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for the Salvation of Lost Ones

Your Journey

He Also Is a Son of Abraham

For our young readers...

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a Second Time

Fire

*"Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance:
behold, He taketh up the isles as a very little thing." ISAIAH 40:15*



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Cover: The Aegean Sea is part of the Mediterranean Sea.
Many of Paul's missionary journeys were in the areas along this sea.

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Meditation

Christ's Effectual Coming for the Salvation of Lost Ones

Rev. G.M. de Leeuw (Emeritus), Nobleford, AB

“For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost”
(Matthew 18:11).

Beloved reader, what a great contradiction exists between the words “salvation” and “lost” in the text here mentioned. These are the two words which are related to man’s state for eternity. When writing and reading these words, we have to realize that mankind, in general, is not familiar with them which shows us how empty man’s life is, by nature. My dear reader, it cannot be emphasized enough how ignorant we are, while going through this world—ignorant about what life really is, not knowing that our life is short, unstable, and uncertain—also unknowingly approaching eternity. Yet, although not emphasized enough, in spite of being ignorant from our side, there is instruction available from God’s side.

Which kind of instruction? Oh, maybe you have answered already; namely, that instruction (young people, do you listen?) is, of course, the Bible which is true. Our dear Bible is the written Word of the living God, written to instruct us in regard to who He is, who we are—by nature, lost in Adam—and who His Son is—the Lord Jesus Christ. We may have our Bibles, which are translated out of the original languages, Hebrew and Greek, into our native tongues—translated to make us familiar with Scriptures’ contents from Genesis to Revelations.

Are there those among us for whom it is as it once was with the two who were traveling to Emmaus and when the Lord Jesus came with them, He, at that moment, was still unknown to them? With the purpose to accompany them and to explain their riddles, how suitable and wise were His questions. What pleasant company was added unto them. How penetrating and how instructive were His questions for their souls. Do we not all need such a Teacher to lead us into all the truth of the written Word of God and to reveal unto us the remarkable ways of salvation? Is that not the one thing needed on our way to eternity? Was there already some instruction given to you? This instruction is mainly given when you place yourself under the faithful and sound preaching of the Word of God; this precious Word can make us wise unto salvation.

What a good example is given to us in the history of the eunuch who, while on his chariot reading the roll of Isaiah, received an explanation by Philip and invited him to sit beside him. Dear reader, do you have in your home not only that part of the Bible but the complete Word of God, the Old and the New Testament? I think that your answer will be in the affirmative, but, then, my next question is—

do you read this precious Word of God and then ask the question which came from Philip to the reading eunuch: “Understandest thou what thou readest?”

What a question! Was this ever asked of us? Dear reader, is not every sermon more or less asking us the same thing? When we finish the Lord’s Day, and other times, when we are under the Word of God, is it not always more or less asked of us: Understandest thou what thou readest? Then, how do we answer? How honest was the eunuch when answering Philip: “And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me?” That now is exactly the point—guidance—which means guidance from on High. Here beside this chariot that guidance was available, instrumentally available by a servant of the living God of Israel, such as Philip was.

Dear reader, do you honor those who are sent to you for your eternal well-being? Maybe your answer is—not enough. Oh, may it please the Lord to teach you more and more regarding who He is, who you are, and who Christ is. This teaching, as we mentioned already, is instrumental.

I think we all will understand what a great privilege was given here to a man who was totally ignorant regarding the God of Israel. Is this not the same in the time in which we are living? We can never overesteem the value of the true doctrine which we still may have in our homes, churches, schools, etc., but there is also the question: how do we have it? Do we take it for granted, or is it, by the Lord’s goodness, your spiritual food and drink? Did it make you hungry and thirsty after righteousness? Did it show you the emptiness and the spiritual poverty of the world in which we live?

Dear young people, baptized seed of the congregation, where do you spend your precious time? Are there those among you who like to search the Scriptures and all that is based upon them? Oh, I know the answer already; the attractiveness of this world is extremely strong, and we are, in general, extremely weak. Dear youth, pray to the Lord to convert you, to help you in whatever circumstances you may have brought yourself. Do not ever forget your baptism which, in most cases, took place when you were young. Wherever you go, you bear that sign with you.

If there are those of you who are in trouble, maybe by your own fault, confess it to the Lord. Reverently speaking, His office is open twenty-four hours a day and deals with the most complicated cases.

You all know about the apostle Paul. His former life was terrible. The Bible says of him that he was “breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the

Lord.” He was like a wild beast, but what happened? In his life came a divine hitherto; oh, that remarkable change—becoming a friend instead of an enemy. Satan lost his prey, and God received His child and tool when Paul began using his power on the right side.

It happened once in Rotterdam that the police finally caught a terrible bandit in their hands. They asked him to confess, whereupon he shewed them how he had escaped them so many times. They looked at one another and said afterward, “Would that we had those talents on our side.”



Bible Study

The Names of the Mediator (6)

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

Chosen/Elect

*“Behold My Servant, whom I have **chosen**; My Beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased” (Matthew 12:18a).*

For the second time in this series, this text is addressed. Earlier we dwelt on the name “My Beloved.” This time it is about the words “Whom I have chosen.” The evangelist quotes Isaiah 42:1a where we read, “Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth.”

Scripture speaks of election in various ways. There is an election of angels, an election of men to salvation, and an election of office bearers to a particular office. Isaiah teaches us that we may also speak of an election of Christ. He, too, bears the name “Elect.” That name refers to His setting apart to serve as Prophet, Priest, and King. He is the chosen Servant of the Father. We read the same of David, “I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn unto David My servant” (Psalm 89:3). David is also a type of Christ in his election, but more than David is here!

Election is from eternity. So is the election of Christ. God was an eternity ahead of the Fall. Even before the foundation of the world, the Mediator was the Lamb foreordained and destined to be the Saviour (1 Peter 1:20). If there were no election of Christ, the election of Adam could not proceed at all. Ultimately, His election is even more glorious than the election of sinners.

The name “Chosen” does contain a discovering lesson for us. After all, we did not choose Christ at all. This Cornerstone was refused by the builders. Religious man considers his self-righteousness far more suitable than this chosen Servant. Even to His disciples Christ had to say, “Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.” That is poignant. The eleven disciples were chosen. Even the elect did not choose Him as their Lord and Saviour. Who is able to

This is similar to Paul. The Lord stopped him to use him in His vineyard wherein he worked with the same talents but now on the right side.

I have to close. Dear reader, and beloved young readers, I have just one question to finish, and please try to answer between you and the Lord. The question is this: On what side are you? Dear young boys and girls, to you I have the same question. Will you try to answer? Do that today—tomorrow can be too late. May it please the Lord to remember us all for Christ’s sake. □

comprehend the wonder that He nevertheless chose such, who initially rejected Him? It was a fruit of His election that they began to choose Him.

This glorious name “Chosen” was derided by the enemies. At the foot of the cross, they publicly questioned His election: “And the rulers also with them derided Him, saying, He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He be Christ, the chosen of God” (Luke 23:35b). What was not understood is that He could not save Himself precisely because He is the chosen of God. If Christ ever proved His election, it is in that He died to save the elect.

How necessary it is that we learn to count all things loss and dung for the sake of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. He whom the Father chose will also have to be chosen by us. Has the name chosen, by God’s grace, really acquired value for us? Or do ye still choose death rather than life?

—November 4, 2010, Rev. A. Schot

Christ

*“Peter answering said, The **Christ** of God” (Luke 9:20b).*

The Lord Jesus asked His disciples a question, “Whom say the people that I am?” Several answers were given: John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the old prophets. Then the Lord Jesus asked a follow-up question: “But whom say ye that I am?” This is a very personal question. What answer can you give? Can you give the Mediator a name you have come to love—a dear name, an indispensable name?

When Peter had to give Jesus of Nazareth a name, he said, “*The Christ of God*.” That is the promised and sent Anointed One, the announced Messiah of the Old Testament. During the centuries of the old dispensation, it had become increasingly clear who the Messiah would be. Not only did the

Lord declare this in the Advent promises, but it also became visible in the Old Testament offices, institutions, and persons. It was all a picture of what has been fulfilled in the coming of Christ.

Messiah is the Hebrew name for Anointed One. The Greek name is *Christ*. The Mediator is set apart from eternity. God the Father had appointed His Son to be Mediator. *That* is what Peter may declare. In this the Saviour became dear to him. Christ was sent from God; the eternal work of God lies declared in Him.

This disciple was given to see deeply. He knew that if Christ is not the Father's Anointed One, he cannot be saved, but because Christ is set apart by God the Father, His ministerial work will be looked upon in favor by the Father.

He is not only the Mediator who was *set apart*, but He was also *qualified* through his anointing. This also has profound content. Christ not only *had to be* a Mediator, but He was also *able* to be a Mediator. The anointing by the Holy Spirit was seen at His conception. Also, this anointing was revealed at His baptism in the Jordan. He was fully qualified and strengthened to fulfill His mediatorial office.

Nothing more needed to be added on Peter's part. His Saviour was the Christ of God. He would do what Peter could never do anymore. He would be Prophet, Priest, and King for him. The disciple had yet to receive further instruction in this. He did not yet understand the full depth of Christ's work, but the Holy Spirit wanted to unfold the riches of Christ's name in his life. Has this Christ become dear to *you*?

—February 25, 2010, Rev. C. Neele

(To be continued)



From Our Inheritance

He Also Is a Son of Abraham

Joseph Irons (1785-1852)

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

“And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho” (Luke 19:1).

What! Did the Son of God, who came to seek and save sinners, enter and pass through a city but never enter a house, nor stop even to deliver a discourse in the street or to speak to a single individual? You remember Jericho was an accursed city; yet, in this accursed city of Jericho, there was but just one poor sinner lying under the curse that must be fetched out; and though the Son of God did not stay in Jericho, yet Zacchaeus must come out of it. “And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.” Rich or poor, in cursed cities or blessed cities, where ever they are, Jesus will find out His own. “And he sought to see Jesus who He was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him: for He was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and saw him.” So that you see Jesus is quite as desirous of seeing the objects of His love as they can be of seeing Him. He knew the tree, and He knew its growth because it was His own creation. He knew the spot, and He knew who put the curiosity into Zacchaeus' heart; therefore, before Zacchaeus could get a full view of this despised Nazarene, Jesus looked up and knew him directly. He knew him from all eternity. “And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come

down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully.”

I think it is one of the Erskines, if my memory serves me, that takes a view of this in a contrast. He says that most sinners think of coming up to Christ's terms, but Christ makes them come down to His terms. However, it is a good idea. There are thousands that think of coming up to Christ's terms of salvation, but when Christ takes them in hand, He brings them down to His terms.

“And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.” And, blessed be His name, He does THAT to this day. “And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.” That is the reason, as the apostle says, “They which are of faith, the same are the children of (faithful) Abraham;” and God brought Zaccheus to a participation of the faith. “For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. And as they heard these things, He added and spake a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.” There was a carnal spirit of Millennialism about the disciples (something similar to

that which exists in the present day) but they were doomed to be disappointed, as will be their successors.

“He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.” I would that that sovereign command from the lips of Jesus might thrill through every one of our hearts every day. “Occupy till I come.” If we are living like Christians, we have something to occupy us for Christ every day. “Occupy till I come.”

“But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.”

“Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin.” I fear there are a great many of this description in the day in which we live. “For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he said unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have

required mine own with usury? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.”

Do you see the carnal spirit of Millennialism (verse 11)? “They thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.” They thought, but their thoughts were not God’s thoughts, were they? No! Therefore, the Lord added this parable of the nobleman to teach and instruct them concerning the error of their thoughts and the necessity of the Spirit of the Lord to direct their thoughts concerning salvation. Salvation is God’s work, and Christ abiding at the house of publicans, in bringing them down to His terms of salvation by faith in Himself, is all of free sovereign invincible grace. Because “he,” (sinner Zaccheus) “also is a son of Abraham,” according to the spiritual lineage, in the second Adam, Christ Jesus. For He came to “seek and to save that which was lost.” So, Jesus finding and saving Zaccheus sets before us an inward work of grace affecting both soul and body as also outward conduct. So, Jesus proclaims Himself to be King of kings, and Lord of lords—King over soul and body, life and death, forevermore—but not to reign as carnal man THINKS, sitting upon an earthly throne ruling over an earthly kingdom. No, God the Son is a Spirit as well as God the Father and as such will never reign upon earth as Millennialism advocates. Likewise, as to His human nature, He will never assume such a reign upon earth, for the redemption work has been perfected by Himself once and for all. □

Encouragement to a Troubled Child of God

Wherefore art thou always so troubled, disquieted, and distressed, especially about that time when the Lord’s Supper is to be administered? Thou art filled with fear lest thy faith be not genuine, and because thou findest so many corruptions yet remaining, thou art saying, “If I were really a person who had faith, my heart would have been more purified, and I should have lived more tenderly before God.” Let not thy heart be troubled, thou hast great reason to be encouraged....

Consider what a free offer of grace and salvation is made unto sinners in the gospel. This, certainly, should remove every fear and ought to banish from thy mind every desponding thought; does not that precious Word assure thee that however *unworthy* thou mayest be and however *abominable* thou mayest appear in thine own eyes, from the view thou hast gotten of the holy nature of thy God and of the evil of sin, yet thou art *welcome* to approach the Saviour; yea, by coming to Him as the vilest of the vile thou dost actually place a crown upon His head. There is nothing to hinder thine obtaining salvation from Him but thine own *unwillingness*; therefore, though Satan may throw obstacles in thy way and fill thee with fear, let him not gain his point. The more violent his assaults are, do thou with a more accelerated motion run to Him, and hide thyself beneath the shadow of His wings.

—Taken from The Pious Communicant
Rev. Petrus Immens



A Word in Season

Your Journey

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

(Taken from the July 1984 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

The following is a graduation address, but it is likewise applicable to all those who have passed from one grade to the next and for all who have completed another school year.

Dear young friends, today you are closing a period in your life. The Lord has kept you in safety and in health. This is a great blessing as well as an undeserved blessing. Many boys and girls have died before they reached your age, but through God's goodness you may still continue on your way.

Today you are standing at a threshold. You have finished a period in your life. Of course, you are happy to be graduating. I hope that you may realize that this is not an achievement of your own. It is the Lord who kept you; it is He who gave you wisdom. As you look back, be not proud but humble. I hope that it may be in your heart, "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory."

In retrospect, dear graduates, it was a good time for you, especially since, through the Lord's goodness, the education which you received was based on God's Word. Now you must go onward; you have not yet reached your final goal.

As you leave this more or less sheltered environment, you will be confronted with the opinions of others, with a way of life, and possibly with an education that is contrary to God's Word. How are you going to deal with this?

Imagine that you are on a journey. Indeed, you are on a journey. You, and all of us, are traveling toward our eternal abode. When we plan a journey, we make all sorts of preparations. We pack our luggage, and we make sure to remember our travel guides. These maps are helpful in finding our way in strange places.

Young friends, you have such a guide. It is the Bible. The Bible is a good, no, it is your best traveling guide. It is a guide for life and a guide unto life. I fear that in our day the Bible is not often read. In our modern society it appears that regular Bible reading at the table after meals is almost nonexistent. This causes a decline in spiritual life. It causes us to lose the right direction and to miss our life's goal.

What and who is your guide in life? Do you personally read your Bible, especially at night before you go to bed? If the answer is "No," then may I suggest that you begin tonight. Think of the eunuch in Acts 8. He, too, was traveling. See what he did. He read God's Word! Have you ever noticed that he read it aloud? He read in the book of Isaiah, and he does it aloud. You should do this, too, when you read your Bible. Read it aloud; it will keep your mind from

wandering. When you hear yourself read and see the words, you will not easily be distracted. How do I know that the eunuch read aloud? We read it in the Bible, "And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias..."

Young friends, I hope your parents may hear the same of you. "Listen, my son, my daughter, is reading the Bible." Perhaps you say, "I do not understand it." Then look again at this eunuch. This man, while traveling, is reading his Bible aloud, but...he understands nothing of it. It is a mystery to him. Yet, this is no reason for him to put down the book. No, with him it is exactly the opposite. Because he does not understand it, there is a longing in his heart for someone to come and explain to him what he is reading. We hear a sadness and longing in his voice when he asks Philip to help him understand, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" He reads, and he prays for an interpretation of what he reads. Do you do the same? That is a not only a question but also a task.

God's Spirit brought the Word of God to this man. He now holds in his hand the greatest treasure. This treasure is not yet in his heart, but the Author of this treasure shall see that it shall come there. He gives to this black man an interpreter. Through Philip, Jesus is proclaimed to him.

When a person would become rich in God, when we would choose to walk in the right way in, through, and out of this life, we must begin with God's Word. We must stand firm upon its teachings. We must always ask for the application of the Holy Spirit in our heart. This is how God begins. Never expect Christ to come into your heart if you do not have His Word in

your hand. There are many powers which draw us away from God's Word, but do not expect a safe journey without this guide.

A living Christ, the pearl of great price, the greatest treasure, will never become our possession outside of the garment of God's Word. This black man did find Christ. He gained a place in God's house; he went on his way rejoicing. He arrived at his destination in safety. This was only possible after he had found Christ.

Dear graduates, this is my message for you. May I lay the prayer upon your lips, "Direct my footsteps in Thy Word; from sin's dominion save my soul" (Psalter 337:3). With God's Word in hand, I wish you a good journey, a journey accompanied with joy in Christ. Only then can I assure you of a safe arrival. □

*We must always ask for the application
of the Holy Spirit in our heart.
This is how God begins.*



For Young and Old

What the Bible Says About the Moon (2)

J.D.P.

(Taken from the October 1969 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

In Jeremiah 31:35&36, the prophet speaks of God as the Creator who has ordered these signs and God says: “Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me for ever.”

This emphasizes the fact that the signs that God placed in the heavens were signs of God’s faithfulness, for the sun rises and the sun sets day after day without fail. The new moon comes and runs its course through the full moon to the waning moon and appears again month after month. These bodies in the heavens move with split second precision without alteration. Why? Because God is faithful, and man could so read of God’s faithfulness in the signs in the heavens that when God made a pledge or a promise to men, God’s promise was as sure as tomorrow’s sunrise.

When the nation Israel, standing on the eve of captivity, doubted that they would be brought back to their land in fulfillment of the promises of God, God reminded them that there had been sunrise and sunset and new moon and full moon from the beginning of Creation. God is faithful, and God who ordered the signs to teach man of His faithfulness would fulfill that which He promised.

Going back to Psalm 19:1 again, we find that those who considered the signs learned of God’s perfection. All that was revealed through the signs in the heavens by day and by night was to remind the one who studied the signs of the truth of verse 7, “The law of the LORD is perfect...” The ordering of the universe by God is perfect because God’s Creation is ordered according to the character of God, and the perfection discernible from the smallest snowflake to the vast expanses of the universe all testify to the perfection of God the Creator.

I find that these signs are also signs to unbelievers. An eclipse of the sun or an eclipse of the moon, to believers was a sign of God’s power, authority, wisdom, faithfulness, and perfection. In contrast, unbelievers who saw those same signs in the heavens were moved to dread and terror. They anticipated an immediate judgment because the light of the sun or the light of the moon had been withdrawn.

Joel 2:10 and 31 speak of the signs in the heavens that foretell coming judgment. Revelation 6:12 refers to a consuming judgment during the tribulation when, from man’s vantage, “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and

the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come” (Joel 2:31).

Genesis 1:14 gives a fourth reason that the sun and, in this case particularly, the moon were created. “And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament...for seasons.” This translation would suggest that Moses is recording that the moon was given to divide spring from summer and fall from winter—the seasons of the year, but that is not the importance of this word at all. The Hebrew word translated “season” is used 219 times in the Old Testament, but more than half of the time it refers to a gathering for worship and is translated “a solemn assembly.” It had to do with the religious festivals, with religious worship, and with praise that was offered to God by those who saw the signs, received revelation from God, and were moved to praise and to worship God.

We recognize that the nation Israel operated not by a solar calendar but by a lunar calendar. Their months began with the new moon, and each new moon introduced a new month. Some of the great religious feasts of Israel were marked by the moon. One was the Passover which anticipated the coming of the Light of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ, who would illuminate man. This feast was observed at the full moon when the light was at its greatest. The last of the feasts, the Feast of Tabernacles, anticipated the gathering of the redeemed into the kingdom which Israel’s Messiah would establish. That feast was a feast of light, and it was observed at the full moon. The Feast of Trumpets, which marked the beginning of the harvest season, was to be observed at the new moon. The worship of those who had come to know God by faith was ordered according to the cycle of the moon.

Because we operate by a solar rather than a lunar calendar, we have missed the import of this repeated cycle. Few of us have looked at the moon in its orbit and have been moved to praise or to adoration as we contemplate the significance of the signs that these were designed to reveal.

There is another fact that I would call to your attention in the first chapter of John’s gospel. The Lord Jesus Christ is introduced to us in these words, “In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (verses 4&5). The prophet Malachi predicted the coming of the Son of God into the world and called Him the Sun of Righteousness (Malachi 4:2). The sun is the source of light, and the One who is the source of all light came into the world that He might illumine the world by His coming and dispel the darkness by His very presence.

In Philippians 2:14&15 we find that we are to do all things without murmurings and disputings: “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.” The word translated light in Philippians 2:15 is different from the word translated light in John 1:4&5. In the latter, as we have already said, the word signifies that which is a source of light; the word translated light in Philippians 2:15 means to reflect an external light. Christ is light, but we have been made reflectors of light.

If you please, in these two verses we have a contrast between the function of the sun and the function of the moon. The sun is the source of light. It sheds its light on the moon, and the moon as a reflector reflects the light of the sun to the earth. How good a reflector the moon is was testified to by the astronauts when they were within a few miles of its terrain and saw the awesomeness of its surface. It is designed to reflect not its own light, for it has none, but to reflect the light of the sun.

Jesus Christ is the source of light for this darkened world. God has not made us suns; He has made us “moons”—reflectors whereby we receive the light that comes from Him and reflect that light into the darkness in which we live. Our function is not to generate light. Our function is to radiate or reflect in a darkened world the light that comes from the Sun of Righteousness.

If the earth comes between the sun and the moon, the moon will never reflect the light of the sun. The moon then is in eclipse. May I say to you that if you allow anything to come between you and the Sun of Righteousness, His light will be eclipsed in your life, and there will be no light reflected to men who are in darkness. Some of us would have to confess to our shame that the love of this world and the love of the things of this world have so come between us and the Source of Light that we have failed to fulfill our function as illuminators in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. □

(This installment marks the end of this series.)



Doctrinal Studies

Of What Man Is (1)

John Hooper (1495-1555)

(Adapted from the July 1955 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

A mortifying doctrine

Man, fallen from his first dignity and original perfection, is now the creature that fighteth with the law of God; is full of darkness, ignorance, and the contempt of God; without obedience, fear, and love of God; oppressed and subject unto all calamities, and willful concupiscence, both of body and soul.

Man is an enemy of God (Romans 8), the image of the devil, the library of lies, the friend of the devil, right heir of eternal death, and the child of damnation (Ephesians 2). We are murderers by the means of sin, not only of ourselves but also of the Son of God, who never sinned. Yet, not understanding this, our woeful case and condition, we neglect both God and His law and feel not our infirmities and sickness—the more is our health to be despaired of!

He that labors under the dangerous disease and yet feels not the grief thereof, will never find the remedy, nor have the ill removed. We see this to be true by natural reason. Of all diseases, frenzy (madness) is the most dangerous, yet the patient feels it not, nor can show where or how this woeful and miserable disease molests him; therefore, very seldom or never are such persons cured and made whole. Seeing that one's way unto health first must come by the knowledge of the disease, yet man is in himself sick and

infected with a thousandfold more diseases than I have rehearsed. It is not without cause that I say, that to know what man is requires knowledge of the disease, although it seems not so unto such as are drunk with the pleasures of the world and never think from the bottom of their heart to return unto repentance. If the Scripture of God and the writings of learned men cannot persuade them what the wrath of God is against sin, I know well my labors will little avail. Yet, every disciple of Christ is bound to seek the glory of God and salvation of his neighbor and to commit the success unto God.

It is very difficult for man to know himself; the only way thereupon is to examine and open himself before God by the light of the Scripture; he that beholds himself well in the mirror and glass will find such a deformity and disgraced physiognomy that he will abhor his own proportion so horribly disfigured. Let man seek no further than the first great commandment: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.” Then shall man perceive his wretchedness, how that many times he loves nothing less than God or his neighbor; and perceive that he is the friend of the devil and of the world, and a contemner of God.

This way James teaches man to know himself: “But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.” James uses the word “law,” which in the Hebrew phrase signifies a doctrine that teaches, instructs, and leads a man as well unto the knowledge of himself as of God.

So, Paul disputes by admirable analogies in Romans 7 that by the law cometh the knowledge of sin. He calls the law the power and force of sin (1 Corinthians 15). Only the law declares how great an ill that sin is; the man that beholds the will of God in the law will find himself and all his life guilty of eternal death. Read Romans 7 with judgment, and then know what man is, how miserably spoiled of virtue and oppressed with sin. So, Paul learned to know himself and knew not what sin was till the law had made him afraid and showed him that he, being a Pharisee, was with all his holiness, condemned. “For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me” (verse 11). In the same chapter he shows plainly what he saw in the glass and contemplation of the law, that sin was manifested thereby, and the greatness thereof known. “But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful,” proclaims the law to be a spiritual and holy thing, as a light or torch to show man his filthy and stinking nature; saying: “The law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin”; a bondman of sin and traitor to God.

Here thou seest, good reader, what a miserable wretch man is, and how man may know his misery by the law. Howbeit, though we read it many times, we are neither the wiser, nor the better. We are not taught much by this mistress the law; she cannot make us good scholars. We dally and play so with the world; we live in such security and ease that whatsoever she say, we turn the deaf ear and will not hear.

Therefore, to make man know himself, God sendeth another mistress to school him, namely, adversity; then we begin to understand the law of God. As David cries that he is unable to bear the burden of sin if the Lord execute judgment as the greatness thereof merits. If the Lord shouldest be extreme to mark what we have done amiss, who may abide it? (Psalm 130). David, when he felt the pains of his adultery, the death of his child, the conspiracy of Absalom, the vitiating of his wives, exile and banishment, and such other calamities; in this school of misery, he surely learned this verse: “Who can stand before His indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of His anger?” Now, though these temporal pains be more than man can support, they are but sport and dalliance in respect of the eternal pains. Howbeit, man may learn by them how much God is displeased with sin and know himself to be, as he is, a vile piece of earth with all his pride and pomp and a rebel unto his Maker as no creature else is, saving the devil and he.

(To be continued)



Reflections

Evening Twilight (6)

Rev. P. Blok (1920-2019)

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

In the Hospital

“Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies”
(Psalm 103:4).

An elderly mother in Israel made a remarkable statement, “Never ask to become old.” She was thirteen years old when the Lord quickened her, when she learned to know herself as a stranger to God and divine matters. It was the beginning of her life as a stranger and of the dying life that the living Church must go through in the valley of tears. She was ninety-three years old when she made this statement, “Never ask to become old.”

Through experienced self-knowledge, she knew she had to carry a body of sin and death till her last breath. There-

fore, it is a miracle when the end will be peace. New life desires perfection. In eternity this will be the portion of all who are included in Christ. “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.”

The old mother had learned lessons of grace in Christ’s school. In this manner, Jesus taught it personally: “These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

The Lord deals sovereignly with His own; yet, without a desert life no one will inherit the kingdom of God. On her journey through the desert, she twice wore a widow’s garment. She was left with Christ as her husband. “For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is His name;

and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall He be called.”

Our attention to her statement was a result of another statement made by a statesman. He pronounced it to indicate the crisis in which the world found itself. He said, “Millions have evaporated!” This is a profound statement. It teaches that man without God desires a vain possession. A kingdom without God is being built. Money and goods are a vain pursuit. Stability for the future is sought in riches, honor, and common property. “It has evaporated!” It is gone, like vapor rising from the field and disappearing, as if it never existed. This statement is a message for vanity-seeking man. Nothing will endure here.

Also, man is only vanity. He disappears like a vapor, but fallen man does not dwell on that. James wrote in his epistle: “Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”

“It has evaporated!” This is what the Lord discovers to His own when life is set before an all-decisive eternity.

In the morning, we visited an old man in the hospital; he was seriously ill. At four o’clock in the afternoon we were inwardly compelled to visit him again. The doctors had brought him a message that there was no more possibility of healing. His condition did not permit an operation. For him it was the evening twilight of life. The day was short and the night close. He could not meet God, nor could he die. Deeply moved, he lay on his bed; his life had passed away like a vapor. In his perception, life was over, and he stood empty-handed before God. It is true what Isaiah wrote: “Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, He taketh up the isles as a very little thing.” In the sick room, with a man before the gates of eternity, the Lord bound His cause upon the heart and gave ample access to the throne of grace. The union with God’s will caused a pleading upon God’s grace and omnipotence. There was a taking over in heaven, grounded in the intercession of Christ. It had become God’s case.

In the evening, we stood at his sickbed again. We met a different person. What was the cause? The doctors had examined him again, and to their amazement they had to diagnose that the very serious inflammation had disappeared. What had happened here? They were at a loss.

The old man knew the answer. God gave deliverance upon a calling in distress. The next day he could return to his home. The Lord also gave grace to break through so that with boldness he could tell of a miracle not only in nature but, above all, in grace. In his dwelling God’s companions gathered together, united because of God’s miracles.

In this anxious time the statesman said, “It has evaporated.” Nothing is left of it. That is how a life without God ends; life is a shadow that disappears.

God’s Church learns from God’s side that everything evaporates. They have bowed under it; of themselves they have nothing that can exist before God. Yet, they are left with what is of God, and that is sufficient for time and eternity.

It is according to God’s truth and promise: “For all those things hath Mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of

a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word.”

It is to the encouragement of a purified people: “Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”

*O my soul, bless thou Jehovah,
All within me bless His Name;
Bless Jehovah and forget not
All His mercies to proclaim.
He forgives all thy transgressions,
Heals thy sicknesses and pains;
He redeems thee from destruction,
And His love thy life sustains.*

—Psalter 280:1 □

(To be continued)

*God’s Church learns from God’s side
that everything evaporates.
They have bowed under it;
of themselves they have nothing
that can exist before God.
Yet, they are left with what is of God,
and that is sufficient for time
and eternity.*

Some Distinguishing Marks of Grace

One mark of a true convert is that he continues to repent of his sins after he hopes that they are pardoned. All that the hypocrite desires is salvation from punishment, and when he thinks this end is secured, he feels no concern respecting his sins. The true Christian desires to be saved from sin; his hatred of sin, and repentance for it, increase in proportion as his assurance of heaven increases. Another mark is that all disposition to make excuses is taken away. The repentant sinner feels willing to lie at God’s feet and confess his sins without even wishing to excuse them.

—Edward Payson

Farewell

E.G. Bosma, Rijssen, the Netherlands

(Translated from from the June 27, 2013 issue of *De Saambinder* [Slightly adapted to fit the North American context])

The school year is almost over, and the final exams will soon be written. For the graduating classes, this means a graduation ceremony. After thirteen years of education, the time for students and teachers to say goodbye will come. At such times, there can be mixed feelings.

Often there are students who miss a graduation ceremony because they did not finish twelfth grade. This may be a damper on the joy of those who do graduate, especially if it involves a friend who tried his or her very best. Others are happy because they will receive a diploma but carry a great sadness—concerns, sorrows, and problems that dampen joy. Even if none of these are the case, for many it will be a goodbye with mixed feelings. On the one hand, there will be a healthy excitement and curiosity about further education; on the other hand, there may be wistfulness and perhaps fear of having to let go of the familiar. Others may just be glad to finally be out of school to enter the work force or go for further education.

It is no different with teachers. They, too, have mixed feelings when saying goodbye to their students. Joy will prevail if many of their students finish their schooling with a diploma. It is incredibly beautiful to be able to play a role in shaping young people—young people who, after so many years, are ready to begin further education or enter the work force. After years of intensive interaction, there will come a farewell. Over the years, a close bond has developed with many students—a bond of trust, mutual respect, and shared interest. Especially as a homeroom teacher, the contact with such a twelfth-grade class has been intensive. There has been empathy in good and in difficult times.

In the past three years I was the homeroom teacher of the same students as they advanced from the tenth to the twelfth grade. In those three years many things happened. Students have not been spared from concern and sorrow. From adolescent boys and girls, they have developed into young adults. They worked very hard on the subject matter, and it is a great joy for a teacher when there are students who are truly interested in the teacher's subject area/field—sometimes even so much that they will go on to study the subject in question in their further education. That feels good for a teacher. Others, on the other hand, had difficulty with the subject but, due to diligence and perseverance,

still managed to complete the subject satisfactorily. All of this is cause for gratitude.

Not only parenting but also teaching has independence as its ultimate goal, but for parents and teachers it is difficult to let go of their child or student. Will they do well in the future? Is the student sufficiently independent to be successful in further education? However, there may also be more substantial questions. There can be some students you would like to have under your care a little longer because there are concerns about their standing in life. Will they be able to hold onto Christian beliefs against the secular current of society and educational institutions? Are they sufficiently rooted in the Reformed confession to take a stance for God and His Word? Then the question comes directly to us as parents and teachers: have we done everything we could to show them something of the LORD being so worthy to be served? (*Young people, do you know, do you realize that your teachers also have these spiritual concerns for you?* —Ed.)

Even if we have done our utmost to the extent of the talents and skills given to us, we are left with nothing but to have done that which was our duty to do. Saying goodbye to students calls for self-examination. Did I do all that could be done in terms of subject matter? Have I been a good example of diligence and a sense of duty? Above all, have I taken the opportunities to point out to students the one thing necessary? Have I succeeded as a teacher in giving students something more than the curriculum, something even beyond the daily devotions?

At a farewell there are mixed feelings for both students and teachers. There may, yes, there must be gratitude for the results achieved, but there can be worries about the future. Saying goodbye hurts. This is a pain which may be alleviated by a firm reliance on God's fatherly guidance and care. What should also not be missing, however, is a prayer for forgiveness for everything wherein we were remiss—failings with respect to each other and with respect to God. Saying goodbye makes one look back on one's own faults and shortcomings. What remains is the prayer of Moses, the man of God: "And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it" (Psalm 90:17).

Every Christian may say, "Oh, death, where is thy sting?" Death was once indeed a terrible enemy, but now it has become weak. Death spent all its strength on Christ; in killing Him, it killed itself. It was conquered then and now has no power to hurt His followers.

—Jonathan Edwards



Questions & Answers

Questions from Our Readers

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

This time I would like to answer a somewhat different question, pertaining to an apparent contradiction between the Dutch Statenvertaling and the English KJV Bible. An attentive reader of *De Saambinder* (the official periodical of our sister denomination in the Netherlands) noted that in a Scripture reference used in an article that the way the English Bible reads 2 Corinthians 5:11 is quite different from the way it reads in Dutch. The text in question is as follows in English: *“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.”* In Dutch this text reads: “Wij dan, wetende de schrik des Heeren, bewegen de mensen tot het geloof.” Literally translated this would read: “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men to the faith.”

The question, therefore, is whether this rendering suggests that there is something in man that is able to believe while Scripture clearly teaches that natural man is dead in trespasses and sin and is not capable of doing any good.

The answer here, I believe, must be that the one does not exclude the other. If we maintain the scriptural balance between what man has become in Paradise and God’s righteous claim upon fallen man, the answer to the question needs not be as complicated as it may seem at first glance. Let us note that in the Dutch it does not say that we persuade men to believe (as a verb) but to the faith (as a noun.) In essence, this is the same in English, except that “to the faith” is not mentioned while it most certainly implied. In both the Dutch and English Bible there are many words that are not present in the original languages but are added by the translators to make the translation readable.

Interesting to note is that in Acts 18:4 we read a similar text, but in the Dutch Bible “to the faith” is in italics while in 2 Corinthians 5:11 it is not in italics. To what else would Paul be persuading men other than the faith? To despair or to the dead works of the Law? Or to a broken covenant of works? No, to persuade men (to the faith) is the only word possible here and certainly implied even though not mentioned specifically. The Canons of Dort speak similarly in Article 3 of the First Head of Doctrine: “And that men may be brought to believe, God mercifully sends the messengers of these most joyful tidings to whom He will and at what time He pleaseth; by whose ministry men are called to repentance **and faith** in Christ crucified.”

See also Ezekiel 33:11; 2 Corinthians 5:20; Matthew 23:37; Revelation 22:17. Charles Hodge provides a beautiful and to-the-point explanation of the text in question: “Under the influence of the fear of the Lord, we endeavor to convince men, i.e. as he had said in 2 Corinthians 4:2, to commend himself to every man’s conscience, and whether successful in this or not he was at least known to God.”

I would like to make a closing observation in this respect. There certainly is reason to be on guard against sayings and movements also among us today (!) where the state of death of the sinner is actually or implicitly denied and when men are assumed to be able to demonstrate faith and repentance, simply upon “the call” or “the invitation.” At the same time, let us equally be on guard to maintain that the unconditional call of the gospel is fully scriptural and **necessary in order to bring men to believe!** (See the Article of the Canons of Dort just quoted.) It is very unfortunate when in this respect two biblical truths (namely, the state of death of man and the free offer of the gospel) are in our days so quickly and often played out against each other instead of scripturally maintained. It is so sad when these matters lead to a confusion of speech and so much polarization also within our congregations. To urge, call, and persuade men to the faith is fully biblical and we may not label this per definition as free-will or Arminianism. The call to repentance and faith is a serious reminder to us of our guilt and responsibility and may never be minimized. On the contrary, as Rev. Kersten states in his Dogmatics, the comforting doctrine of the unconditional Covenant of Grace does not erase the responsibility man carries for the preaching of God’s Word brought to him. “In light of God’s sincere gospel invitation, this guilt becomes ever greater” (Rev. A. Vergunst in “The Distinctive Theological Identity of the NRC”).

So, also, the Synod of 1931 in the Netherlands stated emphatically that the responsibility of man is rooted in Creation and increases as God deals with men. Therefore, may the Lord grant that also among us there would be more a uniting on the foundation of truth than a dividing and devouring of one another upon that same foundation. ◻

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

The Word of God is dearer to a gracious heart than all the riches in the world. —Thomas Manton



Current Events

Christians Supporting Israel

Israel is at war and Christians are standing with Israel and the Jewish people at levels that are unprecedented in history. More Jews have realized that among people around the world cursing and demonizing Israel, Christian support is indeed sincere and important. An organization is promoting a Global Prayer for Israel on May 15, 2024. This is the day in 1948 that Israel was restored Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel. Israel's enemies refer to this as the "Nakba," the catastrophe of Israel being born. If any reminder were needed after October 7, these enemies aspire to destroy Israel. At war for seven months following the inhumane Hamas massacre of October 7, and being attacked by Iran and others, the significance of Jews and Christians coming together has never been greater. Israelis and Jews around the world have never felt more alone since the Holocaust. It was said, "Other than Jews and Christians sharing the common faith that God hears and answers our prayers, the Global Prayer for Israel will be an encouragement for Israelis and Jews around the world." (*Dear reader, while May 15 has been setup by this organization as one day to pray for Israel, are we praying often for Israel? In our homes, in our schools, in our consistories, and with our congregations? —Ed*)

—Crosswalk.com

Abortion Ban from the Past Is Quickly Repealed

A Civil War-era law still on the books in Arizona which banned nearly all abortions was deemed enforceable in the state in early April. By May, the Arizona Senate repealed it in a weeks-long legislative scramble to respond to the state Supreme Court's upholding the total ban law from 1864. The new bill, which the state House approved the previous week, will soon head to the governor and she is expected to sign it. Two Republicans joined all fourteen Democrats in the narrowly divided Senate in approving a repeal of the 1864 law, which held the power to send a doctor to prison for providing nearly any kind of abortion procedure. Before casting her pivotal vote, one of those two republican senators explained her support for repeal, while also making clear her opposition to reproductive health groups and abortion providers like Planned Parenthood.

—NBCNews.com

Assisted Suicide in Minnesota?

Proposed medical aid in dying legislation promises to be an ongoing issue in Minnesota, where some in the disability community fear being devalued or coerced. Critics point to Canada as a cautionary tale. A Minnesota mother saw a story about Canada's medical assistance in dying law. It shook her. "Alberta judge greenlights euthanasia for twenty-seven-year-old autistic woman despite objections from her dad, who says she's healthy—just 'vulnerable' due to mental health problems," read the headline. This mother thought of her adult son, whose disabilities render him nonverbal, barely mobile and dependent on round-the-clock care. If Minnesota passes medical aid in dying legislation, she wondered what might that mean for her son. Her thoughts went to what would happen after she passed away and her son had a public guardian. Would they decide the compassionate thing to do is just to let him die? Minnesota's proposed medical aid in dying legislation is called assisted suicide by opponents. Many Minnesotans with terminal diseases have pleaded with legislators to pass the legislation quickly, calling it a simple

matter of personal autonomy. The controversial law is unlikely to pass this session, legislators say. Yet similar bills have been proposed in each legislative session for the past decade and leaders indicate they will keep trying.

—StarTribune.com

Florida Files Lawsuit Seeking to Block Title IX Changes

Florida filed a lawsuit seeking to block President Biden's changes to Title IX. Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina were also on board with the lawsuit. The Biden administration's changes to Title IX prevent schools from banning biological males from competing in women's sports, among other things. "Florida is suing the Biden Administration over its unlawful Title IX changes. Biden is abusing his constitutional authority to push an ideological agenda that harms women and girls and conflicts with the truth," the governor wrote. "We will not comply, and we will fight back against Biden's harmful agenda." Several other organizations are also listed as plaintiffs in the complaint. These revisions to Title IX redefine "sex" as "gender identity" and "sexual orientation," while also requiring schools to ensure students use "preferred pronouns" for their classmates. If not, the school is at risk of losing federal funding. Under the rule, a school must also not separate or treat people differently based on sex, which will allow locker rooms and bathrooms to be based on gender identity. The lawsuit reads, "While different administrations can have different policy views, they cannot override the text that Congress enacted in 1972 or overrule the binding precedent of this circuit. The Biden rule does both—to the detriment of the states, their schools, and their students. For a host of reasons, this new rule violates the Administrative Procedure Act and should be set aside."

—FoxNews.com

Bill C-367 Threatens Religious Freedom in Canada

Lawmakers want to amend Canada's Bill 63 (Online Harms Act) "to stop religion from being used as a defense for hate speech." In a similar vein they have introduced private member's Bill C-367 to repeal the religious defense available to an accused person when criminally charged with promoting hatred or anti-Semitism. To date, when a person charged with willfully promoting hatred has tried to rely on the religious defense (expressing or attempting to establish by an argument an opinion on a religious subject or an opinion based on a belief in a religious text), courts have rejected that defense when the accused person mixed hatred with religious statements. In other words, this defense has not been a free pass to invoke religion when spewing hate. Yet there are numerous examples of religious teachings which, in Canada in 2024, would readily be construed as the criminal promotion of hatred against an identifiable group if religious defense was removed from the Criminal Code. Some would argue that it is silly to worry about religious texts being criminalized as illegal hate speech. They would do well to remember the promise that was made by LGBTQ advocates in the 1990s to never censor religious people who teach what their sacred texts say about homosexuality. Today, publicly proclaiming what religious texts teach about sexuality is now borderline illegal; one needs to choose his words very carefully. Censorship spreads like a cancer. If religious claims about sexuality and salvation are criminalized, other ideas, beliefs, and opinions will also fall victim to that same cancer.

—JCCF.ca

Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of His willingness. —Martin Luther



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

The Life of Rev. G.H. Kersten as Told to His Grandchildren (1)

(Adapted from the book *Religious Stories for Young and Old, Volume IV*)

Spared in his youth

From his very youth, Henry, as your grandfather was called, had a strong desire to search the Scriptures and to read and study the sermons and other writings of the godly forefathers. That desire was so strong that he even sacrificed his night's rest for it. Until late at night Henry sat up while his brother was sleeping. Didn't he get sleepy, you might ask? Surely, he sometimes did. What did he do then? He quietly went to the kitchen to make coffee, strong coffee, to keep him awake. When after some time, the coffee no longer kept him from getting sleepy, do you know what he did then? He took a bin of cold water in which to dip his feet; this woke him up again, so that he could continue reading until sometimes one or two o'clock in the morning. His brother began to dislike Henry's keeping the light on so late.

One day he said, "Henry, I wish you would stop reading until midnight; you keep me from sleeping. I better tell Mother about it."

It was midnight or about 1 A.M. when Henry's mother came quietly into his bedroom. She was surprised and said, "Henry, aren't you sleeping yet? See what time it is. You must not stay up this late; you are naughty."

Do you know what answer he gave her? "Mother, should I not know how the Lord converts His people?" His mother kissed him goodnight, went back to bed, but thought much of that answer Henry had given to her.

When Henry was fourteen years old, he became very ill. He had a type of blood disease. The result of this was that he grew so weak that he was unconscious several times. His sickness turned for the worse, and the doctor gave no hope of recovery. One day the doctor came to see Henry again.

Finding him worse, he said to his mother, "I am sorry, madam, but I am afraid your son won't make it. His body doesn't respond to the medicine. There is nothing I can do for him. He is seriously ill and won't live long anymore." This caused deep sorrow in the mother's heart.

After the doctor had left, Henry who had just come out of a swoon and had heard the doctor's remark about him, called his mother to his bedside and asked, "Mother, what did the doctor say?"

With tears in her eyes, she looked at her son but gave no answer. "Mom," he faintly said again, "tell me, what did the doctor say?"

"I would rather not say, my boy."

When Henry urged her, she told him that the doctor had no hope of recovery for him, and she added, "Henry, what if you die?"

"Did the doctor say I must die?"

"Yes, Henry," she answered, and weeping, left him.

"Mom, Mom, come back, I must tell you something." With a weak voice he uttered,

"Mother, what the doctor said cannot be true."

"Why not, my boy?" she asked Henry with reviving hope in her soul.

Then he told his mother what the Lord had spoken to him, namely, these words, "With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation" (Psalm 91:16). Oh, how pleased Henry's mother was! From that moment, Henry recovered quickly. The next day the doctor called again.

The very first thing he asked was, "Madam, is your son living yet?"

"Come and see, doctor," she answered.

When he saw Henry sitting in his bed and noticing how much he had recovered, he said, "Mrs. Kersten, you know I don't believe in wonders, but a wonder has happened. According to medical science, he could



Young Rev. G.H. Kersten

not have lived one day longer, and now he is so much better. I can't understand it."

Not long after this, Henry received another privilege. The Lord spoke to him: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins" (Isaiah 40:1&2). Henry knew he could not die from his serious illness. The Lord had work for him to do. He must become a laborer in God's vineyard. One day the minister, Rev. Pieneman from Rotterdam, came to see him. He had heard of Henry's sickness and also of his miraculous healing.

"Henry," he began, "you were seriously ill. Are you better now?"

"Yes, thank you. I soon hope to go to school again."

"That is nice, but were you not afraid to die? You were given up by the doctor, I understand."

"No, Reverend, I was not afraid to die."

"Why not?"

"That is a secret I would rather not speak about."

"Come on, tell me..."

"No, I am sorry. It is a secret between the Lord and my soul."

The minister would not press Henry to give his secret away but said to him, "Come to see me soon and stay for the weekend."

A few months later, Henry went to see Rev. Pieneman in Rotterdam. Knowing Henry was coming, Rev. Pieneman had also invited several of God's people to visit for that Saturday afternoon. After having introduced Henry to them, Rev. Pieneman informed the people that Henry had been very sick but that the Lord had healed him in a miraculous way. He also told them that Henry had not been afraid to die, and addressing himself to Henry, he said kindly, "Are you willing to tell me now why you were not afraid to die?"

"No, Reverend" the reply was, "I cannot do that."

"Can you come with me upstairs to my study room?" the minister asked.

Both left that room and being alone, Rev. Pieneman said, "Now will you tell me, Henry? Why you were not afraid of death?"

"No, Reverend, as I told you, it is a secret between the Lord and my soul."

"But I am your minister, and I think you should tell me."

After deliberating a few minutes, Henry answered, "If you promise not to tell anyone."

"O.K., my young friend, O.K.," said Rev. Pieneman.

Then Henry told his minister how the Lord had promised him to satisfy him with a long life and show him His salvation (Psalm 91:16).

"So, so, I am pleased to hear this," said Rev. Pieneman. "But is there not another reason?"

Hesitating for a short while whether to tell Rev. Pieneman this secret or not, Henry answered, "Yes, the Lord appeared unto me with these words: Comfort ye, comfort ye my people..." (Isaiah 40:1&2).

"Did I not think it!" Rev. Pieneman remarked happily. "Didn't I think it! Come on, let us go downstairs, the people are waiting."

"Don't say anything! You promised," Henry said.

The room was filled with people waiting for the return of the minister and Henry. Opening the door, Rev. Pieneman said, "Friends, here is the new minister."

Your grandfather told us more than once how these words of Rev. Pieneman had struck him. He felt as if he were sinking through the floor. However, the Lord confirmed what He had spoken to him. He preached for the first time when he was only nineteen years old, but that is a story in itself.

(To be continued)

Faith

How many, alas, of the precious saints of God must we shut out from being believers if there is no faith but what amounts to assurance...? Shall we say their faith went away in the departure of their assurance? How oft then in a year may a believer be no believer? Even as often as God withdraws and leaves the creature in the dark.

Assurance is like the sunflower, which opens with the day and shuts with the night. It follows the motion of God's face; if that looks smilingly on the soul, it lives; if that frowns or hides itself, it dies. Faith is a plant that can grow in the shade, a grace that can find the way to heaven in a dark night. It can "walk in darkness and yet trust in the name of the LORD."

—William Gurnall



Bible Stories for Little Ones

David Spares Saul's Life a Second Time

(Based on 1 Samuel 26 & 27)

David had now married Abigail, but that did not mean that his troubles were over. Not at all! After leaving the plains of Paran, near Carmel in Judah, he again had to hide from Saul. David hid in Ziph. David had hid in Ziph before. Saul had almost found him there—but then Saul had to leave because the Philistines had come into the land. The last time David had gone to Ziph, the people there had betrayed him to Saul. This time, too, they hurried and told Saul, “David is hiding in our hills again!”

As soon as Saul heard where David was hiding, he hurried there. What? Didn't he stop to think about the last time he had seen David, when David had spared his life in the cave? Didn't he remember how awful he had felt for trying to capture such a man? No, he didn't. Some people act the same way. They weep bitterly day and night for their sins, but—in a few days—what happens? It all goes away, and they are even harder than they were before; they have forgotten how sorrowful they felt. It was all temporary.

David hadn't seen many people near his hiding spot, so when he heard and saw thousands of men entering the wilderness near him, he grew afraid. Could that be Saul coming with his men? He would send out some men to look. Soon David's spies were back. Yes, that was Saul! Saul was trying to capture David again. Poor David. What could he do now? David went to the only One who could help him.

Now David knew where Saul was, but Saul didn't know where David was, and that gave David time to think about what he should do. David could see that Saul's tent was in the middle of the camp, with all the men's tents around his. The general of the army, a man named Abner, was supposed to be guarding Saul. David quietly crept closer to the tents.

Then he asked two of his men, “Which of you wants to go down with me into Saul's camp?”

“I will go with you,” one of them, Abishai, answered. He was David's nephew, which means he would call David, “Uncle.”

So, late at night the two men quietly stole up to Saul. How calmly he slept, his spear stuck in the ground next to him and a bottle of water lying nearby. What had happened to Abner, who was

supposed to be guarding his king and what about the other three thousand men? Were they all sleeping? Yes, they were! God had caused a very deep sleep to come upon them, so that they didn't know anything was happening.

Abishai thought he had a good idea. “Look how God has brought Saul to you,” he said. “I have his spear right here, and I can kill him for you.”

However, David didn't like that plan. “No, I don't want that,” he said. “That would be wrong. God made him king, so we may not hurt him. One day God will punish him—I don't know how or when, but I know He will do it.” Then David told Abishai, “Take the spear and the bottle of water, and then let's go back.”

As soon as he was safely away from Saul's camp, David called out, “Abner, Abner! Aren't you going to answer me?”

Saul's general awakened. Was someone calling him? Who could it be? “Who is calling to the king?” he cried.

“Abner!” David called again. “You were supposed to be guarding the king, but you weren't; you were sleeping. Look, I came into your camp, and I'll prove it to you—see, here's the king's spear and his water.”

Now Saul was awake. “David, my son David, is that you?” he asked.

“Yes, it is,” came back David's voice. “Why are you hunting me again? What have I done to you?”

Once more Saul felt terrible inside. “I am wrong,” he replied. “I've done wrong, and I promise I won't hunt you anymore. You could have killed me, but you didn't.”

David still had Saul's spear and water bottle, so he told Saul to send one of his men to get it. Probably he did not trust Saul enough to bring it back himself.

Saul blessed David and told him, “You will do great things, and you will make it through all your troubles.” and then he went home.

We don't read much more in the Bible about Saul going after David in those last days of his life, but he wouldn't give up trying to capture David, so David went to hide in the land of the Philistines. Then Saul stopped looking for him.

Now Achish was the king of Gath in the Philistine country where David hid. At first David stayed with

Achish in the city of Gath. Later, when David asked for a town in which to live, Achish gave David the city of Ziklag.

All of God's people have high points and low points in their lives, and this was one of David's low points. He should have trusted God to keep him safe instead

of hiding in an enemy country where he had to tell many lies so that King Achish would let him stay.

What happens when God's people live such a life? Does God bless them? Do they have any peace in their lives? No, then all is trouble, and that is what David found living there.



Bible Quiz

Fire

Dear Boys and Girls,

James and Micah set their snowy boots and wet gloves side by side to dry. Teeth chattering, they hurried to the rug in front of the wood stove and held their hands out in front of them. Ah! The fire would soon warm them; how good it felt!

Their sister Leah held up a sheet of paper. "Guess what I am bringing to Current Events class tomorrow," she declared. "This article tells all about the fire that destroyed the mall downtown. You should see the picture; it's awful!"

The boys didn't budge away from the warm stove with its glowing fire, but they squinted their eyes to see the picture Leah held up. "Wow!" Micah gasped. "That's a huge fire!"

Leah nodded. "Yes, by the time the fire department came, it was already too late. That fire moved fast!"

James stared thoughtfully into the flames in front of him. How strange. Here he was, warming himself by a fire, a good, warm, helpful fire, while downtown, that fire had consumed everything in its path and hurt several people too.

In the Bible, we read the word "fire" 474 times. Many times, fire portrayed God's presence. Fire came down on Mount Sinai when God came to speak and bring the Law. Fire burned in the bush when God came to speak to Moses in the wilderness. In Leviticus we read that fire came down and consumed the burnt sacrifice which Moses and Aaron offered, and in Judges, fire descended and burned up the sacrifice which Manoah and his wife offered to the Lord before Samson's birth.

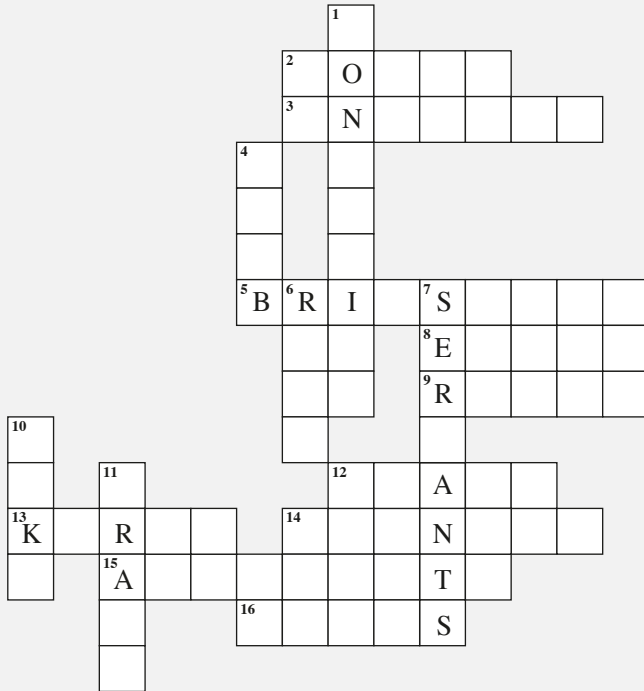
Fire also speaks of God's wrath. We read, "For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire," (Deuteronomy 4) and "For our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12).

Think of Sodom and Gomorrah. How terrible was the fire and brimstone which God rained down on these cities in his wrath over the sins of the inhabitants! We also read of hell as a dreadful "lake of fire," "hell fire," "everlasting burnings," and "the fire that never shall be quenched." There, God's wrath shall never be quenched.

Fire is also mentioned in a different way. There can be a fiery zeal to spread God's Word, and there is the fire of the Holy Spirit's work. When God begins His work in the heart, it will always continue to burn; it will never go out. Sometimes that work burns brightly. Other times, the flame is very small, but when the Holy Spirit comes to fan that little flame, the longings in the heart will once again begin to burn.

How can it be that fire can be God's saving work and can also be God's wrath? Well, perhaps it can be compared to this story: A boy once asked a minister, "The Bible says that God is love. It also says that God is a consuming fire. How can both be true?" In answer, the minister pointed to a flower growing on a bush. "Look," he said, "that flower is blooming and thriving because of the warm sun shining on it." The minister reached down and picked the flower, snapping the stem. "What will happen now?" he said. "The sun will now make this flower wither and shrivel up. The flower will soon die. Do you see? First the flower could not live without the sun. Now the sun will consume it because the flower is no longer connected to its roots. We can compare this with someone who has been rooted in Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit—for this person, God is life and love and light. However, for someone who is outside of Christ and not in communion with God, God will be a consuming fire when they continue in their evil way."

Fill in the crossword puzzle with the answers to each Bible verse below.



Across

- 2. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this _____ (Matthew 13)
- 3. A fire goeth before Him, and burneth up His _____ round about. (Psalm 97)
- 5. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah _____ and fire from the Lord out of heaven (Genesis 19)
- 8. And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of _____ (Exodus 9)
- 9. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the _____ are thrown down by Him. (Nahum 1)
- 12. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a _____ of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed (Exodus 3)
- 13. And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with _____, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign. (Numbers 26)
- 14. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a _____, and the whole mount quaked greatly. (Exodus 19)

15. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he _____? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap. (Malachi 3)

16. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their _____, saith the Lord God. (Ezekiel 22)

Down

- 1. For our God is a _____ fire. (Hebrews 12)
- 4. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the _____ for a burnt offering? (Genesis 22)
- 6. And now also the axe is laid unto the _____ of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. (Matthew 3)
- 7. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the _____, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone. (Job 1)
- 10. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the _____ of fire. (Revelation 20)
- 11. How long, Lord? wilt thou hide thyself for ever? shall Thy _____ burn like fire? (Psalm 89)

For the Older Children

17. Unscramble every word in this verse:

Dan lhals sact meht tino a nrceauf fo reif:
reeht lhsal eb iigwaln nad gnshiang fo tthee.

For the Younger Children

18. Fill in these words:

FELL SAW WALKED WARMED WENT

- Daniel's friends _____ in the fire. (Daniel 3:25)
- The lunatic boy _____ in the fire. (Matthew 17:15)
- Peter _____ himself by the fire. (John 18:18)
- The disciples _____ a fire with fish and bread laid thereon. (John 21:9)
- The Lord _____ before the Israelites in a pillar of fire by night. (Exodus 13:21)

Answers to May's "Birds" quiz:

1. Fir trees Psalm 104:17
2. Dove Psalm 55:6
3. Pelican and owl Psalm 102:6
4. Fowls Psalm 50:11
5. Ravens
6. Dove
7. Winged fowl
8. Turtledoves
9. Vulture
10. Feathered fowls
11. Bird
12. Fowls
13. Fowls
14. Crane
15. Hawk
16. Great owl, Swan
17. Swallow Psalm 84:3
18. Sparrow Psalm 102:7
19. Two Matthew 10:29
20. Many Matthew 10:31
21. Birds Genesis 40:17
22. Raven Genesis 8:7
23. Ravens 1 Kings 17:6

Please send your answers to the address shown below:

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

Answers to previous quizzes were received in April from:

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Clay Bakker | Logan Grisnich (2) | Hunter Timmer |
| Paige Bakker | Kate Hoogendoorn | Kadin Timmer |
| Eryn Bisschop | Weston Hoogendoorn | Laurencia Timmer |
| Britni Blom (3) | Abraham Mol | Sierra Timmer |
| Carly Brouwer (2) | Teddy Mol | Sofia Timmer |
| Derek Brouwer (2) | Blake Pannekoek | Daniel VanHarten |
| Thomas Brouwer (2) | Lauren Pannekoek | Ellen VanHarten |
| Maya Chase (2) | Daniel Remijn | Sarah VanHarten |
| Oakley Chase (2) | Lauren Remijn | Taya Van Voorst (2) |
| Cody Driesen | Anna Spaans | Adalyn Vande Waerdt |
| Ethan Driesen | Asher Spaans | Joelle Vande Waerdt |
| Jordan Driesse | Brogan Spaans | Sophia Vande Waerdt |
| Kailyn Driesse (2) | Levi Spaans | Wyatt Vande Waerdt |
| Lindsey Driesse (2) | Micah Spaans | Joanna Verhoef |
| Allison Ekema | Samuel Spaans | Jayden Weeda |
| Kaylynn Ekema | Tessa Spaans | Nathan Wesdyk |
| Bereket Engelsma | Brandon Ten Hove | Lane Ymker |
| Kyal Grisnich (2) | Hannah-Jo Ten Hove | Lauren Ymker (2) |
| Kynlee Grisnich | Almonzo Timmer | |



God's Unerring Providence

Those circumstances which to the dim eye of Jacob's faith wore a hue so somber were at that very moment developing and perfecting the events which were to shed around the evening of his life the halo of a glorious and cloudless sunset. All things were working together for his good! Thus, troubled soul, the "much tribulation" will soon be over, and as you enter the "kingdom of God" you shall then see no longer "through a glass darkly" but in the unshadowed sunlight of the divine presence that "all things" did "work together" for your personal and eternal good.

—Arthur W. Pink

News & Announcements

■ Ministerial Calls

Accepted:

By Rev. E. Maljaars of Tarija, Bolivia, to the congregation of Courtland, Ontario.

Extended:

To Rev. E. Maljaars of Tarija, Bolivia, by the congregation of Courtland, Ontario.

To Rev. P.C. Vlot, of Krabbendijke, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Declined:

By Rev. E. Maljaars of Tarija, Bolivia, to the congregations of Chilliwack, British Columbia; Markham, Ontario; Sioux Center, Iowa; Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Sunnyside, Washington; Waupun, Wisconsin.

By Rev. P.C. Vlot, of Krabbendijke, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Kalamazoo, Michigan.

■ Obituaries

TENELSHOF, Richard James (Dick) – Age 78, May 4, 2024; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Wife – Jenny; Children – Rich & Karen, Tim & Cara, Jonathan & Elise, Kate & Dave Taft; 13 grandchildren; Brothers – Paul & Marie, John & Barb; In-laws – Maria VanHamburg, Hank & Linda Kegel, John & Nancy Kegel, Ann & Jerry Sporte, Fred & Marie Kegel; predeceased by granddaughters Hannah and Lydia. (Rev. H. Hofman, John 11:15.)

VAN DER MEULEN, Gerrit (George) – Age 84, April 30, 2024; Grimsby, Ontario; Wife – Greta (nee Tigchelaar, deceased); Children – Herman & Evelyn, Ann & Andy Defreitas, Karl & Audrey, Benjamin & Grace, David & Karen, Fran & Andrew Damm; 20 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren; Siblings – Harmen & Gerda; In-laws – Teuni, Margaret Tigchelaar, Flora DenBok, Grace Tigchelaar, Joanne & Allan Heidbuurt. (Rev. H. de Leeuw, Ecclesiastes 12:7.)

VLIETSTRA, Alice – Age 92, May 1, 2024; Glenwood, New Jersey; Siblings – Wilma Vander Waal, Dr. Frederick & Sue, Joan & Walter Heerschap; many nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews. (Rev. H. de Leeuw, Hebrews 9:27&28.)

■ Erratum

Please note that the incorrect time for Courtland's evening service was inadvertently published in the *2024 Church & School Directory*. The correct start time for the service is 7:00 P.M.

—The Book & Publishing Committee

In Memoriam

Mr. Richard TenElshof

On Saturday, May 4, 2024, it pleased the Lord to remove from his beloved family and congregation Mr. Richard TenElshof at the age of seventy-eight years. Mr. TenElshof served the Grand Rapids (Beckwith) congregation faithfully as elder from 2013-2019. May the Lord remember and uphold the mourning widow and family, and may this calling be sanctified in our congregation.

— The Beckwith NRC Consistory

■ Nursing Positions Available at Eventide Home

Eventide Home in Lethbridge, Alberta, is looking to hire nurses for full-time or part-time work. This is an exciting opportunity to build your nursing career in southern Alberta. At Eventide Home, care is provided for the seniors of our community in a way that reflects the shared traditions and doctrinal beliefs of the NRC and God's Word. We are willing to assist in finding housing arrangements. For more information or to apply, please contact Paul Vanden Broek at (403) 320-0655 or Manager@Eventidehome.ca

■ Classis Far West Youth Conference

July 6, 2024 D.V.

The Lethbridge NRC hopes to host the annual Classis Far West Youth Conference in Lethbridge on July 6, 2024, D.V. We welcome all young people ages 16+ to attend for a day filled with topics and activities. To register or make arrangements for accommodations please text 403-635-0846, or email jerkelens23@gmail.com

■ Classis East and Midwest Youth Conference

August 15-18, 2024 D.V.

Classis East and Midwest will be holding a joint Youth Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on August 16&17. Activities will be organized starting Thursday evening with the main topics and discussions scheduled for Saturday, August 17, at Plymouth Christian School. All young people entering tenth grade or age sixteen and older are invited and encouraged to attend. The main topics will be led by Rev. Hofman. To register or make arrangements

for accommodations, text 616-329-0705 or email gryouthday2024@gmail.com

■ Grand Rapids Young Adults (Post-High School) Trip

August 15-18, 2024 D.V.

A two-day trip to a camp in northern Michigan for post-high school young adults is again being organized by a committee under the oversight of the Grand Rapids Beckwith consistory. The overnight trip will be Thursday to Friday evening. Rev. Hofman and others hope to provide meaningful topics and discussions on Saturday, August 17, at Plymouth Christian School. For additional information and to register for the trip, text 616-329-0705 or email nrcmackinawtrip@gmail.com

50th Wedding Anniversary

The Lord willing, on June 5, 2024, our dear parents and grandparents,

Ron & Joyce Maassen

hope to commemorate their 50th wedding anniversary.

"With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2).

3451 Jackson Avenue, Boyden, IA 51234

65th Wedding Anniversary

The Lord willing, our dear parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents,

Bill & Tanny Vermeer

hope to commemorate their 65th wedding anniversary on June 25, 2024.

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

52694 Parkrose Wynd, Rosedale, BC V0X 1X1

Promises, though they be for a time seemingly delayed, cannot be finally frustrated.... The heart of God is not turned though His face be hid, and prayers are not flung back though they be not instantly answered.

—Timothy Cruso

Minutes of Classis Far West 2024 Meeting (Summary)

Rev. E.C. Adams of Picture Butte NRC delivered the Classis prayer service on the evening of March 19, 2024, in the Chilliwack church. His text was taken from Amos 7:7-9. Theme: The Vision of the Plumb Line. Points: 1) The prophet who saw the plumb line; 2) The wall measured according to the plumb line; 3) The fallen wall because of the plumb line.

Article 1—Opening

The Classis meeting convened at 9:00 A.M. on Wednesday, March 20, 2024, in the sanctuary of the Chilliwack NRC. On behalf of the calling church of Sunnyside, Rev. H.D. den Hollander opened the meeting with a request to sing Psalter 250:1, 2&5 and read Psalm 119:25-32. He then offered an opening prayer. He welcomed the delegates and the visitors. Rev. den Hollander spoke a few words on Psalm 119:32. This verse speaks of the enlargement of the heart. When true regeneration is given, the soul goes out after the Lord with freedom and liberty. Then we begin to do what we were created to do. Then our desires go out after the Lord more than after the world. When our heart is enlarged our whole life—walk, wealth—are dedicated to God. This is not only in the beginning, but also on our travels through life. David did not feel this every day. If he received this light he will not only go in that way, but will run. We are unable to do so unless God enlarges our heart. Is that a burden unto us? May God help us in the use of the means.

Article 2 & 3—Credentials & Election of Moderamen

The credentials were examined and approved.

President – Rev. J. den Hoed (by rotation)

Vice President – Rev. E.C. Adams (by rotation)

Clerk – Elder Arie Van Wingerden (by election)

Treasurer – Elder Frank Les (by appointment)

Article 4—Minutes

The minutes of the Classis meeting held on October 18, 2023, were approved by the moderamen.

Article 5—Correspondence

There was no correspondence to report.

Article 6—Reports

A report of the visitation of the Chilliwack congregation performed by Rev. den Hoed and Elder J. DeBruin of Lynden was read. All things were found to be in good order.

Article 7—Submitted Points

The consistory of Nobleford requested clarification or correction regarding the following statement, “We as Classis confirm the right to go to the NRC church of choice following longstanding policy,” as recorded in the Minutes of October 18, 2023, point F.1 since point F.2b in the Minutes of October 19, 2022, says, “They be advised that, for good order, they should attend the NRC congregation that is closest by” as established procedure.

Classis decision: The Classis explained to the Nobleford delegates that they fully stood behind both of these statements as there was no

conflict between them. The Nobleford delegates accepted the explanation given.

The Picture Butte consistory believes that our forefathers in composing the Church Order of Dort, have seen the necessity of an orderly method of dealing with ecclesiastical/church matters. In 2019 the Dutch Synodical committee “Kerkrecht” has provided the Gereformeerde Gemeenten in the Netherlands with a revised version and explanation of this church order in a book entitled *...en met orde*. The Picture Butte consistory believes that, especially in the time in which we live, it is of great importance that we have a church order that can be precisely followed. Therefore, the Picture Butte Consistory requests Classis Far West to forward to Synod 2024 the following: 1) That Synod adopt the revised version of the Church Order of Dort, and 2) That Synod arrange a precise translation of the revised version and explanation of the same, as found in the book *...en met orde*.

Classis Decision: The Classis agreed to forward to the Synod the following request: That the Synod would consider the current church order adopted by the Gereformeerde Gemeenten in the Netherlands and have the book *...en met orde* translated.

The Sunnyside consistory requested the Classis to forward to the Synod a request to revisit their decision to ban all sermons and writings of all deposed ministers. They requested that a more nuanced approach be considered, taking in account the varied circumstances for the deposition.

Classis Decision: The Classis agreed to forward this point to the Synod.

Article 8—Synodical Delegates

The delegates and alternates to the Synod were chosen.

Article 9—Moderatorships

The moderatorships remained unchanged.

Article 10—Customary Questions

A question was asked about the place and date of the next youth conference. Lethbridge will host the conference and will set a date in the near future. Artesia asked about the Classis-assigned visit by Rev. P. van Ruitenburg. He is unable to visit at the moment; therefore, Rev. Adams will perform this duty. It was suggested that the congregations in the Classis consider sending an elder periodically to give aid to Elder Wisse.

Article 12—Arrangements for the Next Classis Meeting

The next meeting will be held in Picture Butte on March 26, 2025 (if a fall meeting is necessary it will be held on October 23, 2024). Artesia will be the calling church. Rev. P. Kleijer will preach a prayer service the preceding evening. By rotation Rev. Adams will serve as President and Rev. Kleijer as Vice-President. Rev. den Hollander will make a presentation at the Office Bearer’s Conference.

Article 13—Closing

Rev. Adams asked the Classis to sing Psalter 368:1-3 and then closed with prayer.

■ 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.**

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

EBEN-EZER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, is inviting applications to fill a full-time secondary teacher/administrator position for the 2024-25 school year, D.V. We would be gladdened by inquiries and applications of individuals who are qualified, versatile, and dedicated but who also love the doctrine according to godliness. For more information about this position, please contact the principal, Mr. A. Vrugteveen at 905-563-3077 or principal@ecschool.ca. Please send applications to the secretary of the school board, Mr. G. Brouwer, 1372 Gregory Road N., St. Catharines, Ontario, L2R 6P9 or call 647-271-8984, or email gerry@ecschool.ca

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, or John Van Der Brink (administrator) at 973-628-7400 or email nrce_office@nrce.nj.org

To All Candidates for Education Positions

Please visit advertising.nrcea.education for an up-to-date listing of job openings in NRCEA schools as well as links to the school websites for more information about the positions and the schools. When accessing the job bank on the NRCEA SharePoint, please use the following:

User Name:

advertising@nrcea.education

Password: **Schooljobs!**

Teachers Needed

CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, COAL-HURST, ALBERTA, invites applications from elementary or secondary teachers for the 2024-25 school year, D.V. 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. Should the Lord incline your heart to apply, please submit a cover letter and resumé with references to office@ccschool.ca

EBEN-EZER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, is inviting applications to fill full-time *educational assistant* position to work with a special needs student, beginning September 2024, D.V. We would be gladdened by an inquiry and application of someone who is versatile and dedicated, who also loves the doctrine according to godliness. For more information on this position, please contact Mr. A. Vrugteveen, at principal@ecschool.ca or call 905-563-3077.

Please send applications to the secretary of the school board, Mr. G. Brouwer, 1385 Third Ave., St. Catharines, Ontario, L2R 6P9. Email: gerry@ecschool.ca

EBENEZER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN, is in urgent need of a teacher for the 2024-25 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

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@nrce.lynden.org or the school board president, Mr. Jerry DeBruin, at 360-224-0901 or jdebruin3797@gmail.com

NERIAH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CALGARY, ALBERTA, is looking for an educational assistant for the 2024-25 school year, assisting in a one room multigrade classroom. This unique position is for an organized, flexible team player, willing to learn and able to transition between grade levels, who will report directly to the current teacher/principal. The position is for two days per week, subject to increase in future years pending student enrollment. Applicants must be a member of the Netherlands Reformed congregations or a closely related denomination. For more information or to apply (before the end of April 2024), contact the principal, Darlene Dekker, at darlene.dekker@neriahcs.ca or school board president, Mr. Daniel Visser, at 403-554-1097 or email visser.daniel@outlook.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@nrcea.org

OBADIAH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, GIROUX, MANITOBA, is looking for help with educating our middle and secondary students for the 2024-2025 school year. If you are interested in this position, please reach out to Jonathan Barten for details at 204-408-4006 or JBarten.OCS.Giroux@gmail.com

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, NORWICH, ONTARIO, is welcoming applications for a grade 6 and a grade 7 teacher as well as for several high school teachers in various disciplines.

For more information about the elementary opportunities, contact Mr. Andrew Korevaar, at elementaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com or 519-495-6629.

For information about secondary opportunities, contact Mr. Gerrit TenHove, at secondaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com or 519-536-3689.

We continue to invite inquiries about our locally developed teaching training program. Cover letters and resumes should be submitted to hr@rcsnorwich.com. Applications will be reviewed, and those applicants selected for interviews will be contacted by the school board.

Foolish talking and jesting are not the ways in which Christian cheerfulness should express itself, but rather "giving of thanks" (Ephesians 5:4). Religion is the source of joy and gladness, but its joy is expressed in a religious way, in thanksgiving and praise.

—Charles Hodge

From **THE BANNER OF TRUTH**
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We Walk by Faith, Not by Sight

Why should a pilgrim grope within,
And judge by what he feels?
A loathsome stench of death and sin
No consolation yields.

Corruptions, base and foul as hell,
May vex and tease the soul;
But Jesus' blood its rage can quell,
And make the conscience whole.

I have no life, no light, no love,
No truth or righteousness,
That God, my Father, can approve,
Or justice can caress.

But what I have in Christ, my Head,
And grace on me bestows;
My life with Christ in God is hid,
And He'll redress my woes.

In this dear Christ I all things have;
Why should I yield to fear?
All that a living soul can crave,
Is richly treasured here.

In Him I stand completely just;
His heart is my abode;
Though in myself, at best, but dust,
In Him I've power with God.

—William Gadsby

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