

the Banner of Truth

July 2024
Volume 90, No. 7

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



In this issue...

Jesus Presented to the Lord
The Profitable Life
A Safe Journey

For our young readers...

Saul Is Killed
Colors

*"The day is Thine, the night also is Thine: Thou hast prepared the light and the sun.
Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: Thou hast made summer and winter." PSALM 74:16&17*



Meditation		Reflections	
Jesus Presented to the Lord	147	Evening Twilight (7)	155
<i>Rev. A.M. den Boer</i>		<i>Rev. P. Blok</i>	
Bible Study		Questions & Answers	
The Names of the Mediator (7)	148	Experiencing Sin and Guilt	157
<i>Rev. C. Neele & Rev. A. Schot</i>		<i>Rev. B. Labee</i>	
From Our Inheritance		Current Events	158
The Profitable Life (1)	149	TIMOTHY – for the Young	
<i>Rev. W.C. Lamain</i>		The Life of Rev. G.H. Kersten	159
Curatorium Announcement	150	as Told to His Grandchildren (2)	
A Word in Season		Taken from <i>Religious Stories for Young and Old, Volume IV</i>	
Some Thoughts	151	Bible Stories for Little Ones	
<i>J.C. Philpot</i>		Saul Is Killed	160
Doctrinal Studies		<i>Submitted</i>	
Of What Man Is (2)	152	Bible Quiz	
<i>John Hooper</i>		Colors	162
For Young & Old		<i>Aunt LenaBeth</i>	
A Safe Journey	153	News & Announcements	165
Taken from July 2003 issue of <i>The Banner of Truth</i>		Summary of Classis East 2024 Meeting	166
Excerpts from a Letter Written	154	Back Cover	
by Rev. C. Hegeman		Jehovah Is My Sun	168
Taken from August 1949 issue of <i>The Banner of Truth</i>		<i>William Gadsby</i>	

Cover: Summertime | © lovethispic.com

THE BANNER OF TRUTH

Publication Number: (USPS 041-540)

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

Annual Subscription Rate: \$50.00 in the U.S., \$60.00 in Canada and foreign countries—payable in U.S. funds. U.S. subscribers: make checks payable to *The Banner of Truth*. Canadian subscribers: if not drawn on a U.S. bank, make checks payable to *NRC of Canada*.

Rev. J. den Hoed, Editor

972 Hemlock Loop, Lynden, WA 98264

Home: 360-354-0210 • Study/Fax: 360-354-0216

James Okken, Managing Editor

3 Joseph Court, Hackettstown, NJ 07840-4664

973-809-2112 • Fax: 973-381-1483 • E-mail: jamesokken79@gmail.com

John Sweetman, Subscription Manager

11 Split Rock Road, Boonton Township, NJ 07005

973-335-4679 • E-mail: nrcbannersubscriptions@yahoo.com

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

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

PERIODICAL: Postage paid at Mahwah, NJ

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

The Banner of Truth

11 Split Rock Road, Boonton Township, NJ 07005

Additional Denominational Sources for Printed Matter

Other denominational periodicals include: *Paul* (mission periodical), 39 Mill St. E., Otterville, Ontario, Canada, N0J 1R0; *Insight Into* (for young people), Rev. P. Van Ruitenburch, Secretary, 8920-3 Broadway Street, Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada V2P 5W1; NRCEA School Journal *Learning and Living*, Calvin Christian School, Box 26, Coalhurst, Alberta, Canada T0L 0V0.

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

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

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



Meditation

Jesus Presented to the Lord

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

(Taken from the March 1982 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

“And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord” (Luke 2:22).

When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law.” Yearly, we remember the birth of the Lord Jesus and the events that followed. He was laid in a manger and circumcised on the eighth day, and then the Bible tells us of His presentation. According to the law, a mother who received a son was afterwards unclean for seven days. During those seven days she was not allowed to touch any holy thing; during the following thirty-three days she was also unclean but not as strictly. She must wait forty days before she was allowed to enter the temple. These days were now accomplished. This institution of the law taught each Israelite—and teaches us also—that we are unclean from the moment of our birth. Our catechism also shows very clearly that we are conceived in sin and born in iniquity. When we may see this, then such a Mediator becomes necessary, who with His innocence and perfect holiness covers also these sins.

Now Joseph and Mary went with the Child Jesus to Jerusalem because the days of purification were ended. How could Mary have become unclean? To purify means to free from guilt or to free from moral or ceremonial blemish. Jesus is not born of the will of man but by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. The power of the Highest came over her, and she was promised that a holy Child, the Son of God, would be born of her. Although the Lord Jesus is without original and actual sin, still He must be presented as an ordinary child. He is without sin, but the sins of the whole human race are laid to His account. He is made a curse for His Church. This is not so clear in our Bible because it speaks of HER purification; in the original, Luke wrote the pronoun in the plural and makes it apply both to Mary and to Christ—literally: the purification of THEM.

In the light of God’s Word, we know that, in order to wash away our stains, the Fountain of Purity chose to be reckoned unclean. What humiliation Jesus underwent already at this moment. It teaches us not only that sin must be punished but also that there is deliverance in Him who fulfilled the law. There is a way by which we may escape the righteous punishment and again be received into favor. How blessed is this fortieth day of Jesus’ life; now poor sinners may come to Him who fulfilled the law which we did not keep. He bore the wrath of God against sin. Whenever your heart is depressed because of the guilt and pollution of sin, whenever your sinful heart becomes

ashamed before God, then this is the way of salvation, namely, the mediatorial work of Christ. Although He remained pure before the eyes of God, He took upon Himself our misery in the house of God, under the hands of the priest of God and according to the law of God, that He might be the complete Saviour.

Before His presentation certain sacrifices had to be brought, namely, a sin offering to bridge the gap with God as Mary was unclean by the birth of this Child, and a burnt offering also to again join with the Lord. For the sin offering, a turtledove or young pigeon was given to bring reconciliation; for the burnt offering according to the law, people could bring a lamb of one year without blemish or, if they were poor, a dove. Mary brought the sacrifice of the poor. Jesus could say, “For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills”—all gold and silver was His—but in the days of His humiliation, He was very poor. Born of a poor virgin, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger, He was now presented in the temple with the offering of the poor.

Paul says of Him, “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.” A rich Jesus became poor in order to make poor sinners rich. In our days many speak and preach of poverty, but they never became poor; others speak of a rich Jesus, but they have never felt themselves wretched, miserable, blind, and naked. Such richness is also in vain. The Lord must be the first in our life, and then we will see our poverty. We became poor through sin so that now we miss the Lord and have nothing for eternity. He who by Word and Spirit may learn to know his poverty is blessed—“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Have we ever seen our poverty? May the Lord open our eyes for our state and condition so that we may flee to Him who became poor.

The sacrificial animal was offered, and the atonement was made. Now Mary may lay her Son in the hands of the priest, and the presentation may take place. The origin of this ceremony is known to us—“Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.” Then we remember that terrible night in Egypt when all the first-born of the Egyptians died, but none of the Israelite children died because they were safe behind the blood of the lamb. Nevertheless, the firstborn belonged to the Lord; therefore, if the firstborn were a son, he must serve in the temple. This institution of the Lord was changed when all Israel with the exception of the tribe of Levi danced around the

golden calf; after this, the tribe of Levi was appointed to serve in the temple. However, the oldest son remained the possession of the Lord; therefore, he must be presented to the Lord and afterwards redeemed.

Mary gave her firstborn to the priest in charge who presented the child to the Lord, and testified, "This child belongs to Thee, O Lord; it is consecrated to Thy service." The ceremony ended with the redeeming of the child for five shekels of silver or about one ounce. (To redeem is to buy back.) Now Jesus is free from the service in the temple in Jerusalem. We know that this ceremony has a deeper meaning. Christ testified of His willingness to redeem His people, even as He had already done in the Counsel of Peace; now He testified, "As Son I belong to Thee, but as Mediator I present Myself in the stead of My Church. They cannot sanctify themselves, but I will fulfill Thy will."

Christ did not serve in the temple, yet He was Priest, a Priest after the order of Melchisedec. He merited all that we need for salvation. The spouse says of Him, "He is white and ruddy." White reveals His holy life in that He came under the Law and has fulfilled the whole Law; He is ruddy because He shed His blood to pay the price for the redemption of the elect.

When our guilt and debt have been discovered, and we learn that it is impossible to purchase our salvation by our own works, the cry will be born for another way. How desirable then the Mediator becomes. His name is Jesus—that is, Saviour; He can and will deliver His people from the greatest evil and bring them to the highest good which is communion with a Triune God. What rich blessings are revealed in Christ for time and eternity. May we learn to know Him as our Redeemer! ☐



Bible Study

The Names of the Mediator (7)

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

Counsellor

"And His name shall be called...Counsellor" (Isaiah 9:6).

The prophet Isaiah speaks in wonderment of a born Child. This Child is the light that arises for a people in darkness. He is given rich names, also the name Counsellor. Counsel is help and guidance in difficult circumstances. The Mediator is not only Counsellor, but He is also Counsel. In Him is declared the counsel of the Triune God from eternity—counsel to overcome the Prince of Darkness, to restore the broken Creation, and also counsel to redeem lost sinners.

With fallen man, there was and is no counsel. Desperate in the deepest sense of the word, we are, by nature, without counsel, with the outcome to be forever without help and guidance and without God. Where is counsel for such wandering people? We helplessly grasp around us to sink into damnation without any help. What anxiety results when this is experienced.

Now, in the name we contemplate, a miracle is declared: With Him is counsel, with Him only. Christ is the Counsel of God from eternity. That Counsel could have remained hidden from man, for "who shall ascend into heaven?" (Romans 10:6b). Fallen man would have always remained without counsel. Isaiah, however, looked to the Child in the manger. Oh wonder, from God comes the Counsel to fallen man.

This Saviour is a Counsellor, a dispenser of the counsel of God. "I will guide thee with Mine eye" (Psalm 32:8b). There is counsel for the guilty heart, counsel for the depravity of your existence, counsel for your hard heart, counsel in all the cares of life, counsel in the moment when your life passes into eternity.

The Dutch annotations state regarding this name so simply, yet movingly, "Or, Counsel, Giver of Counsel. Understand this likewise, that Christ alone knows His Father's counsel and purpose and reveals and communicates the same unto His Church (John 1:18), namely, as much as is needful for them to know unto salvation (Acts 20:27). It is likewise He who administers counsel and succour unto us in all trouble and adversity." How blessed you are if you possess this Counsellor!

—September 16, 2010, Rev. C. Neele

Creator

"I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King" (Isaiah 43:15).

The name Creator is used in the above text in a general sense for the Covenant God. The LORD comforts His people and promises to deliver and shelter them. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (verse 2).

To the congregation of Israel, the Gentiles will be added. The gods of the Gentiles are vain, but the LORD alone is the true and omnipotent God. He is also the Creator of Israel. If this is true of the Triune God, then it is also true of Christ. He is also Creator. “All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3). Paul also testifies of this miracle, “For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him” (Colossians 1:16). “That is, for His sake, in order that He might be an Heir and Lord even of them all” (Dutch annotation).

Creation also exists to the glory of Christ. He already existed *before* Creation as Mediator from eternity. Do we see His hand in the wonders of Creation? It points us to the many miracles by His hand that are in re-creation also. He “callesth those things which be not as though they were.” He who made heaven and earth is also able to bring you back to God, the Creator. Everything will magnify His name. If we abuse Creation, we ultimately dishonor Christ. If we love Christ, then His Creation is dear to us also. At the same time, we will beg for re-creating grace. Whoever may receive this will end in God in Christ, “For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Romans 11:36).

—September 30, 2010, Rev. C. Neele

(To be continued)



From Our Inheritance

The Profitable Life (1)

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

(Taken from the July 1976 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

“But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all Thy works”
(Psalm 73:28).

What a contrast there is between that which is declared in the previous verse about the life and the end of the wicked and that which Asaph testifies of his own personal life. Asaph does not speak about other people, but he speaks about himself.

Asaph was a person known by God from eternity and ordained in Christ unto eternal salvation. Therefore, he was included in God’s good pleasure. Christ had become Surety with His heart for him, and He was the Lamb which, in God’s decrees, was slain also for Asaph. Christ had paid the debt for him. In the time of good pleasure, God the Holy Spirit had called him from darkness into God’s wonderful light. Asaph had been brought nearby Christ. He had learned what it meant to be separated from God and that because of his own sin and guilt. He had mourned and wept about that separation.

At the same time, he had also experienced that through the intercession of the blessed Mediator of the covenant, the gap was closed and the breach between God and his soul was healed. Oh, what a great mercy! On man’s side it is impossible to be restored into fellowship with God, but that which is impossible with man is possible with God. Only in fellowship with God lies true life, true peace, and true salvation. To God’s true people, life outside of God is death, but there is life, peace, and joy in the light of the King’s countenance. It is the same as in natural life when a child

is home. Then he is at ease, and like a father’s and mother’s heart beats to do anything for their child, thus it is here.

At home the child is free in his movements. He can tell everything to father and mother, and there the child feels himself surrounded by love. At home the child is favorably listened to; there, all needs are fulfilled, and he has no fear. There he is protected and favored; there the heart beats so warmly for him, and there he is surrounded with all good things. At home he is in his element. Thus, it is also experienced by all those that are close to God. Oh, if during their life the separation has fallen away, then God is no longer an angry Judge, but in Christ He has become a reconciled God and Father.

Even though they are enabled to say, “Abba Father” through the Holy Spirit, yet there are so few moments that they may feel at home. They learn to know themselves more and more as deserters from God. Oh, that going a whoring from God, that forsaking the Rock of their salvation, that wandering away from the Spring and Fountain of Life—how often it causes their soul to wander far from the Lord. How few are the moments that they may delight themselves and rejoice in the immediate fellowship of God. Yet that is the life of their life. When they are near to God, then they experience His mercies which strengthen them more than the choicest meat. When near to God, they delight themselves in the Lord and rejoice in the glory and majesty of His excellencies.

When they are near to God, there is no more darkness. God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. Unto the

upright there ariseth light in the darkness. When near to God, they enjoy a peace which passes all understanding and keeps heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

When near to God, the enemy cannot oppress them, and their soul finds rest in the loving heart of God. When near to God, the world no longer has influence upon them, and they are no longer assailed by it.

*For one kiss of Jesus' mouth,
I give all that black ground.*

When near to God, the old man of sin is crucified and can no longer carry away and imprison the child of God. When near to God, His people are conformed to the image of Christ; they walk in His footsteps and live to the glory of His name. When near to God, they walk in the law of God with inward delight of the soul. Then they live to please God, and they abhor themselves.

When near to God, unbelief no longer has power, and they no longer reason about the ways of God. Then they do not censure His dealings, but in faith they rely upon the faithful and unchangeable Covenant God and commend all their ways to the Lord, and they lose themselves in His works which are honorable and glorious.

Also, near to God the strongest faith is exercised of which Asaph testifies in these words, "I have put my trust in the Lord GOD." As we read, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). That faith excludes all doubt. Faith rests in God through Christ. Faith is saying yea and amen to all that which God has spoken and done to the glory of His name, to the exaltation of Christ, and to the eternal salvation and glory of all God's favorites.

Denying himself and that which is his own, the sinner by faith—of which the Holy Spirit is the Author—embraces Christ and the perfect righteousness He has brought in.

We ourselves are the greatest idol to whom we bow, and God must break down and sweep away everything that stands in His way. God's Spirit works powerfully and irresistibly and manifests Himself as a Spirit of judgment and of burning so that we shall relinquish everything; nothing shall be left but a Triune God as the only support of our heart. It is God's work to make us despair of all our rags with which we want to cover ourselves and to relinquish all grounds which would fail us in the hour of death. God's dear Spirit also discovers Christ and His perfect righteousness to us and applies that precious, indispensable, and amiable Person as the only foundation of salvation. All that God now works and grants in the time of His good pleasure, in the hearts of His elect, is not without fruit.

Some people discuss much at times, even the most important matters and articles, but when we seek for fruit, then it is bitterly disappointing. It is evident that with such people their exercises are a foot too high. Many people think themselves happy and imagine themselves happy. Others take a work of the mind for a work of the heart, but, friends, the difference between them is as great as between life and death, between light and darkness. Oh, let us not overlook these matters but deal honestly and faithfully with our soul. Consider that we are on the way to an awful eternity and that by and by in the grave there shall be no more device or knowledge. Here it is possible to repent, but when death has cut off our life, it is impossible to return.

Asaph had received much grace, but the fruit of that grace also became manifest. No, it did not remain concealed, but in the face of the greatest enemy he boldly declares, "I have put my trust in the Lord GOD." He trusts in Jehovah, in that God who once declared out of the burning bush, "I AM THAT I AM" (Exodus 3:14a). ◻

(To be continued)

Curatorium Announcement

It is with great gladness of heart that we may announce the acceptance of Elder G.F. Rozeboom to begin studies for the ministry in our Theological School. Student Rozeboom is fifty years of age, a farmer from the Rock Valley, Iowa, congregation, and with his wife has nine children and sixteen grandchildren.

The psalmist prophesied of the great King, "For He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper" (Psalm 72:12). May the Lord in due time make Student Rozeboom an instrument in His hand for that blessed work. We ask you to

remember him and his family in prayer as they undergo great changes in the coming months, moving to Grand Rapids and adjusting to this new way of life.

As well, in addition to Rev. A.H. Verhoef, the Curatorium has appointed Rev. H. Hofman and Rev. E. Hakvoort as instructors in our Theological School. May the Lord also help them in a special way, as these tasks are added to the manifold labors in their congregations.

Rev. J. den Hoed, *President*
Rev. H.D. den Hollander, *Vice President*



A Word in Season

Some Thoughts

J.C. Philpot (1802-1869)

The operation of truth upon the heart is like the light of day, gradual and yet effective, or like dew and rain which soften and fertilize the ground; we can scarcely tell how. So divine truth in the lips or written by the pen of a servant of God often has a gradual influence, though imperceptible, is not less real, for it is due not to the man but to the truth which he proclaims and which the blessed Spirit seals with power upon the conscience.

Many people think that illness is the best time for religion and for being prayerful and spiritually minded, but this is a great mistake. When the illness is severe, it takes such possession of the whole mind and, at the same time, so enfeebles it that it has not the power to act as in health. I have often found that when the main force of illness is over and I am beginning to recover, it is a good time, if the Lord be pleased, to draw the soul upward to Himself, to read, pray, and meditate, but when illness is severe, the soul needs divine support, patience and submission, resignation, and to lie passive in the Lord's hands, believing He doeth all things well. It is then that we need special support so that the mind may not be distracted but rest upon God's goodness and mercy and what, we hope, has been felt in times past. I remember what poor Thomas Copeland once said to me in his illness. He said, "People think that illness is a good time to seek God, but they will find when they are very ill that the illness itself occupies all their thoughts and their feelings." At the same time, there are times and seasons in illness when the weight of bodily afflictions seems partially removed, and then, if the Lord be pleased to work by His Spirit and grace, there is a drawing of the soul unto Himself.

I do see the deep necessity for every child of God to walk much in godly fear. Sin and Satan are never far off their watch if we are. Sin is like a spring which can only be kept from expanding to its full length by continual pressure. Take away or relax the pressure, it expands in a moment to its full length. The fear of God in the heart is the pressure upon the spring, and if that relax and let go, sin extends itself in a moment, and who can tell how far it will go? As Francis Spira said, "Man knows the beginning of sin, but who knows the bounds thereof?" It is much easier to check sin in its first movement than when it has gained strength. If the egg be not crushed, it will break out into a viper. What should we do without free grace, the atoning blood of the Lamb, and the work of the Holy Spirit to make the gospel precious to the soul?

Christ is not to be found in the path of carnal ease and worldly joy. It is in tribulation and trouble alone that He is

really sought and really found. We cannot choose for ourselves what that trouble shall be, but its fruits and effects must be good if they lead us up to the Lord Jesus Christ or bring down any measure of blessing from Him. There is so much seeking and serving the Lord with half a heart, so much mingling of the flesh with the spirit, and trying to unite the manna of the wilderness with the flesh-pots of Egypt. We may be certain that when the taste is vitiated with the onions and the garlic, there is no relish for angel's food. This, then, is one of the benefits of sanctified affliction, that it purges the appetite from delighting in the gross food of Egypt, to give it a taste for the bread which came down from heaven that a man should eat thereof and not die.

If we view religion as a body, may we not say that the doctrines of the gospel are the bones; experience, the flesh; and the blessed Spirit, the life of both bones and flesh? The doctrines of the gospel support all sound experience, but at the same time are so clothed with it that they are not visible except through the medium of the flesh. In the body the flesh could not stand without the support of the bones. So in religion—what would experience be unless supported by sound doctrine? Again, take the flesh from the bones, and you have nothing but a dry skeleton. So take the experience of the truth from the doctrines of truth, and you have nothing but what Joseph Hart calls dry doctrine. Again, without the blessed Spirit, what is either doctrine or experience but a lifeless lump? The dead Calvinists have the bones without the flesh; the Arminians have the flesh without the bones; the daily experimentalists, for such there are, and such were even under Mr. Huntington, have bones and flesh without life. The living family of God have bones and flesh and life, for they have truth in doctrine, truth in experience, and truth in life and power; thus, religion with them is a living body.

It is poor hearing when nothing is carried away. The gleaners in the harvest field would not be satisfied to carry home ears out of which every gram of corn had dropped, and those who glean in the fields of Boaz and are privileged to glean among the sheaves may well be dissatisfied unless they carry some corn home.

Whatever ground others may stand upon, there is one on which I can never stand—no, not for a single moment—and that is my own righteousness. If we are to have some standing ground—or how else can we stand for time and eternity—what rock can there be for our feet but that which God laid in Zion? Being driven from every other standing place by the law of God, the convictions of our own conscience, and a view of our dreadful sinful heart,

we feel compelled to show to others, when called upon to do so, the peril of standing upon such a sandy foundation as self; and having seen something of the blessedness and suitability of the Lord Jesus Christ, we can hold Him up to others as a sure foundation if the Lord be pleased to reveal it to their hearts.

May our desire be to know more of divine teaching, to see and feel more of our own weakness and helplessness, to have a stronger faith in the blessed Lord, and to have clearer and sweeter manifestations of His love, blood, and grace. This will produce a separating influence from the world, will give more strength to fight against sin and Satan, and will eventually bring the soul off more than conqueror through Him who has loved it with an everlasting love.

I have often thought what sweet blessed words those were which dropped from His sacred lips when upon earth, which I need not quote at length, for you will find them in John 3:14-16. (*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up:*

That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.)

It is not our knowledge, or wisdom, or gifts, or abilities, or usefulness, or anything of the kind that can save us, but looking unto the Lord Jesus Christ, and being blessed with a living faith in Him. Many a poor creature who has scarcely been able to say anything during life and has been seemingly outshone by great professors of religion has received that into his soul, dropped into his heart, as it were, from the mouth of God, which has saved him with an everlasting salvation, whilst the other has sunk into eternity without hope. So I would encourage every poor, tried, tempted soul still to look, still to long, still to seek, and still to knock till the Lord appears, for it is in this way that deliverance is obtained, Christ revealed, mercy manifested, and pardon sealed upon the heart. ◻



Doctrinal Studies

Of What Man Is (2)

John Hooper (1495-1555)

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

The law for discipline

This inward and secret ill, rebellion of the heart, blindness of the intention, and forwardness of will, is daily augmented by the malice of the devil and our own negligence, which regards not what the law teaches of that which God requires of man. Because the gospel teaches that we are only saved by the mercy of God for the merits of Christ, many gospellers have set all at liberty. They care not at all about such life as should and ought to follow every justified man and disciple of Christ. It is no marvel, for there is no discipline and punishment for sin; and wheresoever the gospel is preached and this correction not used, against the highest as well as the lowest, there shall never be a godly church.

No more can a king's army, though their hearts are ever so good, resist the force of his enemies without the weapons and artillery necessary for men of war, than can the king's majesty, the magistrates, and preachers preserve the Church against the devil and sin, without the excommunication of such as openly offend the divine majesty of God and His Word. By this means, the sinner is taught by the Scripture to know himself, as we find in 1 Corinthians 5: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to

deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." God grant, not only that the faithful but also that unbelievers should be kept in order by the discipline of the law as Paul saith: "That the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient." Likewise in Deuteronomy 19: "So shalt thou put the evil away from among you. And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you. And thine eye shall not pity."

This political and civil use of the law teaches man to know his faults; and this discipline of the law, exterior and civil, is necessary for a man for divers causes to declare our disobedience unto God; to avoid the punishment that God, or else the magistrate, always punishes the transgression with; and because of public peace in every commonwealth, that one man should not do injuries to another, either in body or in goods.

There is yet second cause why this discipline of the law is necessary, which few men regard. Paul saith that it is a schoolmaster unto Christ because such as leave not off to sin, and to do the thing which is contrary unto the express Word of God, to those Christ is not profitable. This use Paul teaches when he says in 1 Corinthians 6 that fornicators,

idolaters, adulterers, etc., shall not inherit the kingdom of God. So, John saith in 1 John 3 that whosoever sinneth is of the devil. He that knows himself must refrain from doing ill, hear the gospel and learn the gospel that the Spirit of God may be efficacious in him, which cannot be as long as he hath a purpose to continue doing ill. Ezekiel speaks of this civil and politic use of the law and, likewise, of this second use thereof, which is, as I said before, to show man his sin, to accuse man before God, to alarm him, and to condemn man plainly. Ezekiel 33: "As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." These words declare that as God desires not the death of a sinner, so He requires the sinner to cease from doing ill and to be converted unto virtue.

In men that are addicted unto the pleasures of this world, the law does not have this use, say the preacher whatsoever he shall say. Let the Word of God threaten eternal death for sin, it avails not. He thinks God is asleep and will, at last, be satisfied with some trifle as an offering for sin. We shall find the contrary to our great pain as others have before our time that would not believe the Word till they felt the vengeance and punishment of God—as Cain, the world drowned with the flood, the burning of Sodom, and others.

It is a great and horrible offense to hide or extenuate the judgment of God against sin and the voice of the law that condemns the same. God willeth His pleasure to be known openly: "Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy" (Jeremiah 1:9b-10b).

Thus, man may know himself to be, as he is, a very wretched and damnable creature, were it not for the virtue of Christ's death. So saith Paul: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He before said that he once lived without the law, that is, he was secure, not feeling the wrath of God. Now, being converted from a Pharisee to be an apostle and brought to a knowledge of himself, he confesses his imbecility and faults and says: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." Yet, Paul confesses that we cannot satisfy the law, but that we should come to Christ with these comfortable words: "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all," a great consolation for every troubled conscience!

Thus, man may know himself to be, as he is, a very wretched and damnable creature, were it not for the virtue of Christ's death.

(This installment marks the end of this series.)



For Young and Old

A Safe Journey

(Taken from the July 2003 issue of *The Banner of Truth*, originally appearing in *De Saambinder*, August 1999)

Pastoral notes concerning the vacation season

Time of travel is again approaching. We certainly realize that not everyone has a desire to travel, and some are not able to do so. Still, to distance ourselves from our daily tasks and cares for longer or shorter periods of time can be beneficial.

We should notice, however, that for young and old among us, the coming weeks are not without dangers and temptations. There are dangers from without, but we must also not minimize the dangers from within. The all-knowing Searcher of the hearts says in His Word, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23). Dangers do not come upon us only from without, but the circumstances around us certainly increase the temptations.

With that in mind, it is understandable that we look up

against the coming weeks with hesitation and concern. Unfortunately, there are reasons for this concern.

Away from everything?

Away from our daily environment, away from our usual daily routine, away from everything that is common and customary—indeed, where do we draw the line? It is these boundaries that we would like to consider before we and our children go on vacation. In these days our hearts are filled with the desire that our boundaries be removed or become indistinct. Do we realize this sufficiently? We mean especially those boundaries which the Lord has so clearly revealed in His Word—the boundaries between the church and the world, between His day and the other days of the week, between good and evil, between husband and wife, and the like.

It is in this way that we wish you a safe journey. It is not our purpose to prescribe a lengthy set of rules. We do not wish to do so, nor may we do so. However, we do want to

impress upon your consciences the standards that the Lord has revealed for us in His unchangeable Testimony. Then, when faced with situations that arise, we may set the boundaries where God's Word has set them and not go our own way in the coming weeks by making all kinds of compromises. Then it will certainly not be a safe journey but the contrary.

Two of the fifty-two

As parents, we should also be consistent in conversation and example. That which is not allowed at home should not be allowed on vacation either. Otherwise, we will undermine and break down what we have tried to uphold in the rest of the year, albeit with many shortcomings.

How necessary it is that we keep in mind in all of our activities that we are, at every moment, on a journey that will take place only once, namely, our life's journey, which will never be repeated. It is that journey to our eternal destination that we find mentioned in Ecclesiastes 12, "Because man goeth to his long home" (verse 5), and concludes with, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment,

As parents, we should also be consistent in conversation and example. That which is not allowed at home should not be allowed on vacation either. Otherwise, we will undermine and break down what we have tried to uphold in the rest of the year, albeit with many shortcomings.

with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (verses 13&14). May the realization of this be evident in our daily life, also when we are away from home, and may the seriousness of it define our walk of life.

Rest

May the Lord grant us to seek rest and to find it where it alone is to be found, that is, at His throne of grace, at the feet of the great Giver of rest, who invites and draws those weary and heavy laden with their guilt and lost condition. Such rest we wish for you from the bottom of our heart.

Outside of that rest the heart remains restless, and the eye is never satisfied. Rest in God through Christ is something that cannot be missed.

It was our desire to bind these thoughts on your heart before you begin your travels. May the Lord also remember those who remain at home, in whatever circumstances they may be, but especially those with difficulties

and concerns. They are also traveling life's journey.

May the Lord protect us in the way that we shall go, and it is our heartfelt prayer for you, "The LORD bless thee, and keep thee." For all of you, young or old, whether at home or away, we commend you to God! □

An Excerpt from a Letter Written by Rev. C. Hegeman

(Taken from the August 1949 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

Young men, young women, boys and girls, seek earnestly to understand the true meaning of God's Word; when you are on your vacation, behold and observe the wonders of God in nature; consider that glory of God in creation, and remember to take one or more good books along with you and read them. Would you like to know a few of the good ones? Then take *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan or any other of his works. Take also the works of William Huntington. They are, indeed, very simple, instructive, and easy to understand. You may rest assured that you will then enjoy a very pleasant and instructive vacation, while Satan will be bitterly disappointed that you did not attend any such places as the theatre, moving picture, or show house, all which are but allurements and decoys of Satan.

Perhaps someone will now say, "That man has certainly told the truth, and I am not going to such places anymore!" We are indeed happy to hear you talk like that, but remember, dear friend, be not proud nor boastful, but give the glory unto God, for it is through His preserving hand alone

that you are kept from such places. We must never forget that the very germ of this sin is present in the heart of every human being, and we are always in need of being kept from sin through the power of God. To you, my dear reader, who, through circumstances of your marriage, may frequent such places either regularly or occasionally, we admonish you to consider well what you are doing, for eternity is fast drawing nigh. Remember, the Lord will then demand an account of your doings. Is it possible for you to appear acceptable before God while you are enjoying the sinful pleasures of such places? Nay, my friends, then it will be eternal perdition; you will be cast into hell and that on account of your own sin and guilt. Be assured of this very thing, that, when God actually convinces a person of his or her sinfulness, that same person seeks after the Truth in very deed with all his heart. Oh, my friend, are you such a seeker? □

—Heartiest greetings



Reflections

Evening Twilight (7)

Rev. P. Blok (1920-2019)

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

By the Cemetery

“Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling” (Psalm 49:14).

When the evening twilight is past, night comes. Israel divided the night into four parts; together these were called the night watches. “And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians.” In the morning watch, the LORD looked out of the pillar of fire. After a fearful night of strife and fear, the LORD showed His glory to the enemies of the people.

During the siege of Jerusalem, the prophet Jeremiah called on the people to pour out their hearts before the Lord: “Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord.” Israel’s Keeper does not slumber.

It stormed at the Sea of Galilee. The ship in which Jesus’ disciples were was in danger of sinking. A fearful night had passed, and their expectation was also in danger of being shipwrecked. In the dark of the night, Jesus appeared. “And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.”

His work of redemption is applied to a people who perceive themselves as completely lost. The poet of Psalm 63 experienced that the nights in life can also be wonderful and sweet. “When I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches.” David could recall God’s wonderful deeds in his life. The Lord richly bestowed His help and assistance. He wandered through the desert of Judah. The Lord hid him in the cave of Adullam. He could rest in His God and have communion with His God all night. “In the night His song shall be with me.”

The Lord shows that He knows His people in all the circumstances of life. The difference between the righteous and the ungodly will be seen. “For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.” Thus, our thoughts multiply about a righteous person whom we had brought to the grave. He had served

the congregation as an elder for many years. That left an empty place in the congregation and in the consistory. Now people can fill up, but not fulfill. Paul commanded the elders to come to Ephesus. What was his message? “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”

Jesus spoke of this in the gospel according to John: “But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.”

An esteemed elder, taught by God, was gathered in. He was a righteous one, not by contemplation or conclusion of the mind. He knew not only the place of birth but also the place where he was acquitted of guilt and punishment as a condemned one on the basis of Christ’s righteousness and had received a right to eternal life. The Lord gave the privilege of grace which makes poor; thus, he could never rise above his fall. Verily the congregation had lost a readable letter of Christ. With another old office bearer we walked back to the church building in silent

reflection. He had been discovered to his fall, and the fullness of Christ had been revealed to him. During the funeral he was deeply discovered to his state for eternity. Of this he spoke, “This deceased brother lived honorably, and he died and was buried honorably.”

The Lord gave testimony of it. “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

Deeply moved, he said, “How will you bury me one day?” The truly righteous enter the porch of the incurables. The author, Pleun Klein, wrote, “I have found only few in this porch.”

“The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot.”

Essentially, justification is grounded in the electing good pleasure of Christ and in Him the electing of all His elect.

*With this, righteousness was acquired.
In order to know the benefit thereof,
it must be imputed and imparted.
With only the knowledge of the
acquisition, the soul can find no rest.
With the historical knowledge of it,
man cannot meet God. That does not
take away the sufficiency of Christ’s
sacrifice, but without the imputation
the soul is not saved.*

This also demands the exercise of the virtue of God's righteousness. "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not his mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth."

With this, righteousness was acquired. In order to know the benefit thereof, it must be imputed and imparted. With only the knowledge of the acquisition, the soul can find no rest. With the historical knowledge of it, man cannot meet God. That does not take away the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice, but without the imputation the soul is not saved. "For this was the sovereign counsel, and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of His Son should extend to all the elect, for bestowing upon them alone the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly to salvation."

Therefore, true faith aims for the benefits bestowed by God. "The way of the just is uprightness: Thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just."

The religious multitude demanded of Pilate the sentence of Christ without needing the substitutional labor. On Gabbatha their sentence was pronounced. "When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this Just Person: see ye to it."

Grace is imputed. Grace is granted. Grace is known. Grace is confirmed. Grace is crowned.

*O'er them soon shall rule the just,
All their beauty turn to dust;
God my waiting souls shall save,
He will raise me from the grave.
Let no fear disturb your peace
Tho' one's house and wealth increase;
Death shall end his fleeting day,
He shall carry naught away.*

—Psalter 136:3 □

(To be continued)

Reading in Romans

Rev. G. Hoogerland, Kruiningen

(Translated from *Bij het geopende Woord* [By the Open Word])

"...Grace to you and peace..." (Romans 1:7b).

Paul, the called apostle, wrote on behalf of his Sender to the church of Rome and to the beloved of God and to the called heathens. These were all the saints, small and great. The Lord loved them equally. So, the benediction is meant for all of them.

"Grace to you." Grace is opposite of guilt. We make guilt every moment of our life. We already have guilt at our conception and birth. This is the imputed guilt of Adam's covenant breach. We confirm that covenant breach with every sin. You, poor in spirit, learned to know and lament this guilt. You learned that you could not pay for it. Perhaps the Lord once gave you a view outside of self upon the guilt-assuming Surety. Now it is your continual struggle to learn to be saved by grace. Your work-holy existence does not want this. It is grace if you are made willing to be saved by grace. Then everything that is yours must be taken away. That is a lesson for life. It also is a God-glorifying lesson.

Also in sanctification, grace is necessary to loathe ourselves and to seek for our purification and salvation without ourselves, in Christ more and more.

"...and peace." If something of grace may be experienced, also something of peace with God will be tasted; then all mountains of guilt, condemnation, and doubt are gone for a moment. At that moment, we see that the Judge has quenched His wrath in His dear Son and that His countenance is reconciled. What sweet peace!

Herein lies the evil of man's inventions; when man's inventions replace a spiritual ordinance of God, they become sinful and wicked. For nothing that is spiritual to draw my heart nearer to God, or God nearer to me, is of man.

—*Jeremiah Burroughs*



Questions & Answers

Experiencing Sin and Guilt

Rev. B. Labee, Veenendaal, the Netherlands

(Translated from the February 9, 2023 issue of *De Saambinder*.)

Preaching among us often speaks about experiencing sin and guilt, for example, in the first Lord's Days of our Heidelberg Catechism. However, where do we find this in the Bible?

The Heidelberg Catechism

The person who asked this question noted that critical people are increasingly questioning the authority of our Heidelberg Catechism (and other confessional writings). Among other places, Lord's Day 5 is so clear about experiencing sin and guilt and bowing under the righteous judgment, but when referring to our book of comfort, it is disposed of as a "word of man."

It is remarkable that these people know better than our fathers at the Synod of Dort (1618-1619) who wished "to persevere steadfastly in this orthodox, godly, and simple confession of faith" and to have the Heidelberg Catechism preached "unadulterated" until the return of Christ. The Heidelberg Catechism summarizes Holy Scripture and interprets the experience of God's children of all times and places. We quote the well-known Dr. H.F. Kohlbrugge (1803-1875) with heartfelt approval: "All who have ever been converted to God agree with this Catechism. On the other hand: all who remained unconverted have always been tampering with it."

Rev. G.H. Kersten wrote in his foreword to the edition of his exposition of the Catechism that the great value of the Catechism lies in the fact that it is a "book of comfort." "The doctrine of Scripture is maintained objectively but also treated subjectively. Our Catechism does not speak of a pleading on the promises of the gospel without the discovering work of the Holy Spirit, which precedes the opening of the gospel. Thus, the doctrine of man's misery is discussed first, in its state, in its origin, and in its inevitableness, by which all hope of salvation is cut off. After this the way of salvation is opened only in Christ

Jesus. Herein the instructor is so earnest and faithful that when the distressed sinner asks whether there is a way by which he can be reconciled with God, instead of instructing him to 'Simply believe,' or 'Just accept the promises of God,' he points to the implacable righteousness of God that must be and is satisfied only by the Mediator, who is very God and also very Man and perfectly righteous. This is the language of the heart of God's people. It is the experience of their souls that with all the benefits received they are lost, and under the justice of God they faint unless they may be found in the only Mediator. The Lord grant that we may remain with this doctrine and be established in it."

The professor

Therefore, finally, we would like to point to the many places found in Scriptures under each answer in our book of Comfort. There are too many to mention...Nevertheless, to mention some specific Bible passages, Psalm 32:5a, Proverbs 28:13, and 1 John 1:9 are very striking.

Psalm 32:5a: *"I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD."*

Proverbs 28:13: *"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."*

1 John 1:9: *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

Reader, have you ever stood at the ravine of your lost state? ❑

(Note: Rev. Hofman was unable to provide an article this month. He hopes to resume next month, D.V.)

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

Marks of True Grace

Though true grace has various degrees, and there are some that are but babes in Christ, in whom the exercise of the inclination and will towards divine and heavenly things is comparatively weak; yet, everyone that has the power of godliness in his heart has his inclinations and heart exercised towards God and divine things with such strength and vigor that these holy exercises do prevail in him above all carnal or natural affections and are effectual to overcome them. Every true disciple of Christ "loves Him above father or mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, houses and lands: yea, than his own life."

—Jonathan Edwards



Current Events

Pakistan Christian Dies After Attack

About a week after suffering a brutal mob attack, a Pakistan man in his seventies died. A mob attacked him on May 25 after claims that he had burned pages from a Quran circulated throughout the predominantly Christian community in Sargodha. The man suffered severe head trauma in the attack. Pakistan's anti-blasphemy laws, which are often weaponized against Christians, prohibit the desecration of the Quran. Those who violate the laws are often killed. The morning of the attack, leaders in local mosques called for area Muslims to gather at the man's house. Hundreds of people soon started attacking his home and work. The mob then attacked him, beating him with bricks and logs. Members of the mob also attacked police as they attempted to make arrests as well as the ambulance as it transported the man to the hospital. Police detained dozens of people involved following the attack. They also placed members of the man's family in protective police custody. Police are also investigating the blasphemy charges against the man.

—Persecution.org

Chase Bank De-Banking Christians

A Christian law firm is celebrating that a major bank chain rolled back one of its controversial policies that led to the de-banking of several conservative individuals and nonprofit organizations over the last few years. JPMorgan Chase, the largest bank in the U.S., rolled back its WePay service terms that required merchants to refrain from accepting payments or using the service for activities related to "social risk issues," which the bank defined as anything "subject to allegation and impacts related to hate groups, systematic racism, sexual harassment, and corporate culture." A bank spokesperson then said, "We support clients around the globe and in every state in the U.S., across industries, religions, and political affiliations." The Christian law firm's senior counsel said, "Chase has used this policy to discriminate on the basis of viewpoint. The policy itself is a risk to every single person who uses WePay and Chase, the biggest bank in America...Americans should not have to fear that they can lose access to their bank accounts or payment processing because of their religious and political beliefs." In recent years, Chase and other major banking chains have booted conservative people from their services without much explanation.

—BeliefNet.com

Louisiana Could Mandate Ten Commandments in Schools

Louisiana is one step closer to becoming the first state to require all schools and colleges that receive public funding to display the Ten Commandments. Bill HB71 still needs the signature of the Republican governor to become law, but it passed in the Louisiana Congress in May. If the governor does sign the bill into law, every Louisiana classroom from kindergarten to the university level, which receives state funding, will be required to display the commandments "on a poster or framed document that is at least eleven inches by fourteen inches." The Republican representative that introduced the bill said implementing the Ten Commandments is the "basis of all laws in Louisiana" and honors the country's religious origins. "I hope and I pray that Louisiana is the first state to allow moral code to be placed back in the classrooms,"

she said. "Since I was in kindergarten (at a private school), it was always on the wall. I learned there was a God, and I knew to honor Him and His laws." A Democrat senator argued, "I didn't have to learn the Ten Commandments in school. We went to Sunday school...you want your kids to learn about the Ten Commandments, take them to church." He then pointed out that this new legislation is expected to face legal challenges. Texas, South Carolina, Oklahoma, and Utah have recently attempted to approve similar legislation.

—CBN.com

Iran a Country of Particular Concern

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has once again recommended that Iran be re-designated a "Country of Particular Concern" for "engaging in systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom." Its latest annual report, published in May, showed that the religious freedom conditions in Iran remain "extremely poor." Iran has the third most religious prisoners of conscience, behind only China and Russia. Of the more than 2,200 religious prisoners documented in USCIRF's FORB Victims List in 2023, Iran accounted for 347. USCIRF also recommended that U.S. authorities take several actions, sanctioning Iran and supporting Iranians that are asserting their freedom of religion. USCIRF also recommended Congress reintroduce the bipartisan Stop Helping Adversaries Manipulate Everything Act (SHAME Act), which it said, "would prohibit lobbyists from receiving compensation from countries designated as foreign adversaries." Most of the designated countries, including Iran, engage in particularly severe religious freedom violations and other egregious human rights abuses.

—ArticleEighteen.com

Persecution in Mexico

Local government officials in Hidalgo state in southern Mexico are pressuring a group of 151 Baptists expelled from their villages to sign an agreement that violates human rights protections under Mexican law. The Baptists were forced out of their villages because of their religious beliefs. Village leaders cut off their electricity, vandalized and blocked access to their church and some of their homes, and posted guards at the entry points to the villages. The expelled Christians have suffered years of persecution because of their refusal to participate in local religious festivals that are incompatible with their faith. The Baptist church leaders said that they do not want to accept the agreement, because it would fine the victims, ban five families from returning, and only permit the other families to return under the same severe restrictions that have been imposed on them since 2015. The group of expelled Christians called on authorities to intervene to allow them to return home and practice their faith freely, but the government denies that the incidents are linked to religious freedom. This persecution, like that in many other parts of southern Mexico, is rooted in the village leaders' insistence that the Baptists convert back to the local majority religion. In parts of Mexico, especially in mountainous regions of the southern states, the majority religion is a folk Catholicism that blends pre-Hispanic Mayan practices with Catholicism in a syncretic Christo-pagan religion.

—ChurchInChains.ie

The Word of God stands between the saints and all danger. —William Gurnall



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

The Life of Rev. G.H. Kersten as Told to His Grandchildren (2)

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

A youthful preacher

I told you how your grandfather was called for the ministry in his youth with these words: “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).

Your grandfather often asked himself how preaching would ever become possible. He was discouraged many times. You see, his parents could not afford—and also frowned upon—sending Henry to the university to study theology. His mother even made objections against sending him to the high school where Latin and Greek were taught. Therefore, he went to a teachers’ college and became a teacher in a grade school in The Hague where his parents lived. Henry liked to go and visit God’s people in different places.

One day he said to his mother, “Is it okay if I go to Lisse for the weekend to see Rev. Overduin and Segers?”

“Oh, surely,” she answered, “and give them my regards.”

As soon as Henry was gone, the Lord spoke these words to his mother, “Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49b). These words greatly amazed her since she did not understand their meaning at all. She was pondering on this text the whole day, but no light was shed on it from above. The next day, Sunday, she begged the Lord again to give light upon the meaning of these words, but instead the Lord spoke to her the same words.

Henry was heartily welcomed at Rev. Overduin’s parsonage, but the minister said, “I must preach somewhere else tomorrow.”

“That is too bad. If I had known that, I would have come another time.”

“No, no, I am pleased you came,” and waiting a little while, the minister went on, “Do you know Henry, what I was thinking? You preach tomorrow.”

“Oh, Reverend, how can you say such a thing like that? Me preaching? No, impossible, you can’t mean that!”

“Yes, I do mean it. You preach for me tomorrow in my stead.”

“But I never made a sermon; I don’t know how to go about it. If you could help me, perhaps...”

“No, I can’t help you. I must leave soon. There is my bookcase. You consult any work you want, but I can do nothing for you.”

After the minister was gone, Henry was left alone in the study. While he was studying, he often sighed and prayed, “Lord, help me; Lord, put me not to shame. Lord, open Thy Word to me.”

The next morning, Sunday, Henry went to the consistory. The elders and deacons knew already that he was going to preach. Rev. Overduin must have informed at least one of the elders. It was time to begin. The congregation expected one of

the elders to climb the pulpit as usual. It had been announced the week before that there would be reading service. “Who is that? Only a boy! Must he read and not an elder? Why? Who is he anyway?” Such questions and others rose up in the hearts of many. Then they heard him give out a psalm, read a chapter, offer a prayer and deliver the sermon, to the astonishment of many and to the gladness of God’s people who were edified by it.

In the evening Henry preached again. The church was packed, and it pleased the Lord to help him by renewal and to open His Word to him so that he was not put to shame (Psalm 25:20).



Young Rev. G.H. Kersten

When Henry came home, his mother asked him how he had fared, how Rev. Overduin was and what Rev. Overduin's texts were. In answering this last question, he mentioned the texts from which he himself had preached but never said a word about the fact that he had preached.

Tuesday morning the mailman brought some letters from Lisse. Henry's mother said, "From whom can that be?" When she opened the letters, she was astonished. "What," she said, "can that be true? Did my Henry preach? Yes, it must be true because the three letters write the same." Now the words spoken to her by the Lord were bound on her heart again. Now she understood the meaning of them. "My Henry preached!" she cried out. Oh, how humbled she felt that the Lord was going to use her son to be a laborer in His vineyard.

I am inserting that which Rev. Kersten wrote about convictions and his conversion.

"It pleased the Lord to powerfully convince me, through His Spirit, when I was ten years old. I shall never forget the place where I became a lost sinner. I spent many nights with bitter complaints. After one year I learned to know the Lord Jesus as the way of salvation, who a few years later assured me by His Spirit of my portion in Him and His righteousness."

Children, it is a blessing if we may have impressions of death and eternity, especially when we have them

in our youth. It may prevent us from many sins. However, impressions alone are not enough to meet God in righteousness and peace. "What comfort is there in such preaching?" you may ask; "What is left for me?"

Today many say, "You must give something to the youth also; let us adjust the truth a bit."

No, that is impossible. You cannot adapt the Word of God to man. Then we begin to err. I cannot comfort anyone and say, "Keep courage; you'll make it." No! The Lord said to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." I cannot say to either young or old, "You are in the covenant, only believe it!"

That is the cry of our days. However, the Word of God teaches us that we are children of wrath by nature. Therefore, I have one message only—however hard it may sound in your ears—and that message is, "Thy judgments are a great deep" (Psalm 36:6). I passed the highest mountains and the steepest ravines, so steep that fear beset me. Now, when man begins to see, by the light of the Holy Spirit, that he stands at the very edge of such a ravine, that any moment can be his last, and that he is lost, then he is holily disquieted and shaken, and says: "Oh God, convert me." Oh, how I wish that this was in your hearts also.

(To be continued)



Bible Stories for Little Ones

Saul Is Killed

(Based on 1 Samuel 28&31; 1 Chronicles 10)

Many times, Saul had heard how David was to be king after him, and he knew that God's words always came true. Often, he must have worried—and feared. If David were to be the next king, that meant that something was going to happen to him! Saul knew death was very close, and it made him afraid.

Do we ever fear death? Death could be right at the door—but we live as if we are going to live forever.

One day Saul saw the large Philistine army coming together to fight the Israelites, and he was afraid. What was he to do? Would the Israelites win the battle, or would they be defeated? How could he find out? He couldn't ask Samuel, for Samuel was dead.

Then he knew. He could ask God for help! It was true that he hadn't thought about God as much as he should have, but he would ask God anyway. However, no answer came. No prophet came to Saul with a special word from God. No dream came at night. Nothing happened. God did not answer him.

Many people think that God will do anything for them even though they don't want anything to do with God. Notice what happens in an airplane crash or in a terrible fire. People see death, and THEN they cry to God!

"I HAVE to know what's going to happen in that battle!" Saul thought anxiously. "There's only one thing

to do—I'll see if there are still any witches around.”

Witches? Not witches as we think of them, but fortune-tellers, people who told what was going to happen in the future. They did not talk with God when they needed something, but they talked with—the devil. How awful! Today there are still people who say they can do these sinful things, and we must stay away from them.

At one time Saul had either killed or made all these kinds of wicked people leave Israel. Perhaps that was when Samuel was yet alive. But now Saul was going to try to find one who was still hiding in Israel, and he would ask her to show him what would happen in the battle.

Saul's men told him of a woman like this not very far away. Since Saul didn't want her to know who he was, that night he changed into different clothes and then went to her. Two men went with him.

“I want you to get me someone from the dead so I can talk to him,” he told the woman.

“But I can't do that!” cried the woman. “Don't you know that I'm not allowed to do that sort of thing anymore? King Saul would kill me if he were to know of it!”

“Nothing will happen to you,” said the man who was really the king. “I promise you that Saul won't kill you!”

“Okay, if you say so,” the woman said. “Whom shall I get for you?” Saul told her he wanted to talk with Samuel.

The woman did what she had to do, and then—she screamed! She had brought up an old man who looked like Samuel, and then she knew who her visitor was.

“You have tricked me!” she cried. “You are King Saul!”

“Don't be afraid,” Saul said. “I won't hurt you, but tell me, whom do you see?”

“I see spirits,” she cried. “An old man is coming. He's wearing a mantle like Samuel always did.”

Was that really the prophet himself? Hadn't Samuel died and gone to his final home in heaven? Yes, he had. Most of those who explain the Bible think that this was an evil spirit from Satan pretending to be Samuel. Not even the devil can take one of God's children from heaven.

“Why are you bothering me?” Samuel asked Saul.

“Oh, Samuel,” cried Saul. “I am so worried. The Philistines have come to fight us, and I don't know what's going to happen. I have asked God, but He doesn't answer me, and I'm so afraid.”

“But why do you ask me, if God won't answer you?” asked Samuel. “God is going to do just what I had always told you He would. He is taking the kingdom away from you and giving it to David. It's all because you wouldn't obey God. The Philistines are going to win the battle, and tomorrow you and your two sons are going to be here with me.”

Oh, no, what did that mean? The next day Saul and his two sons would be dead,

Saul cried out and fell to the ground. His worst thoughts were going to come true; He was going to be killed, awful thought, awful thought! Then where would he be? Why hadn't he listened to God? Oh, WHY hadn't he listened to God? Now it was too late! Too late! Too late!

The witch tried her best to cheer him up. “Get up; eat something.” she told him. “I have done what you wanted. Now you must eat something so that you have strength for the way home.”

Saul was too upset to eat anything. Finally, the woman and Saul's men persuaded him to eat some meat and bread. Then Saul and the men went home.

In the battle against the Philistines, Saul could see that God was not with the Israelites, and he knew he was going to be killed. Then the enemy wounded Saul, and he was hurting so much. He also already knew that his two sons had been killed in the battle. What an awful thought—and, very wounded, he knew he was next to be killed, just as that spirit had said.

No! He was not going to let anyone say the Philistines had killed him; he was too proud for that.

“Kill me with your sword,” he told the young man who carried his armor.

The boy was afraid. Kill the king? Never!

“Then I'm going to do it myself,” thought Saul. “No one is going to say those Philistines killed me,” and he fell on the point of his sword and died.

The armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, and without stopping to think, he fell on his sword, too—and died.

How awful! So many souls meeting their Maker—unprepared. Are we ready to meet our Maker?



Bible Quiz

Colors

Dear Boys and Girls,

There are many colors mentioned in the Bible.

Esau had RED hair and ate red pottage.

YELLOW is not mentioned very often in the Bible.

In the Psalms we read of a dove: "Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold."

BLUE was used for priests' clothing. "And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue" (Exodus 28).

Lydia was a seller of PURPLE.

In Mark 6, Jesus commands the multitude of people to sit on the GREEN grass.

Genesis 30 is the only chapter that mentions BROWN. There were brown sheep and brown cattle in Jacob and Laban's flocks.

ORANGE is not found in the Bible.

Silver and gold represented wealth and money. The cup of Pharaoh found in Benjamin's sack was made of silver, Judas betrayed the Lord Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, and the kings of Israel had much gold and silver. SILVER is mentioned 283 times in the Bible. Yet in Proverbs we read that obtaining silver and money is not nearly as important as it is to receive God's work and teaching in the heart. God says, "Receive My instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice GOLD."

* * * * *

When we think of the Bible, we can imagine the first page as being GOLD. On the first page we read of Creation. Everything was beautiful and perfect. It reminds us of the color gold. We read above all of the Creator. It is about God, who rules over heaven and the earth which He created. He lives in heaven, where everything is good, and the angels sing to His honor. It speaks in the Bible of the streets there being of gold.

When you turn the page in your Bible, however, we come to a BLACK page. This is Genesis 3. It speaks of sin, sorrow, and grief; it speaks of the fall in paradise. It has become all wrong between us and God. All sin is like the color black—the sins we commit every day: if we hurt others with gossip, are not honest, or tease other children...

Thankfully, the Bible also mentions RED. The Lord Jesus shed His blood and paid for the punishment of sin. He has obtained salvation so that it is possible for things to become right again between God and people. He suffered and died for the sins of His people.

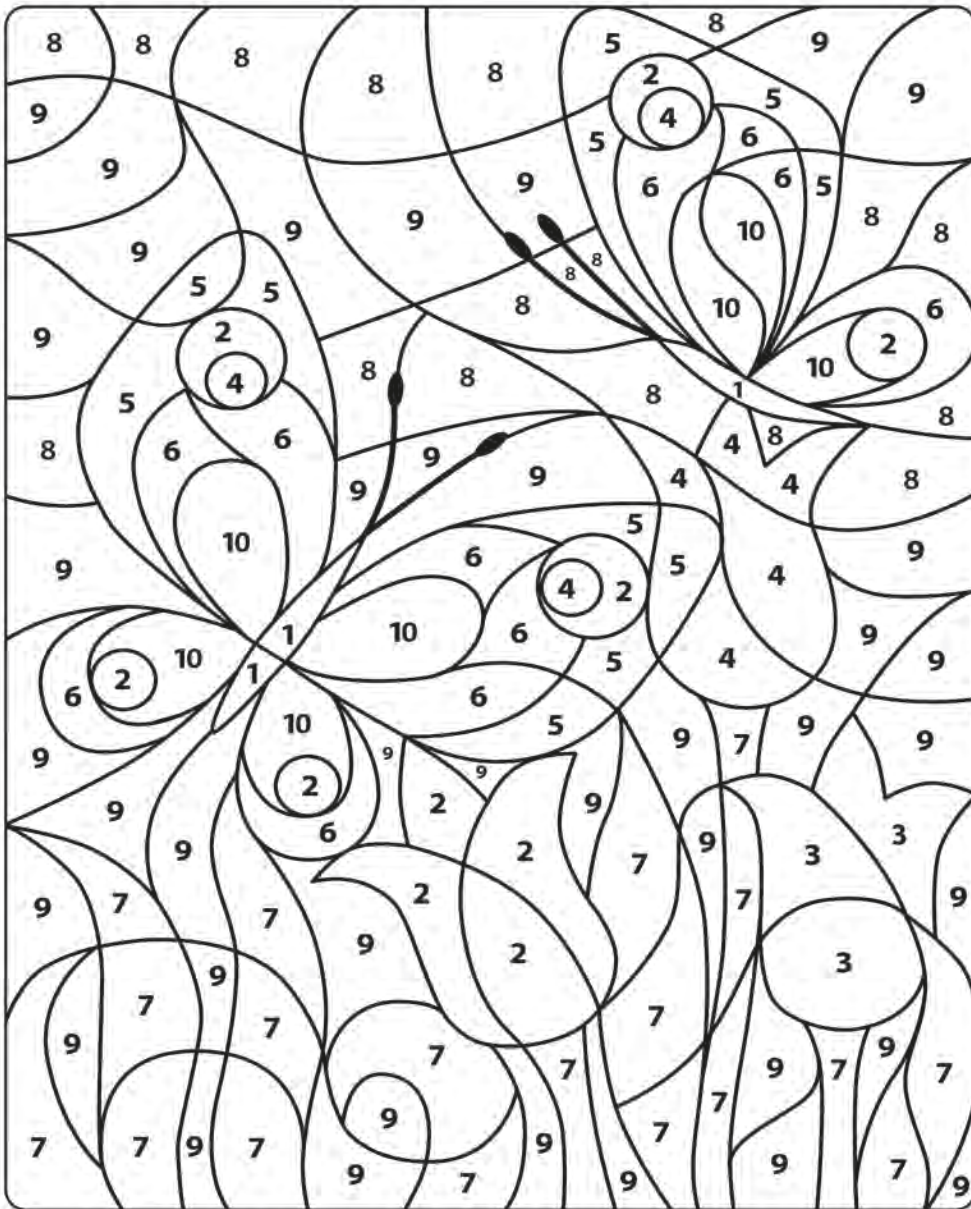
In Isaiah we read of the color WHITE. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." David also pleads in Psalm 51, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." White speaks of the washing away of sin, and of eternal life.

GREEN speaks of new life. In the spring, everything becomes green outdoors. The Bible speaks of green herbs, green trees, and green pastures. The green pastures were a place to rest. However, it also speaks of how frail green things are and how they easily wither. "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away." This points us to the frailty of life. So easily, it can be cut down. However, the life that God gives in a person's heart can never be snuffed out. Although the little plant of that life may often droop or become dry, the Lord will care for it.

* * * * *

Each number in the picture on the next page represents a color. To find the correct color, look up the texts. The color mentioned in the text is the color you will use to fill in all spaces with that number.

- 1 = Genesis 30:40 _____
- 2 = 1 Kings 6:30 _____
- 3 = 2 Kings 3:22 _____
- 4 = Leviticus 13:36 _____
- 5 = Proverbs 7:9 _____
- 6 = Daniel 7:9 _____
- 7 = Isaiah 57:5 _____
- 8 = Ezekiel 27:24 _____
- 9 = Acts 19:24 _____
- 10 = John 19:5 _____



For the Older Children

Sometimes colors had a different name in the Bible. Find each of these names.

16. In Joshua 2, the red rope is called _____.

17. In Exodus 28:18, the green jewel is called _____.

18. In Isaiah 1:18, sins are portrayed as red and called _____ (different word than #16)

19. In Ezekiel 10:1, a bluish-green stone appeared above the cherubim, called _____.

20. How many things can you find which were mentioned as green in the Bible?

(Psalm 23, Revelation 9, Psalm 37:2&35, Leviticus 2, Judges 16, Song of Solomon 2:13, Esther 1, Jeremiah 17:8, Hosea 14:8, Genesis 30:37, Psalm 52:8)

_____, _____,
 _____, _____,
 _____, _____,
 _____, _____,
 _____, _____,
 _____, _____,
 _____, _____,

For the Younger Children

Draw a line from the object to the correct color.

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 11. Mordecai's garment (Esther 8:15) | blue |
| 12. The sea where Pharaoh and purple his host drowned (Exodus 15:4) | |
| 13. The tablecloth under the showbread (Numbers 4:7) | red |
| 14. The seven withs (vines) which tied Samson (Judges 16:7) | white |
| 15. The angels which sat in Jesus' tomb (John 20:12) | green |

Parents, do you wish to see your children happy? Take care, then, that you train them to obey when they are spoken to—to do as they are bid.... Teach them to obey while young, or else they will be fretting against God all their lives long, and wear themselves out with the vain idea of being independent of His control.

—J.C. Ryle

Answers to June's "Fire" quiz:

1. Consuming Hebrews 12:29
2. World Matthew 13:40
3. Enemies Psalm 97:3
4. Lamb Genesis 22:7
5. Brimstone Genesis 19:24
6. Root Matthew 3:10
7. Servants Job 1:16
8. Egypt Exodus 9:23
9. Rocks Nahum 1:6
10. Lake Revelation 20:15
11. Wrath Psalm 89:46
12. Flame Exodus 3:2
13. Korah Numbers 26:10
14. Furnace Exodus 19:18
15. Appeareth Malachi 3:2
16. Heads Ezekiel 22:31
17. And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 13:42)
18. Walked, fell, warmed, saw, went

Answers to previous quizzes were received in May from:

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Clay Bakker | Micah Kievit | Micah Spaans |
| Paige Bakker | Elizabeth Kooyman | Tessa Spaans |
| Britni Blom | Jacob Kooyman | Megan Taylor |
| Christina Blom | Krysten Kooyman | Brandon Ten Hove |
| Jenina Blom | Abraham Mol | Hannah-Jo Ten Hove |
| Lawrence Blom | Madeline Mol | Kaiven Van Middendorp |
| Martha Blom | Teddy Mol | Konner Van Middendorp |
| Tiffany Blom | Zachary Mol | Brett Van Velthuisen |
| Aryanna Breeweg | John Murphy | Sophia Vande Waerd |
| Andrew Breuer | Andrew Murphy | Helen Verhoef |
| Brooklyn DeJager | Blake Pannekoek | Joanna Verhoef |
| Laurel DeJager | Lauren Pannekoek | Shara Verhoef |
| Allison Ekema | Kadri Post | Caleb Vogelaar |
| Kaylynn Ekema | Nevaeh Rozeboom | Matthew Vogelaar |
| Andrea Fluit | Collin Rus | Jayden Weeda |
| Willow Groeneweg | Kaela Rus | Keegan Weeda |
| Tonia Harris | Lakia Rus | Nathan Wesdyk |
| Jada Kelderman | Brogan Spaans | Carli Ymker |
| Jadon Kievit | Jacob Spaans | |



Please send your answers to the address shown below:

Aunt LenaBeth

180 Jacobs Road, Newfoundland, NJ 07435

E-mail: auntlenabeth@gmail.com

Directions for Meditation

Read before you meditate. "Give attendance to reading" (1 Timothy 4:13). Then it follows, "Meditate upon these things" (verse 15). Reading doth furnish with matter; it is the oil that feeds the lamp of meditation. Be sure your meditations are founded upon Scripture. Reading without meditation is unfruitful; meditation without reading is dangerous.

—Thomas Watson

Sola Scriptura

God speaks by the Church (the true Church, we mean); He speaks nothing by her but what He speaks in the Scriptures, which she does only ministerially declare to us. Therefore, the authority of God and His law is above hers, who, though she publish, yet did not make it, but is herself subject to it.

—John Owen

News & Announcements

■ Ministerial Calls

Extended:

To Rev. E.C. Adams of Picture Butte, Alberta, by the congregation of Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

To Rev. E. Hakvoort of Norwich, Ontario, by the congregation of Franklin Lakes, New Jersey.

■ Obituaries

SISCO, Ruth (nee Van Der Stad) – Age 85, June 3, 2024; Newfoundland, NJ; Husband – Eugene (deceased); Long-time Friend – Bill Post; Children – Arthur & Janet, Elizabeth, Nancy Thiessen, June Melofchik; 8 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren; Siblings – Neil Van Der Stad, Ed Van Der Stad, Harold & Rina Van Der Stad, Jennie Sweetman, Winnie Anker; predeceased by 2 sisters and 4 in-laws. (Rev. H. de Leeuw, Romans 6:23.)

VRIESELAAR, Cornelis (Cor) – Age 80, May 14, 2024; Chilliwack, British Columbia; Wife – Connie (nee Maljaars); Children – Tim & Brenda, Jim, Cathy, Jeff & Rachel; 18 grandchildren; Siblings – John & Corrie, Johanna & Keith, Sally & Gerrit, Bonnie; In-laws – Wilma Vrieselaar, Martin & Lydia Maljaars, Joanne Maljaars, Bill & Ada Maljaars, Jim & Mary Maljaars, Pete & Cheryl Maljaars, Dave & Janna Maljaars, John & Irene Maljaars, Casey Maljaars, Wilma & Stan Vander Waal, Mary & Martin Zwartbol; predeceased by 3 brothers, 4 in-laws and a niece. (Rev. P. Kleijer, Psalm 39:7.)

■ Installation and Inaugural Services of Rev. E. Maljaars in NRC of Courtland, Ontario

The consistory of the Netherlands, Reformed Congregation of Courtland, Ontario, announces with gladness that the Lord has inclined the heart of Rev. E. Maljaars to accept our call to become our shepherd and teacher. The Lord willing, Rev. E. Maljaars will be united with our congregation in an installation service conducted by Rev. E. Hakvoort on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at 2:30 P.M. Rev. E. Maljaars hopes to preach his inaugural service the same evening at 7:00 P.M. Both services will be held in the Netherlands Reformed Congregation of Norwich, 45 Main St. E., Norwich, ON N0J 1P0.

■ 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 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 July 17, 2024, our dear parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents,

Mel & Dena Blom

hope to commemorate their 50th wedding anniversary.

"Shew me Thy ways, O LORD; teach me Thy paths" (Ephesians 4:2).

57 Jason Ridge Ct. S.W.
Grand Rapids, MI 49534

50th Wedding Anniversary

The Lord willing, on July 26, 2024, our dear parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents,

Thomas & Debra Engelsma

hope to commemorate their 50th wedding anniversary.

"Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth" (Psalm 119:90).

7805 Warner St., Allendale, MI 49401

Request Concerning Obituary Listings

Dear Readers,

The editorial team of *The Banner of Truth* attempts to list obituaries for each recently deceased member of our churches. We strive to ensure accurate and acceptable information especially with regard to the families mourning the loss. Though most obituaries are provided by the deceased's consistory or officiating minister, being certain of some details can prove to be difficult at times. Accordingly, we kindly encourage the appropriate family member(s) to email the managing editor the week after the funeral to assist in confirming these details.

—The Editors

Those that care not for the Word are strangers to the Spirit, and they that care not for the Spirit never make a right use of the Word. The Word is nothing without the Spirit, and it is only animated and quickened by Him. The Spirit and the Word are like the veins and arteries in the body that give life to the whole. Therefore, where the Word is most revealed, there is most of the Spirit.

—Richard Sibbes

Summary of Classis East Meeting, April 10, 2024

Prior to the classis meeting, Rev. H. de Leeuw provided a topic on Tuesday, April 9, about “Receiving Texts.” He made the distinction whether the text is from ourselves, from the devil, or from the Lord. We need spiritual discernment, and we need to deal honestly with the souls entrusted unto us.

Tuesday evening, Rev. A.H. Verhoef led the prayer service in Brant County. He spoke with regard to 1 Corinthians 15:58 about “Paul’s encouraging exhortation unto his Corinthian brethren,” and asked attention regarding the reason for this exhortation, the contents of this exhortation, and the assurance with this exhortation.

Wednesday morning, April 10, Rev. H. de Leeuw from Brant County opened the classis meeting with a meditation about John 20:19-23. After opening, a warm welcome was extended to all delegates, deputies of Article 49, office bearers and visitors. Special events in the congregations and denomination were mentioned. The credentials from the seven classis congregations were received and approved.

The following delegates formed the moderamen: Rev. H. de Leeuw (chairman), Rev. E. Hakvoort (vice-chairman), Elder S. van Brugge (clerk) and Elder R. van Koeveringe (treasurer).

The minutes of the previous classis meeting were approved by the moderamen of that meeting. Some correspondence and reports were received. Classis decided that the moderamen of the previous classis meeting will from now on serve as Committee for Incoming and Outgoing Ministers.

Regarding one church visitation, it was mentioned that when a consistory wants to read transcribed catechism sermons that were put into bound copies, written permission needs to be obtained from the author, or if he has since passed away, from the family. The remaining church visitations were divided and will be done by the classis ministers.

A report was received regarding the 2023 Norwich and Courtland Youth Conference. Approximately 130 young people were in attendance. This year, there will be a joint Classis East and Midwest Conference, hosted by one of the Michigan congregations, DV. One report was dealt within closed session, and one point was dealt within executive closed session in the presence of the Deputies Article 49, who provided Classis with advice.

The Ontario congregations will consider collaboration in making a combined annual Church Directory. Each individual congregation will have to give its support, and if received from those congregations, the Courtland congregation will be responsible for compiling and printing the directory.

One congregation was seeking guidance on the term lengths and term limits for office bearers. It was confirmed that a congregation’s bylaws cannot contradict Church Order but are supposed to complement each other. If this is not the case, the congregation’s bylaws need

to be amended to remove the inconsistency and membership approval for this change has to be obtained with the usual two-thirds majority. Term lengths and term limits may be set by a consistory as Church Order allows for some flexibility, but if bylaws speak about this, this should be reflected in the bylaws. One member of the LAC who was also present, gave some information regarding this. Their mandate is to assist NRC churches and schools in legal matters. If a congregation has voluntarily adopted bylaws, they take legal precedence over Church Order and therefore must be followed. It is, therefore, of great importance that the bylaws do not contradict but rather complement Church Order. The LAC has templates for a bylaw, but they serve as a starting point for the church. The templates must be reviewed and revised as necessary to ensure compliance with State and Federal Law and with their understanding of Church Order. Classis agreed that a consistory should utilize the support and services of the LAC who are aware of state requirements and legal implications with other government agencies.

One congregation requested Classis to give consideration to forward to Synod the request to review the various options of how the finalized Synod minutes are printed. At present, each office bearer receives a printed book. This past Synod resulted in 79,000 pages needed to make up the contents of the synod minutes. Would a copy for each delegate and a few confidential copies for each consistory not be sufficient? After a brief discussion, it was agreed to forward this point to Synod for consideration.

Regarding moderatorships, everything remains as it currently is.

The following delegates are chosen for the Synod: Rev. A.H. Verhoef, Rev. E. Hakvoort and Rev. H. de Leeuw. From the elders: Elder S. Mol, Elder J. van Brugge, Elder R. van Koeveringe and Elder J. Tod, with the alternates: Elder S. Sweetman, Elder W. Pas and Elder S. van Brugge.

The expenses were dealt with. The next classis meeting will be scheduled for October 2, 2024, DV, if needed. The next spring classis meeting is scheduled for April 2, 2025, DV. The calling church will be Clifton. Rev. A.H. Verhoef will open the meeting as moderator. The chairman will be Rev. E. Hakvoort, and vice-chairman Rev. A.H. Verhoef. The prayer service will be led by Rev. H. de Leeuw and office bearers’ conference will be led the day prior to the classis by Rev. E. Hakvoort

At the closing, the vice-chairman, Rev. E. Hakvoort, acknowledged the Lord for the help given. “The Lord has brought us hitherto.” He thanked the chairman for leading the meeting today, and the delegates for their participation. He then asked that we close with singing Psalter 417:1. After reading the corresponding Psalm 43, the meeting was closed with prayer.

—SV

Cautions Against Leaning upon Spiritual Feelings

Be not too much set upon having your *comfort and joy* derived from a feeling sense of divine grace and of the operations of the Holy Spirit. If it please the Lord to grant you those sensible evidences of His love, be thankful. Highly prize and carefully preserve them; if ye have not these experiences, consider that now ye are not so much called to feel as to believe. The former is transitory, but the latter remains when feelings cease. The one produces a tender, steadfast walk, but the other renders it wavering and unsteady. As long as a person has a feeling of the love of God, he conceives that hills and mountains must fall before him, and says, “I shall never be moved” (Psalm 30:6). If he lose this feeling sense, the least unfavorable circumstance alarms him, and he is ready to give up all for lost, but faith continues though midnight darkness rests upon us. By believing we keep a fast hold of the Word and promises, and thus temptations of every kind lose much of their power.

—Taken from The Pious Communicant
Rev. Petrus Immens

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

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ROCK VALLEY/SIOUX CENTER, IOWA, is seeking to fill openings in grades 7-12: math, elementary, physical education, and secondary teaching. Some of these positions are part-time or full-time and can be combined depending upon qualifications and experience. For further information, please contact the principal, Mr. Daniel Breuer, at 712-476-2821 or dan.breuer@nrce.sia.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 in urgent need of grade 7 teachers. Applications for other teaching positions are also welcome.

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.

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.**

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

Jehovah Is My Sun

Jehovah is my Sun;
He shines into my heart;
Though clouds do often interpose,
My Sun shall not depart.

This Sun has warmed my soul,
When chilled by sin and death;
Its beams have shone with strength and heat,
And made me strong in faith.

Whatever be my frame,
My Sun no change can know;
Though I am dark, He still remains
My light and glory too.

Nor death, nor sin, nor hell,
Shall make Him cease to shine;
And, though I cannot always feel
His beams, He's ever mine.

'Tis no precarious light
That shines on Zion's hill;
'Tis God, essential light itself,
And therefore, cannot fail.

—William Gadsby

the
Banner
of Truth

July 2024

Volume 90, No. 7

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