! “Lord, I believe.” Faith is always a gift, and gifts always have substance. The substance of this gift of faith is Christ. That remains true for the whole Church of God. Here the man may be as a light post in the darkness through which God’s true people so often have to go. Their faith is brought low. The Substance hides Himself so long, but read it here for your comfort; the Gift of the Father becomes the object of the faith of this man at God’s time. The Bible is the Book that declares the life of His striving inheritance, and it proves here that His people are given to believe. True faith has substance. The object of their faith is the Messiah, Prince Immanuel. True faith gives union to God through Jesus Christ. May the Lord encourage His outcasts, His Zion who are not strangers to the strife for the satisfaction of His justice. It lies declared in the Person of the Mediator, “This is My beloved Son!” □

*(To be continued)*

Satan cannot deny but that great wonders have been wrought by prayer.  
As the spirit of prayer goes up, so his kingdom goes down.

—William Gurnall



## *For Young and Old*

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### **Never Leave Your Place Vacant**

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

(Taken from the book *Pastoral Letters* by Rev. W.C. Lamain)

Beloved Congregation,

**T**his time I should like to direct a personal word to the parents and the children of the congregation.

The regular catechism classes have again begun. May God's richest blessing rest upon the instructions which are being given. God's Word tells us so plainly: "Neither is Paul that planteth anything, neither Apollos that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." I hope all of us may be more deeply convinced of this so that in this respect, too, our eyes may be constantly lifted up unto the Lord.

We must often accuse ourselves of undertaking much in our own strength and of presenting our supplications so little at the throne of grace. May we be given hearts to seek the Lord most earnestly, imploring Him if it may please Him to be mindful of and to visit His Church.

The older the world gets, the craftier and more hostile Satan becomes. New things are being invented continually; thus, new ways are opened whereby especially the rising generation is drawn away from the truths of the Bible. On the one hand, the world's power to entice is so great that it numbers its victims by the thousands. Even some who profess religion are also induced to sacrifice their valuable time to the Moloch of this world. What must become of such families if the parents take the lead in walking in the paths of unrighteousness? "Food and frolic," that was the cry of the ancient Romans. Alas! this is no different in our day. It is plainly evident that the world and the powers of hell are conspiring to take away any remaining impressions regarding death and eternity from the consciences of the children of men. It is my heartfelt wish that God will open the eyes of the rising generation and also the eyes of the older ones for the great dangers which are threatening us from all sides.

On the other hand, we find a spirit of superficiality in which man sets himself at rest for eternity. Everywhere you hear, "Peace, peace and safety." Satan not only walks about as a roaring lion according to 1 Peter 5:8 but also appears as an angel of light to delude souls for eternity.

Many are offended at the ancient and tried doctrines of truth. They do not hesitate to say that they have found a much easier way to be saved than the way which our worthy fathers taught us in accordance with the Word of Truth. Thousands upon thousands are deceived for eternity, which is what poor mortal man wants, too, unless he is made honest.

Parents and children, I most earnestly request your cooperation. Do not stay away from the means of grace.

Never leave your place vacant in the house of God, neither on the Lord's Day nor during the week when an opportunity is given. It will testify against us in eternity if we count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing and resist the Spirit of God.

Parents, stir up your children to attend catechism regularly. See to it that they learn the questions and tell them what a serious matter this is. Boys and girls, only one hour during the whole week you are taught the doctrine of truth by me, as the means in God's hand. Oh, do spend this time wisely, and do not pass up the opportunity given you to learn these things. The world passes away, and the lust thereof, but he that does the will of God abides (or lives) forever.

Try hard to learn about the truths which the Bible teaches and ask the Lord to help you understand. Above all, ask Him to bless the truth to your heart, to your eternal welfare. The Lord still blesses us in so many ways, as we live in this world which is sinking away in sin. There are promises in the Bible in Psalm 72 that God's name shall be continued as long as the sun and the moon endure and that there shall be children who shall fear God throughout all generations.

What great happiness would it create if the work of God were again in evidence! Since an opportunity will be given to attend confession class, let those be sure to attend who are of age as well as those who are already married but who have never made public confession. It is most proper to do this because it is ordained by God Himself.

During the coming winter months, I again wish to gather with those who have already made public confession, to discuss the fundamental doctrines of truth with them. The Lord has supported and assisted me thus far in the use of the English language. I hope to put forth my efforts again this winter, and it will please me very much if many of you will manifest an interest in the study of the Word of God. The length of time, whether short or long, that I shall be permitted to labor among you is known to the Lord alone. However, I desire to devote myself to you, through the power and grace of God. You, then, do likewise.

The Lord grant that I may labor among you joyfully and count me worthy to honor His name, not only to have an eye to His glory but also to seek your true happiness. In pious as well as wicked ways, onslaughts are made upon the Church of God. May Christ, the King of Zion, protect her, extend her borders, and strengthen her members, to His glory and honor.

Accept the heartiest greetings from him who seeks your soul's welfare,

*Your minister, Rev. W.C. Lamain* □



## Questions & Answers

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### Questions from Our Readers

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

***Wulfert Floor writes that God waits for a people that abandons the world and its lusts. He waits for a people that reject their own self-righteousness. Some people will say that God does not wait because all things happen at His time. They argue that by saying “God waits” we minimize who He is. Can you explain?***

The answer to this question is not as difficult as it sounds. There are many examples in Scripture which speak of the Lord in such a way that God, as it were, adapts His revelation to our finite, human understanding. As a matter of fact, the Bible is full of such a form of speech concerning divine revelation. Therefore, we read, for instance, of His eyes, ears, hands, and other corporal members which are ascribed to the divine Being. Rev. Hellenbroek in his question booklet answers that “all this must be figuratively understood of such properties of God as bear some resemblance to the use of those human members” (Chapter III, Question 2). How condescending is the Lord that He is pleased to reveal Himself in this way; otherwise, no human being would ever begin to even understand, let alone comprehend the very revelation of God concerning man’s need for salvation.

I believe the same principal applies to expressions as “God’s waiting” (Isaiah 30:18) or “God’s delay, or tarrying” (Psalm 70:5 & Matthew 24:48) or God answering “speedily” (Luke 18:8). Of course, there is in God no conflict between

the decree of His counsel and the executing of the same, let alone that there would be a delay. Neither is there in Him any succession of time, for in the divine Essence there is an eternal “now” or “present,” for example, from everlasting to everlasting He is God, and one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day (see Psalm 90:2 & 2 Peter 3:8). Hence, I believe it is fully scriptural to speak of God’s waiting or delaying the revelation in both judgment and the showing of mercy. In no way does this minimize who He is.

On the contrary, I believe it reveals who He is! Rev. Kersten explains beautifully in his *Reformed Dogmatics* about the longsuffering of God that it is His goodness whereby He, as it were, postpones the deserved punishment. He then quotes Isaiah 48:9: “*For My name’s sake will I defer Mine anger, and for My praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.*” Dear reader, is that not a delay? Is that not the time of His grace and mercy when He so mercifully extends to sinners His Word and revealed will? Is that not a waiting of the Lord, a delay, my friend, when the Lord still calls and invites sinners to repentance, and waits to be gracious? It is during this “waiting time” of the Lord that God Himself invites and beseeches the sinner by His Word: “*Be ye reconciled to God*” (2 Corinthians 6:2). ◻

Send your questions to: Rev. H. Hofman, 2339 Deer Trail Dr. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505, or [hofman@premieronline.net](mailto:hofman@premieronline.net).

### Obedience

It is not enough to hear God’s voice, but we must obey. Obedience is a part of the honour we owe to God. “If then I be a Father, where is my honour?” (Malachi 1:6). Obedience carries in it the life-blood of religion. “Obey the voice of the Lord God,” and do His commandments. Obedience without knowledge is blind, and knowledge without obedience is lame. Rachel was fair to look upon but being barren said, “Give me children, or I die”; so if knowledge does not bring forth the child of obedience it will die. “To obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Samuel 15:22). Saul thought it was enough for him to offer sacrifices though he disobeyed God’s command, but “to obey is better than sacrifice.” God disclaims sacrifice if obedience be wanting. “I spake not unto your fathers concerning burnt offerings, but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey My voice” (Jeremiah 7:22). Not that God did enjoin those religious rites of worship, but the meaning is that He looked chiefly for obedience—without which sacrifice was but devout folly. The end why God has given us His laws is obedience. “Ye shall do My judgments, and keep Mine ordinances” (Leviticus 18:4). Why does a king publish an edict but that it may be observed?

—Thomas Watson



## Reflections

### Evening Twilight (1)

Rev. P. Blok (1920-2019)

(Translated from the book *Avondschemering* [*Evening Twilight*])

#### The Evening Twilight of Life

*“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever”* (1 John 2:17).

In the evening twilight of a world which is sinking away, we hear the footsteps of Zion’s triumphant King. In the evening twilight of one’s own life, we contemplate how it was, how life reveals itself, and that the end is coming. “My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass.”

In nature, when the sun sets, the shadows stretch long. They teach a lesson about life. Night is coming. How will it be then?

Do we see the evening twilight in this world which is sinking away? Do we then see the evening twilight in the visible church? Do we see the evening twilight in the life of the living Church? Do we see the evening twilight in our personal life?

How was natural life in the morning twilight? The light of life was given. The characteristics of life could not remain hidden. How was life under the general light of the revelation of God? How was life under the light of the special revelation of God? It is also necessary to consider the lives of those to whom—out of the darkness of the state of death—the light of grace was given. “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me.” In the evening twilight of one’s own life, thoughts multiply. In order to be able to look into the thoughts of God, the light of the Holy Spirit is indispensable. Only then the true knowledge of God—His Word and salvation as it is in Christ—is learned. All natural knowledge is incapable of this. All contemplation wanders in darkness. Jesus’ lesson to Nicodemus is clear. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” How will it be in the evening twilight of a world which is sinking away? He is coming to judge the earth. The signs of His final judgment are pointed out

as in the answer to the question of His troubled disciples. “And as He sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Many signs are given in His answer. One of these is very special indeed. “But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so, shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

Sinful man lives a life without God. In all areas of life, the thought of God and His holy service has disappeared. Man is without God in the world. The second sign is evidence that the evening shadows are lengthening. “Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.”

It is dark on earth. Unnatural sins are committed. Sin as sin is despised. The God of the law and the demand of the law are rejected by sinful man. Yet the evening twilight casts its shadow even longer; it is almost night. Of this Jesus spoke. “I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.” “But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.”

How will it be then? The Apostle Paul wrote about this to his spiritual son Timothy. “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”

This is what we want to consider more in the evening twilight of life. There is a lesson to be learned. “Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.”

*Lord, thro’ all the generations  
Of the children of our race,  
In our fears and tribulations,  
Thou hast been our dwelling-place.  
Ere the vast and wide creation  
By Thy word was caused to be,  
Or the mountains held their station,  
Thou art God eternally.*

—Psalter 244:1 □

(To be continued)



## Current Events

### Parental Rights Continue to Win

Among other things, New Jersey (NJ) Policy 5756 reads, “There is no affirmative duty for any school district personnel to notify a student’s parent or guardian of the student’s gender identity or expression.”

The NJ Attorney General’s office stated before a NJ Superior Court Judge that the Transgender Student Guidelines (Policy 5756) is not a mandatory policy, and public-school boards were [never] required to adopt it when the Department of Education released the Guidance. Based upon this, school boards across the state have been empowered by parents to effectively repeal this anti-parent policy. The NJ Family Policy Center (NJFPC) reports that Colts Neck, Hanover, Holmdel, Howell, Kinnelon, Lacey, Lafayette, Millstone, Sparta, and Sussex-Wantage school boards have successfully repealed the policy in the last months. Recently another NJ school board repealed this policy. Freehold is now added to this extraordinary list, as they repealed the policy on November 14. A NJFPC representative urges parents to make sure their school board is next. He said, “I am greatly encouraged about the future of the parental rights movement in New Jersey.” —NJFPC.org

### Study Found Births Rose Post-Roe v. Wade

Since *Roe v. Wade* was overturned in June 2022, at least 30,000 babies have been born that would have otherwise been aborted, according to a new study. The 32,000 babies were born in states that enacted some new form of abortion restriction. The study says, “Our primary analysis indicates that in the first six months of 2023, births rose by an average of 2.3 percent in states enforcing total abortion bans compared to a control group of states where abortion rights remained protected.”

The trio of researchers said the shift represented the “most profound transformation of the landscape of United States (US) abortion access in fifty years.” The president of Students for Life of America said that the research indicated a “triumph that pro-life policies result in lives saved.”

—FoxNews.com

### One in Four Countries Restrict Religious Conversion

To share your faith—or change it to another—first check your citizenship. The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has released a new report on anti-conversion laws around the world. The report notes that one in four nations (forty-six total) restrict the right of its people to either adopt or propagate a religion. “The right to convert from one religion or belief to another, or to no religion or belief at all, is central to [the] protection for religious freedom,” said a USCIRF commissioner. “In countries with anti-conversion laws, religious minorities tend to be broadly targeted for harassment, assault, arrest, and imprisonment.” She cited the example of a pastor sentenced by Nepal to one year in prison for allegedly attempting to convert Hindus to Christianity. Recently in India, nine Christians were arrested for allegedly evangelizing the poor, in Iran one hundred six Christians were arrested for their religious beliefs, in Libya an American Christian was arrested for alleged missionary activity, in Morocco it is illegal to

cause a Muslim to question his or her religion. Given the demographics in the offending nations, Christians bear the brunt of these discriminatory practices. Believers are urged to find creative ways to share their faith, to boldly support gospel preaching in restrictive nations, and to pray for those imprisoned for converting to Christianity.

—ChristianityToday.com

### Advent Sunday Bombing in Philippines

Four Christians were killed and fifty-four others were injured in a bomb attack during an Advent Sunday service at a university in the Philippines on December 3. Most of those killed or injured were students attending a Catholic service that was being held in the gym at a university located in Mindanao, in the south of the country. A group affiliated to Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack. An Armed Forces Chief said he suspected the bombing could be retaliation for recent military operations against local pro-Islamic State extremist groups in that southern region. Several militants were killed in these operations. Another chief said: “As we speak, there is an ongoing massive operation to hunt these terrorist groups or suspected perpetrators of the bombing.” A police chief later said they had identified persons of interest. The Philippines is over eighty percent Christian, predominantly Catholic, but the southern part of the Mindanao Island group has a significant Muslim population and is home to violent extremist groups that have been fighting for an independent Islamic state for over forty years. Christian converts from Islam in Mindanao face pressure from family and community.

—ChurchInChains.ie

### Mob Attacked a Christian Community in Central India

Several congregants were injured, including two critically, after a violent mob attacked a Christian community in Chhattisgarh, India. The attack was conducted by a group of radical Hindu nationalists, who stormed into an active church service on a Sunday morning. Mob participants carried weapons into the service, seemingly determined to leave as much property damage and personal injury in their wake as possible. The pastor has been serving this congregation for many years and the violence and pressure from Hindu nationalists to stop hosting worship services are not new to him. The same pressure has been mounting for other congregations in the area as well. A Christian leader from the area said, “As the pro-Hindu political party returns to the government in the state in the recent elections, Christians are worried.” A written complaint was made to authorities after the most recent attack, but the complaint was not even registered. No action was taken against the aggressors. Unfortunately, this lack of attention is commonplace in India’s current political state. In 2023, there have been more than 143 incidents of violence against Christians in Chhattisgarh, with more than 35 incidents of social boycotting and 20 incidents of not allowing Christians to bury the dead bodies of their family members. Chhattisgarh ranked second in the most persecuted states in India after Uttar Pradesh.

—Persecution.org

Our confidence in Christ does not make us lazy, negligent, or careless, but, on the contrary, it awakens us, urges us on, and makes us active in living righteous lives and doing good. There is no self-confidence to compare with this.

—Ulrich Zwingli



# Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

## **The Confession of Faith** (49) **Article XXXVI: Of Magistrates** *(continued)*

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

We ended the first article about the magistrates with emphasizing that the government has a task in punishing sin and that murderers are to die according to God's special commandment. It is not only the calling of the government to make certain that justice is maintained, but this article also speaks of another calling of the government, one which is generally not so readily accepted. It reads, "And their office is, not only to have regard unto and watch for the welfare of the civil state, but also that they protect the sacred ministry, and thus may remove and prevent all idolatry and false worship; that the kingdom of anti-Christ may be thus destroyed and the kingdom of Christ promoted."

This is a stumbling block for many, and therefore the Christian Reformed Church removed this portion from the confession, thinking to be wiser than our fathers at Dort. Our fathers knew very well that the theocracy no longer existed, since this had come to an end at the destruction of Jerusalem. However, think of the God-fearing kings of Israel who protected true religion and were greatly blessed by the Lord; we can mention David, Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah as among those who have shown their zeal for the service of the Lord. Remember also the fifth commandment, which is not only applicable to the relationships in the families but can also be applied to the nations. When there is subjection to the government which rules according to God's Word, the Lord promises His favor.

It is true that the national form of the covenant has come to an end; however, the covenant did not change but is now the ecclesiastical form for the church. The form of Israel fell away, but the essence of the demand remained. The government has the duty to provide for the honor of God's name, His day and His service; everything which goes against this must be punished. Unbelief and false teachings are sins just as well as is stealing; they are even the

greater sins, and therefore are listed as being the duty of the government to prevent them.

At the 177th session of the Synod of Dort, the deputies asked the government not to give any public office to Roman Catholic priests. This was not persecution since our fathers have always spoken out for the freedom of the conscience, but the honor of God and the welfare of the country made it a necessity for the government to act in such a way. Article 36 expresses what God's Word requires of the government, but it is also applicable to each of us personally. True religion must be maintained, protected, and restored when necessary.

We live at a time when the rights of man are of greater value than the rights of God's Law; therefore there is no longer place given for that "intolerant article 36," as it is sometimes called. Did this so-called freedom bring real happiness? No, the judgments of the Lord are multiplying, and the patience of the Lord with this rebellious world (government and church included) is coming to an end. The countries which depart from God's institutions (and this is quite general) make themselves ripe for destruction.

The Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in South Africa made a decision in 1949 that there was no reason to change this article and omit part of it. Let us not forget that the God-fearing kings of the Old Testament times were praised by the Lord when they destroyed the idols. We do not advocate that those who do not keep the Sabbath should be killed; no, the Lord Himself has given us the parable of the tares in the field. These tares were not to be rooted up immediately but at harvest time, meaning at the end of the world. The confession points to the destruction of idols and false religions, not to the persons themselves. It is the duty of the government to take care that the whole Law of God is kept. This means not only the second table of it but also the first table.

This article speaks not only about the calling of the government but also the calling of the subjects. We should obey them providing they do not go against God's Word; if something is required contrary to the Word of God, we may refuse or protest in that matter but must not be disobedient in everything as is sometimes advocated. They say, "The government is not acting according to the law, and therefore we will no longer pay taxes"; this has nothing to do with the matter and is only self-love. It is expressly stated, "to pay tribute, to show due honor and respect to them, and to obey them in all things which are not repugnant to the Word of God."

Should we not pray for our government, asking the Lord to give them wisdom to rule according to His will but also to give us men who fear the Lord? The times are difficult, also for the government, and this makes it even more urgent that we pray for them. In visiting the congregations and families, we so seldom hear that there is prayer for our country and government, and this is a bad sign.

When the Lord no longer gives prayer for country and government, it is to be feared that He is withdrawing Himself from such a country. May the Lord give a prayer to pray unto Him, for He is the only One who can bring a change.

It cannot be denied that there are manifold sins in our days, perhaps as never before. This should bring us on our knees before the Lord to beg that He may cause us to return unto Him. We hope that the coming year, D.V., may become a year in which we need the Lord in all our ways. The Lord has promised, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

When we truly subject ourselves to the Lord, we will do the same to our parents and to the government, as these are placed over us by the Lord Himself. In speaking about the fifth commandment, Paul has pointed out that it is the first commandment with a promise. In the keeping of God's commandment there is great reward.



## *Bible Stories for Little Ones*

### **David Escapes from Saul**

(Based on 1 Samuel 19)

Saul had given orders—David must be killed! He told his son Jonathan and the servants that they **MUST** kill him, no matter what, but Jonathan loved David. He didn't want him killed. Some friends will leave you when danger comes, but Jonathan would not leave David. He ran to tell David the news.

"Oh, David, my father wants to kill you!" he cried. "Hide yourself until tomorrow, and I'll try to talk to my father. I'll let you know what happens."

The next morning Jonathan talked to Saul. "Oh, Father, why do you want to kill David?" he asked. "He's never done anything to hurt you. In fact, look at how he killed the giant Goliath for you. He could have been killed himself, but he went into battle just for you. Because of him, God was on our side; you have no reason to kill him."

Saul was so moved when he heard Jonathan's words that he swore an oath and promised, "As the Lord lives, David will not be killed."

Now, any promise or oath must always be kept. Saul had just made an oath, but do you think he kept

it? No, he did not. Not too long after that, David played his harp for Saul in the palace. The evil spirit which sometimes bothered Saul had come upon him again. Terrible jealousy and anger boiled in him, and he thrust his spear at David as he had done before.

Saul, why did you do that? The Israelites had just fought the Philistines, and David had destroyed many of them for you. Why should you think evil of him? Listen—God had allowed an evil spirit to come into Saul. The evil spirit was from Satan, the king of the devils. Satan did not want David to be king; he did not want David to live. If he could get David out of the way, then Jesus Christ would not be born later.

That's what the devil thought, but God is greater than the devils, and He kept David safe. David escaped from the palace and hid at his home. However, Saul wasn't going to let him go that easily. He sent his men to David's house, and they surrounded it. All through the night they watched the doors, waiting—waiting for David. They knew he'd have to come out sometime.

David's wife, Michal, helped him to escape. She told him, "If you don't leave tonight, then tomorrow you will surely be killed." She let him down through a window. As soon as David had escaped, Michal put an image in his bed and covered it with blankets to make it look like a person.

All night Saul's men guarded the house. Finally, morning came. Then they went to Michal's door. "We want David," they cried. "We have come to arrest him."

Michal told them, "He is sick." So, the men returned to Saul.

Soon they were back. "No, Saul said we **MUST** take him with us," they told her, pushing into the house, "even if we have to carry him in the bed."

The men stomped across the room, stormed into the bedroom—and there was David. No, wait, that wasn't David. That was only an image covered with blankets. David had escaped right before their eyes.

Saul was furious when he heard how his own daughter had tricked him. David had escaped from him again, but then his spies sent him a message. "David is hiding by the prophet Samuel."

"Go capture him," ordered Saul.

Near Samuel's house was a house of prophets. As Saul's men came near to Samuel's house, they saw Samuel with a company of the prophets, who

were full of the Spirit of the Lord and speaking wonderful things. Then—suddenly—what happened? These men, the messengers of Saul, began prophesying, too, just like the prophets.

Saul learned what had happened and sent more men, but the Spirit of God also came upon them, and they, too, prophesied. Again, the **THIRD** time Saul sent men after David, but they began prophesying as well.

Saul became angry and decided to go himself. Off he went to Samuel's house, and what happened? Yes, Saul, too, began prophesying, and he forgot about David. We don't know what these men spoke about when they prophesied because the Bible doesn't tell us this. Whatever it was, we certainly can see that this was God's way of protecting David. David was able to escape from Samuel's house.

We can read David's prayer at that time in Psalm 59: "Deliver me from mine enemies...and save me from bloody men," he prayed. "For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me: not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O Lord." In such moments David looked to God to protect him. He said, "I wait upon Thee, for God is my defense." When he was delivered, God would receive all the honor, for he added, "But I will sing of Thy power...for Thou hast been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble."



## Bible Quiz

### Cattle

Dear Boys and Girls,

Many animals mentioned in the Bible are very useful. Think of horses used in battle, camels to travel through deserts, and donkeys to carry packs or people. Cows are also mentioned in the Bible. They were made "after their kind...and God saw that it was good." Why were they created? Man had been given many fruits and plants to eat, but the cows would eat the grass. Grass was not something man could eat; it was of lower quality, but cows could convert all this pasture and forage it into milk and meat.

It says in the psalms that the Lord owns "the cattle upon a thousand hills." Everything belongs to

Him, also the cattle. When He made the cattle, He also made the places where they could graze. Often, this land is not suitable for building houses, but it is suitable for the cattle. For each animal that was created, God provided a perfect habitat in which it could eat and survive.

When Pharaoh of Egypt dreamed about the thin cows swallowing the fat cows, it portrayed lack of food. When there was no rain, the cows grew thin and bellowed in the dry pastures; when the plagues in Egypt killed their cattle, the Egyptians suffered great losses. Cattle were very, very important. When they died from famine or plagues, poverty threatened to overtake the people.



We often think we have rights to all that we have because we own it. However, if God owns the cattle, and if God was able to send His judgments so easily by reducing the cattle in a land so that poverty struck, isn't this so with everything that belongs to us, too? God gave us all that we have; we have no rights that secure these things so that we can say, "This is all mine."

We should be thankful for all the Lord gives us to use, all that He gives us to sustain our life. We can take all this for granted. We also may not just do as we please with all that we have, and if we have less than others, then we still have so much to be thankful for. Even a beggar on the street still has things to be thankful for. How about you? You have much more than a beggar—are you thankful for it? With all that you have, do you not need anything MORE? Yes...each of us needs one thing MUCH more than anything else, but we do not realize it unless the Lord shows us. We need the "one thing needful," which is a new heart. Ask the Lord for this every day.

\* \* \* \* \*

B E B W S T R I F E S S E T T  
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 G T T A W R S S F D L S U S A

Complete the verses following. Then find your answers in the wordsearch. Some words can be found more than once!

1. The Lord says in Psalm 50, "For every \_\_\_\_\_ of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills."

2. When God created animals, He "made the beast of the earth after his kind, and \_\_\_\_\_ after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good."

3. One task Adam had was to name all the animals created in paradise. "And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the air, and to every beast of the field."

4. After Satan had entered the serpent in paradise and had tempted Eve, the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon they belly shalt thou go, and \_\_\_\_\_ shalt thou eat all the days of thy life."

5. In the generations listed in Genesis 4, we read of Jabal. "He was the father of such as dwell in \_\_\_\_\_, and of such as have cattle."

6. When the great flood covered the earth, "every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the \_\_\_\_\_, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark."

7. Noah had been instructed to preserve several of each animal by letting them into the ark. "And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the \_\_\_\_\_ asswaged."

8. We know that Abraham was very rich because in Genesis 13 we read that he "was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in \_\_\_\_\_."

9. The men who took care of the cattle of Abram and of Lot did not get along. "And there was a \_\_\_\_\_ between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land."

10. Jacob speaks to the men watering the flocks (Genesis 29). "And he said, Lo, it is yet high day, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together: \_\_\_\_\_ ye the sheep, and go and feed them."

### For the Older Children

11. All of creation has been made to praise God. We read of this in Psalm 148. In which verse do we read of cattle? \_\_\_\_\_

12. In Psalm 107 we read of God's care over the cattle. He "suffereth not their (the Israelites) cattle to \_\_\_\_\_."

13. Unscramble the letters in parentheses to form the correct words.

“And as for you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I judge between cattle and \_\_\_\_\_ (aletct), between the rams and the he goats.”

“And should not I \_\_\_\_\_ (rpase) Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?”

“But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the \_\_\_\_\_ (difel), Go and sit down to meat?”

14. In the following verses, which one speaks of cattle as:

- A. Burnt offerings
- B. Spoil of war
- C. Wages earned
- D. Occupation
- E. riches

- 1 Samuel 30:20 \_\_\_\_\_
- Isaiah 43:23 \_\_\_\_\_
- Genesis 30:32 \_\_\_\_\_
- Genesis 36:7 \_\_\_\_\_
- Genesis 46:32 \_\_\_\_\_

15. In Genesis 33, we read how Jacob was careful with his flocks and cattle. What did he tell Esau?

16. In which chapter of Isaiah do we read, “And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep”? \_\_\_\_\_

### For the Younger Children

17. Read about the ten plagues in Exodus 9:6. How many cows died in Egypt? \_\_\_\_\_ How many cows died of the Israelites? \_\_\_\_\_

18. Read Exodus 9:19. What was going to kill the cows if they were not put into the barns? \_\_\_\_\_

19. Read Psalm 104:14. What does God make to grow for the cows to eat? \_\_\_\_\_

20. Read Isaiah 30:23 and Joel 1:18. What do cows need in order to feed and not go hungry? A large \_\_\_\_\_

21. Read John 4:12. Where did Jacob, and other men, get water for their cows to drink? \_\_\_\_\_

Please send your answers to the address shown below:

Aunt LenaBeth  
180 Jacobs Road, Newfoundland, NJ 07435  
E-mail: [auntlenabeth@gmail.com](mailto:auntlenabeth@gmail.com)

Answers to December’s “Pits” quiz:

- |   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. Job 33:24                            |                    |
| 2. Hell                                 | Revelation 9:1     |
| 3. A hole in the ground                 | 1 Chronicles 11:22 |
| 4. Sadness and despair                  | Psalms 30:9        |
| 5. Temptation and trouble from enemies  | Psalms 35:7        |
| 6. Dungeon                              | Jeremiah 41:7      |
| 7. Life                                 | Job 33:28          |
| 8. Living                               | Job 33:30          |
| 9. Rock                                 | Psalms 28:1        |
| 10. Grave                               | Psalms 30:3        |
| 11. Clay                                | Psalms 40:2        |
| 12. Destruction                         | Psalms 55:23       |
| 13. Midst                               | Psalms 57:6        |
| 14. Mouth                               | Psalms 69:15       |
| 15. Strength                            | Psalms 88:4        |
| 16. Darkness                            | Psalms 88:6        |
| 17. Proud                               | Psalms 119:85      |
| 18. Spirit                              | Psalms 143:7       |
| 19. a. Exodus 21:34                     |                    |
| b. Matthew 12:11                        |                    |
| 20. a. Houses                           |                    |
| b. Snares                               | Jeremiah 18:22     |
| 21. The dungeon of Malchiah             | Jeremiah 38:6      |
| 22. A pit in Dothan with no water in it | Genesis 37:20      |

\* \* \* \* \*

Answers to previous quizzes were received in November from:

- |                    |                      |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Brianna Aleman     | Jarynne Knibbe       | Jeremy Spaans (2)    |
| Erin Aleman        | Sienna Knibbe (5)    | Jacob Spaans         |
| Esther Bakker      | Whitney Knibbe (3)   | Micah Spaans         |
| Britni Blom        | Elizabeth Kooyma (2) | Tessa Spaans         |
| GaryJon Blom       | Jacob Kooyma (2)     | Hannah-Jo Ten Hove   |
| Jenina Blom (2)    | Krysten Kooyma (2)   | Emmalyn Van Garderen |
| Lawrence Blom (2)  | Abraham Mol          | Konner VanMiddendorp |
| Christina Blom     | Madeline Mol         | Kaiven VanMiddendorp |
| Martha Blom        | Olivia Mol           | Alivia Vande Hoef    |
| Joseph Blom        | Teddy Mol            | Micah Vande Hoef     |
| Martena Blom       | John Murphy (2)      | Aubrey Vanden Berg   |
| Tiffany Blom       | Andrew Murphy        | Ava Vanden Berg      |
| Willem Blom        | Blake Pannekoek      | Heidi Vanden Berg    |
| Kyle Bouman (4)    | Lauren Pannekoek     | Kristen Vanden Berg  |
| Aryanna Breeweg    | Andrew Remijn        | Shara Verhoef        |
| Carly Brouwer (2)  | Daniel Remijn        | Caleb Vogelaar (2)   |
| Derek Brouwer (2)  | Lauren Remijn        | Matthew Vogelaar (2) |
| Thomas Brouwer (2) | Colin Rozeboom       | Jayden Weeda (2)     |
| Jackson Dendekker  | Nevaeh Rozeboom      | Nathan Wesdyk (2)    |
| Cody Driesen (2)   | Kaela Rus            | Rebekah Wesdyk (2)   |
| Ethan Driesen (2)  | Lakia Rus            | Allyson Ymker (2)    |
| Jordan Driesse     | Naomi Schelling (2)  |                      |
| Kailyn Driesse     | Brogan Spaans        |                      |
| Lindsey Driesse    |                      |                      |
| Cody Driessen      |                      |                      |
| Ethan Driessen     |                      |                      |
| Allison Ekema (2)  |                      |                      |
| Kaylynn Ekema (2)  |                      |                      |
| Kate Hoogendoorn   |                      |                      |
| Anthony Knibbe (3) |                      |                      |
| Ashley Knibbe      |                      |                      |
| Donovan Knibbe     |                      |                      |

Welcome to our new member:

Naomi Schelling

Love,  
Aunt LenaBeth



# The Happy Little Girl

J.C. Ryle (1816-1900)

Dear Children,

Would you like to know who was the happiest child I ever saw? Listen to me, and I will tell you.

The happiest child I ever saw was a little girl whom I once met traveling in a railway carriage. We were both going on a journey to London, and we traveled a great many miles together. She was only eight years old, and she was blind. She had never been able to see at all. She had never seen the sun, and the stars, and the sky, and the grass, and the flowers, and the trees, and the birds, and all those pleasant things which you see every day of your lives; but still she was quite happy.

She was by herself, poor little thing. She had no friends or relations to take care of her on the journey, and be good to her; but she was quite happy and content. She said when she got into the carriage, "Tell me how many people there are in the carriage. I am quite blind and can see nothing." A gentleman asked her if she was afraid? "No," she said, "I am not frightened; I have traveled before and I trust in God, and people are always very good to me."

But I soon found out the reason why she was so happy. What do you think it was? She loved Jesus Christ because He first loved her; she had sought Jesus Christ, and she had found Him.

I began to talk to her about the Bible. I soon saw that she knew a great deal of it. She went to a school where the teacher used to read the Bible to her. She was a good girl and had remembered what her teacher had read.

Dear children, you cannot think how many things in the Bible this poor little blind girl knew. I only wish that every grown up person in England knew as much as she did. But I must try and tell you some of them.

She talked to me about sin—how it first came into the world when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, and how it was to be seen everywhere now. "Oh," she said, "there are no really good people! The very best people in the world have many sins every day, and I am sure we all of us waste a great deal of time, if we do nothing else wrong. Oh, we are all such sinners! There is nobody who has not sinned a great many sins."

And then she talked about Jesus Christ. She told me about His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane; about His sweating drops of blood; about the soldiers nailing Him to the cross; about the spear piercing

His side, and blood and water coming out. "Oh," she said, "how very good it was of Him to die for us, and such a cruel death! How good He was to suffer so for our sins."

Then she talked about wicked people. She told me she was afraid there were a great many in the world, and it made her very unhappy to see how many of her school-fellows and acquaintances lived. "But," she said, "I know the reason why they are so wicked. It is because they do not try to be good; they do not wish to be good; they do not ask Jesus to make them good."

I asked her what part of the Bible she liked best. She told me she liked all the history of Jesus Christ, but the chapters she was most fond of were the three last chapters of the Book of Revelation. I had a Bible with me, and I took it out and read these chapters to her as we went along. When I was done she began to talk about Heaven. "Think," she said, "how nice it will be to be there! There will be no more sorrow, nor crying, nor tears. And Jesus Christ will be there, for it says, 'the Lamb is the light thereof,' and we shall always be with Him; and beside this, there shall be no night there. They will need no candle nor light of the sun."

Dear children, just think of this poor little blind girl. Think of her taking pleasure in talking of Jesus Christ. Think of her rejoicing in the account of Heaven, where there shall be no sorrow nor night. I have never seen her since. She went to her own home in London, and I do not know whether she is alive or not. I hope she is, but I have no doubt Jesus Christ has taken good care of her.

Dear children, are you as happy and as cheerful as she was? You are not blind. You have eyes, and can run about and see everything, and go where you like, and read as much as you please to yourselves. But are you as happy as this poor little girl? Oh, if you wish to be happy in this world, remember my advice today. Do as the little blind girl did and seek Jesus Christ early! Proverbs 8:17 says, "I love them who love Me; and those who seek Me early shall find Me."

***"Blessed is the man that heareth me,  
watching daily at my gates,  
waiting at the posts of my doors."***

(Proverbs 8:34)

# News & Announcements

## ■ Ministerial Calls

### Extended:

To Rev. P.D. den Haan of Rijssen-West, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

To Rev. S.W. Janse of Rijssen Zuiderkerk, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Chilliwack, British Columbia.

To Rev. G.W.S. Mulder of Ridderkerk, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Franklin Lakes, New Jersey.

To Rev. A. Schot of Nunspeet, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Grand Rapids-Covell Avenue, Michigan.

To Rev. M.H. Schot of Hendrik-Ido-Ambacht, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Markham, Ontario.

To Rev. H.A. van Zetten of Nieuw-Beijerland, the Netherlands, by the congregations of Sioux Center, Iowa, and Kalamazoo, Michigan.

To Rev. R.A.M. Visser of Apeldoorn, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

## ■ Obituaries

BOUMA, Harold – Age 96, November 5, 2023; Choteau, Montana; Wife – Johanna (nee den Dunnen); Children – Louie & Trudy, John & Cindy, Jennie & Chris Garramon, Norma & Ray Vossebelt, Rosalie & Case Slingerland, Donna & Randy Teunissen; 25 grandchildren, 88 great-grandchildren, 6 great-great-grandchildren; Sisters – Jennie & John Luteyn, Frances & Larry Teunissen; Sister-in-law – Cornelia Bouma; predeceased by grandson Jason Teunissen, 2 great-grandchildren, 6 brothers, two sisters, 5 sisters-in-law, and 2 brothers-in-law. (Rev. P. Kleijer, Isaiah 25:9.)

KLOK, Nathan Paul – Age 2; November 20, 2023; Boyden, Iowa; Parents – William & Rachel; Brothers – Gerrit, Wade, Miles, Charles, Peter; Grandparents – Helen Klok, Hank & Laurie Van der Waal; Great-grandmothers – Alyda Bleeker, Elizabeth Van der Waal; several aunts, uncles, and numerous cousins; predeceased by grandfather Gerrit Klok. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Hosea 11:8&9, Jeremiah 31:15&16.)

MAASSEN, Amanda Jane – Age 38, November 26, 2023; Hull, Iowa; Son – Bryce; Parents – John & Judy (nee den Hoed); Siblings – Jaclyn & Neil Schelling, Rachele, Katelynn, Christian; Grandparents – Art & Alma den Hoed; predeceased by grandparents Ray & Joan Maassen. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Matthew 25:10b.)

## In Memoriam

### Mr. Walter Verhey

*“Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of His Servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God” (Isaiah 50:10).*

On November 18, 2023, it pleased the Lord to take from the midst of his family and congregation Elder Walter Verhey at the age of sixty-three. Elder Verhey served the congregation of Brant County for three years as deacon and thirty years as elder. He faithfully labored among us with the love in his heart and the gifts which the Lord granted unto him. An empty place is realized not only in the midst of the family but also in the congregation and consistory. May the Lord graciously remember the mourning family and sanctify the calling to each of us and bless this calling to all our hearts.

— The Brant County NRC Consistory

ROZEBOOM, Jacoba (Jackie) – Age 98, November 5, 2023; Inwood, Iowa; Husband – William (deceased); Daughter – Ruth & Teunis Hoefakker; 2 grandsons, 8 great-grandchildren; Sister-in-law – Marrie Van Zweden; predeceased by grandchildren Steven Hoefakker and Kayla Hoefakker, 5 siblings, 3 sisters-in-law, and a brother-in-law. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Hebrews 4:9-11.)

VAN GARDEREN, Aafje (nee Stigter) – Age 68, November 30, 2023; Picture Butte, Alberta; Husband – Jan (John); Children – Jan Willem & Annemarie, Marieke & Ed Klok, Annet & Mark Hengstmengel, Janneke & Krijn Soet, Herma & Harvey de Kok, Gerda & Hank Vanessen, Thea & Nico VanderSmit, Karin & Richard Van Hoef, Teus & Hendrika, Avelien & Henry Oskam, Dirk & Danielle, Laura & Jonathon Neufeld; 52 grandchildren; Siblings – Hanneke Stigter-Blankers, Jannie Stigter, Petra & Jasper de Gier, Teus & Sandra Stigter, Hendrik-Jan & Marieke Stigter, Jeannette & Piet Brokking, Kees & Marjolein Stigter, Laurens Stigter & Lillian, Evert Stigter & Ilse, Gerdien & Maarten van Oostenbrugge, Anneke & Ton Koetsier, Hennie & Bart-Jan Spruyt; In-laws – Maartje Doornekamp, Aresia van Garderen-Ederveen, Wim & Jannie Blom, Bert Streef, Wim van Garderen; predeceased by a stillborn son, parents Teunis & Hendrika Stigter, parents-in-law Willem and Anna, a brother

Dirk Stigter, brothers-in-law Herman Van Garderen and Arie Doornekamp, and a sister-in-law Geertje Streef. (Rev. E.C. Adams, 1 Samuel 20:3b.)

VERHEY, Walter – Age 63, November 18, 2023; Lynden, Ontario; Wife – Maria (nee Bolle); Children – Tim & Monica, Len & Lauren, Marty & Emily, Nick & Janelle, Jacqueline; 14 grandchildren; Parents – Ted & Faye; Mother-in-law – Jane Bolle; sisters and brothers; predeceased by father-in-law Herman Bolle. (Rev. H. de Leeuw, 2 Samuel 1:25-27.)

## ■ Courtland NRC Contact Information

Elder S. Van Brugge, Clerk  
Box 249, 39 Mill St. E.  
Otterville, ON N0J 1R0  
226-888-5520

## ■ Ordination & Inaugural of Candidate P. Kleijer

August 16, 2023, was a very special and memorable day for the congregation of Lethbridge, Alberta, when for the seventh time the congregation received a shepherd and teacher to instruct them. It was for the first time that a candidate accepted the extended call and was ordained as a minister of Word and Sacrament in the midst of the congregation. The ordination service was conducted by Rev. A.H. Verhoef of St. Catharines, Ontario. The text for the sermon was taken from Isaiah 58:12. The theme for the sermon was: *“A Suitable Word from a Surprising God.”* The following two points were given: 1) A promise for the congregation; 2) A task for restoration. The Form of Ordination of the Ministers of God's Word was read, and Candidate Kleijer answered the questions with *“Yes, truly, with all my heart.”*

The following ministers and elder participated in the Laying on of Hands: Rev. A.H. Verhoef, Rev. E.C. Adams, Rev. P. van Ruitenburg, Rev. G. Beens, Rev. J.R. Slingerland and Elder W. Grisnich. The following texts were spoken in the order of the speakers: Revelation 3:8a, Hebrews 13:8, Zechariah 4:6b, Genesis 17:1b, 2 Timothy 4:5 and 1 Thessalonians 5:23a. The congregation then stood and sang Psalter 436:3 in English and Psalm 134:3 in Dutch while Candidate Kleijer knelt on the bench at the conclusion of this part of the service.

In the evening Rev. P. Kleijer preached his inaugural sermon from Zechariah 4:6 with the theme: *“A Comforting Vision Regarding*

*the Church*” with the following two points: 1) The preservation of the church, 2) The encouragement to the church. After expounding on this portion of scripture, Rev. Kleijer spoke some customary words of thanks and added some personal remarks. The following speakers addressed Rev. Kleijer: Rev. P. van Ruitenburch on behalf of Classis Far West, Rev. J.R. Slingerland on behalf of Classis Midwest and as former fellow student, Rev. E.C. Adams on behalf of the Curatorium, Rev. M.G. van Middendorp as a friend from the Netherlands, and Elder J. Erkelens on behalf of the congregation of Lethbridge.

Elder J. Erkelens requested the congregation to stand and sing Psalter 357:1-4 as a wish for our new minister. Rev. Kleijer closed the service with prayer, and thereafter with requesting to sing Psalter 421:6. For the first time as an ordained minister, and as the minister of Lethbridge, Rev. Kleijer concluded the service with pronouncing the benediction.

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### 65th Wedding Anniversary

The Lord willing, on January 14, 2024, our dear parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents,

**Andrew & Jacoba Korevaar**

hope to commemorate their 65th wedding anniversary.

*“O give thanks unto the LORD, for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever”*  
(Psalm 107:1).

42 John Street, P.O. Box 952  
Norwich, Ontario N0J 1P0

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***Look to it my dear friends, that none of you be found Christless at your appearance before Him. Those that continue Christless now will be left speechless then. God forbid that you who have heard so much of Christ and have professed so much of Christ, should at last fall into a worse condition than those who never heard the name of Christ.***

—John Flavel

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## New Year

*Rev. A. Vergunst (1926-1981)*

(Translated from *De Saambinder*, December 29, 2005)

***“And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good”*** (Genesis 1:31a).

**A** new year begins; what will it bring us? What is uncertain now will soon be known; also in this year it will become true again that concerns, sorrow, and plagues will be the man’s portion.

Has this always been so? Has this world been created to be a scene of much struggle and misery? Let God’s Word point us at the beginning of the New Year to another beginning—a beginning of which it is written that it was very good. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. That there is now so much misery in this world has not been God’s work. His work was perfect. Sin destroyed God’s glorious work of Creation and made it all subject to the curse so that now, for the sake of sin, the whole Creation groans under the burden of God’s wrath and displeasure.

A new year—a new beginning of a year counted toward the coming of Christ, and it has to do with that beginning that God once gave to the world. For God does not want to surrender Creation to sin and curse forever. He wants to look after lost man and the world according to His purpose, which is that God’s Church may be gathered together, according to His good pleasure, and a new heaven and earth prepared for it—where it will be seen that everything God had made is very good. God is still carrying out His work.

Also, in this year God’s work will continue. This year will also be a year of “our Lord.” There is much uncertainty, struggle, trouble, and sorrow, but there is also expectation if we may look to “our Lord” and know the time is in the hand of Him who dwells at God’s right hand and carries out God’s good pleasure. God is busy making good that which He once made good also through His Son; after all, grace will restore what sin has destroyed.

Is there a new beginning for you, too? Not of the year, or all kinds of good intentions, but the beginning of God’s grace? You, too, were very good, but there must be a new beginning. That is not your new beginning but God’s new beginning with us. There is an “In the beginning” in Genesis 1, but also an “In the beginning” in a new dispensation of God, in the time taken for it by Christ.

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### ■ ■ ■ *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. Distribution of the MP3s and CDs are provided at no cost by your consistory. 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.

Anniversary and other announcements will be placed upon request. A donation for their placement would be appreciated. Please follow directions for check payment, shown in gray area at bottom of inside front cover. For consistency, copy size is limited. Send requests to James Okken, managing editor (see contact information at bottom of inside front cover.) Requests should be made **by the first of the month prior to the month of publication.**

# Minutes of Classis Far West 2023 Fall Meeting (Summary)

Rev. J. den Hoed of Lynden delivered the prayer service on the evening of October 17, 2023, in the Lynden church. His text was taken from Psalm 73:23b. Theme: The Wonderful Portion of God's People. Points: 1) It was the Lord who took him; 2) It was the Lord who held him; 3) It was the Lord who directed him.

## Article 1—Opening

The Classis meeting convened at 9:00 A.M. on Wednesday, October 18, 2023, in the sanctuary of the Lynden NRC. On behalf of the calling church, Picture Butte, Rev. P. van Ruitenburg opened the meeting with a request to sing Psalter 47:1,5,7 and read Isaiah 49:13-21. He then offered an opening prayer. He welcomed the delegates Rev. A.H. Verhoef and Rev. J. Slingerland as Deputies of Article 49 for Classis East and Midwest, and the visitors. Rev. van Ruitenburg spoke a few words pertaining to Isaiah 49:15. He spoke of three pictures and made two applications.

## Article 2&3—Credentials & Moderamen

The credentials of delegates were submitted and approved. The following officers were selected to serve at the meeting:

<i>President</i>	Rev. H. den Hollander (by rotation)
<i>Vice President</i>	Rev. J. den Hoed (by rotation)
<i>Clerk</i>	Elder Arie Van Wingerden (by election)
<i>Treasurer</i>	Elder Jerry DeBruis (by appointment)

## Article 4 & 5—Minutes & Business Out of the Minutes

At the Far West Classis meeting held on March 15, 2023, it was determined that minutes would be approved by the moderamen of each meeting and not brought for approval at the next meeting. The Classis meeting held on March 15, 2023, determined Business Out of the Minutes to be an invalid agenda item.

## Article 6 & 7—Correspondence & Reports

There was no correspondence to report. A report was received from the Far West Youth Conference held July 8, 2023, in Chilliwack.

## Article 6 & 7—Reports

A report was received from the Far West Youth Conference held July 9, 2022, in Fort Macleod.

## Article 8—Submitted Points

The consistory of Chilliwack forwarded the request for emeritus status for Rev. P. van Ruitenburg. This request was accompanied with a letter from Rev. van Ruitenburg and a letter from the Chilliwack consistory supporting this request. Rev. A.H. Verhoef and Rev. J. Slingerland as Deputies of Article 49 concurred with this request to honorably enter the status of emeritus. Classis voted to approve this request. Rev. van Ruitenburg will officially enter this status on November 29, 2023. The president spoke a few words in connection with Psalm 131. Rev. van Ruitenburg was thanked for his many labors in the Classis and denomination, and God's blessings were wished for the labors he may yet be enabled to perform. The assembled then sang Psalter 28:1-3.

The consistory of Nobleford is requesting the Classis to establish a committee to investigate, or have the Classis make a decision, on whether the concerns of the members of the Fort Macleod NRC attending in Nobleford are irreconcilable and should be allowed to

transfer their membership. Classis voted to agree to the following statement: Classis will not declare the situation irreconcilable or appoint a committee to investigate. We as Classis confirm the right to go to the NRC church of choice following long-standing policy. We as Classis empathize with Nobleford in their conundrum.

The consistory of Nobleford asked for clarification on the role of a delegate according to Article 48/49 as an adviser at a Classis meeting. Church order states that they may give input only at the request of the Classis but not unasked. Their role is not decisive but advisory.

The consistory of Picture Butte asked if the Chairman of a classis meeting has the sole authority to change the agenda as submitted by the calling church. They were informed that changes to the agenda can only be done with the approval of the Classis. The Classis has the right to disapprove any changes; therefore, the power does not reside solely in the Chair.

The consistories of Picture Butte and Nobleford requested that the decision to alter the practice of minutes approval be reconsidered and rescinded. As there are conflicting opinions on this, not only among commentators on church order but also in practice, it was decided to forward this question to the Synod to establish a consistent approach. Picture Butte also asked for a reconsideration of the decision to declare "Business Out of Minutes" inappropriate. Business Out of Minutes as an agenda item was upheld as inappropriate. Continuing matters as described should appear as reports in future agendas.

The consistory of Picture Butte asked: When a classis meeting is held for the purpose of the examination of a candidate, who determines whether a consistory may or may not submit an urgent point that needs to be addressed to be placed on the classis agenda? Establishing the agenda is the sole responsibility of the calling church. In this scenario it would be wise to ask the other consistories their thoughts, but not required.

## Article 9—Moderatorships

The moderatorships were changed to reflect the arrival in the Classis of Rev. Kleijer and the impending emeritus status of Rev. van Ruitenburg.

## Article 10 & 11—Customary Questions & Expenses

In response to a question, Rev. van Ruitenburg indicated that he intends to follow through with the Classis-requested visit to Artesia.

A question was asked if Classis Far West should have a permanent clerk. This was rejected.

It was asked if all was in order for the support of Rev. van Ruitenburg as he enters emeritus status. Chilliwack confirmed that this was done.

Expenses were reported to the treasurer.

## Article 12—Arrangements for the Next Classis Meeting

The next meeting scheduled for March 20, 2024, will be held in Chilliwack with Sunnyside as the calling church. Rev. Adams will preach a prayer service the preceding evening. By rotation Rev. den Hoed will serve as Chairman and Rev. Adams as Vice-Chairman. Rev. den Hollander will open the meeting. Rev. van Ruitenburg is scheduled to give a presentation at the Office Bearer's Conference..

## Article 13—Closing

Rev. den Hoed asked the Classis to sing Psalter 425:3&5 and then closed with prayer.

Christ's followers cannot expect better treatment in the world than their Master had.

—Matthew Henry

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 Tom Van Vugt (education chairman) at 973-703-1511 or email [tomv@plainviewgrowers.com](mailto:tomv@plainviewgrowers.com), or John Van Der Brink (administrator) at 973-628-7400 or email [nrcs\\_office@nrdsnj.org](mailto:nrcs_office@nrdsnj.org).

#### To All Candidates for Education Positions

Please visit [advertising.nrcea.education](http://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:

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Password: **Schooljobs!**

### Teachers Needed

CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, COAL-HURST, ALBERTA, invites applications from elementary or secondary teachers for the 2024-25 school year. DV. Applicants must be members of the NRC or a closely-related denomination and eligible for Alberta certification. Any inquiries should be directed to the principal, Mr. Marc Slingerland, at 403-381-3030 or [marc.slingerland@ccschool.ca](mailto:marc.slingerland@ccschool.ca). Should the Lord incline your heart to apply, please submit a cover letter and resumé with references to [office@ccschool.ca](mailto:office@ccschool.ca).

EBENEZER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN, is in urgent need of a teacher for the 2023-24 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](mailto:rdteunissen@yahoo.com).

EMMANUEL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, LYNDEN, WASHINGTON, is in need of a teacher for the 2024-2025 school year. We welcome applications for teachers at the elementary, middle, or high school level. To apply or request more information, please contact the administrator, Ms. Beth Bleeker, at [bbleeker@nrclslynden.org](mailto:bbleeker@nrclslynden.org) or the school board president, Mr. Jerry DeBruin, at 360-224-0901 or [jdebruin3797@gmail.com](mailto:jdebruin3797@gmail.com).

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ROCK VALLEY/SIOUX CENTER, IOWA, is seeking to fill openings in grades 7-12: math, elementary, physical education, and secondary teaching. Some of these positions are part-time or full-time and can be combined depending upon qualifications and experience. For further information, please contact the principal, Mr. Daniel Breuer, at 712-476-2821 or [dan.breuer@nrclsia.org](mailto:dan.breuer@nrclsia.org).

PLYMOUTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, welcomes teaching applications for positions in elementary and secondary for the 2024-2025 school year. We particularly have a need in the high school. For more information or to request an application, please contact the school principal, Mr. Nate Bleeker, at 616-454-9481 or email [nbleeker@plymouthchristian.us](mailto:nbleeker@plymouthchristian.us).

PROVIDENCE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN, welcomes applications for teachers at the elementary and middle school levels. We are anticipating openings for the coming school year. For more information or to request an application, please contact the school administrator, Mr. Tom Kwekel, at 616-644-2661 or email at [tkwekel@pcskzoo.com](mailto:tkwekel@pcskzoo.com).

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, NORWICH, ONTARIO, continues to welcome inquiries about elementary and secondary positions. For elementary positions, contact Mr. Andrew Korevaar, [elementaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com](mailto:elementaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com) or 519-863-2403 ext. 241. For secondary positions, contact Mr. Gerrit TenHove, [secondaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com](mailto:secondaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com) or 519-863-2403 ext. 303. We continue to invite inquiries about our locally developed teaching/training program. Cover letters and resumé should be submitted to [hr@rcsnorwich.com](mailto:hr@rcsnorwich.com). Applications will be reviewed; those applicants selected for interviews will be contacted by the school board.

### De Saambinder Delivered by Email

For those who do not receive *De Saambinder* from their local church and would like information regarding receiving a copy electronically via email, please contact: Andrew Kieboom at 269-720-3533 or email to: [saambinder.noordamerika@gmail.com](mailto:saambinder.noordamerika@gmail.com)

### Accessing Older Issues of *The Banner of Truth*

Are you aware that you can see scans of actual older issues of *The Banner of Truth* on [Digibron.nl](http://Digibron.nl)? For example, here is a link to an extract from one of Rev. W.C. Lamain's New Year's sermons which was used as a meditation in the January 1963 *Banner of Truth*: <http://tinyurl.com/BOTJan1963>. You can read this extract on that page, or click the orange button at the top left of the page and see the scan of the actual issue. It is almost as if you had it in your hand. —Ed.

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## Casting the Gospel Net

When Peter, through the tedious night,  
Had often cast his net in vain;  
Soon as the Lord appeared in sight,  
He gladly let it down again.

Once more the gospel net we cast,  
Do thou, O Lord, the effort own;  
We learn from disappointments past  
To rest our hope on Thee alone.

Upheld by Thy supporting hand,  
We enter on another year;  
And now we meet, at Thy command,  
To seek Thy gracious presence here.

May this be a much-favored hour  
To souls in Satan's bondage led;  
O clothe Thy word with sovereign power  
To break the rocks and raise the dead!

Have mercy on our numerous youth,  
Who, young in years, are old in sin;  
And by Thy Spirit, and Thy truth,  
Show them the state their souls are in.

Then, by a Savior's dying love  
To every wounded heart revealed,  
Temptations, fears, and guilt remove,  
And be their Sun, and Strength, and Shield.

To mourners speak a cheering word,  
On seeking souls vouchsafe to shine;  
Let poor backsliders be restored,  
And all Thy saints in praises join.

O hear our prayer and give us hope,  
That when Thy voice shall call us home,  
Thou still wilt raise a people up  
To love and praise Thee in our room.

—John Newton

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