

the **Banner** *of Truth*

October 2024
Volume 90, No. 10

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

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The Reformation
Thanksgiving Meditation

For our young readers...

David and the House of God
Earthquakes





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Cover: Harvest fruits | Public domain image

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*.

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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.

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Meditation

The Common Salvation

Rev. J. Slingerland, Corsica, SD

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation” (Jude 3a).

Beloved” is an opening word which expresses the bond that Jude, the writer of this epistle, has with the Christian congregation he addresses. By the same opening word of this address, a separation is made which explains the reason why Jude has written this epistle, for in the following verse we read that “certain men crept in unawares...ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.” Thus, in a very subtle manner error had entered into the Christian church which was a threat to the doctrine of true faith. God’s servants walk with a burden concerning the purity of the doctrine of salvation in light of the souls entrusted to their care. Subtle deviations from the truth are detrimental to the spiritual welfare of a congregation and pose a great danger for the rising generation.

Jude points with all earnestness to the “common salvation.” What is meant by that phrase? Why does he feel such an urgency to write concerning the “common salvation?” Dear reader, if it is well and the Lord grants it, then at the end of this month within our churches, schools, and homes, the Lord’s preserving hand over His Church by way of the Reformation will again be observed. That a Reformation was needed speaks to the truth of the darkness that lives in our hearts by nature. That a Reformation was given speaks to the truth of God’s care over His Church, which He has purchased with His own blood. It was by the enlightening work of His Spirit that the Reformers were given light upon the truths of the Bible, divine light, which is indispensable to the preservation of the “common salvation.”

We understand very well that the “common salvation” does not mean that salvation is given to all. Paul records what all men have in common because of our rebellion against God in Paradise: “There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God” (Romans 3:10&11). It is a blessing if the truths of God’s Word are yet with the mouth confessed and agreed with, but have we personally been enlightened concerning our spiritual ignorance? Man under the umbrella of religion strives with all his strength and understanding to bring forth something pleasing to the Lord, but the Lord brings all the wisdom of man to nothing, He enlightens one unto the reality that he shall appear before an unknown God, whom he cannot meet in his unconverted state. Has the necessity of a change of state, a regeneration, been made your burden?

Neither does the “common salvation” point to salvation

being granted upon my faithful attendance in God’s house. The Romish church in its darkness stressed that salvation lay in the church. The Reformers pointed by renewal to the foundation of God’s Word. Christ said, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3b). We easily confess this to be a sound saying, but it is to be feared that many are at ease with nothing more than a historical knowledge. What a burden of guilt lies upon the soul under conviction, brought to a standstill before the reality of having personally embraced a threefold death—temporal, spiritual, and eternal. Are there amongst our readers those who wrestle under that weighty word...lost?

The “common salvation” to which Jude points is that only way of salvation which is granted upon true faith in the mediatorial sacrifice of Jesus Christ. On the day of Pentecost under the preaching of the Word by Peter, the external call was effectually applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit, and three thousand were given to cry out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Of the early Christian church, we read further in Acts 2:42a, “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship.” A necessity was born in the heart to be instructed in the mysteries of salvation, that they might be placed upon that eternal foundation of Him who had merited a complete and perfect work in accordance with His Father’s eternal good pleasure. God’s Word has recorded the spiritual bond that was given in Christ: “And all that believed were together, and had all things in common” (Acts 2:44). Then an end is made by the Lord of all my legalistic deeds, and the hunger of a missing, not a possessing, soul is born. How Martin Luther wrestled under that immovable burden of justice until divine light was given: “The just shall live by faith.”

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8). That is the wonder granted in the way of the “common salvation.” There we meet a Mary in her need, looking unto the mediatorial work of Christ. There we see Peter, no longer boasting of his love for Christ but stripped of his self-righteousness, confessing, “Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee” (John 21:17b). Yet, again, we see a Paul, who may marvel of a difference where there was no difference, by nature, “Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief” (1 Timothy 1:13). Do such testimonies of God’s Word arouse a jealousy within your heart?

There was great concern in the heart of Jude regarding the welfare of the Christian congregation—not only for those in whom the Lord had made a beginning but also

that the pure doctrine would be preserved for the future generations. Therefore, by the inspiration of the Spirit he “gave all diligence to write.” Jude had to contend against the spirit of Antinomianism which had revealed itself, a professing of faith with the mouth but a life of sin which proved the heart was void of grace (Romans 6:1-2). At the time of the Reformation, it was especially the error of good works. We must always remember error creeps in slowly and in a very subtle manner. Jude wrote this so that it might be read. Are you familiar with your Bible? A superficial knowledge of God’s Word is the cause of great error throughout the centuries. There is a great danger today concerning the written word, not because the Bible is withheld from us; rather, the truths of the doctrine of salvation in accordance with the entire Word of God are often not known or are misunderstood. Parents, especially fathers—as it is their duty—use all diligence in the midst of your families to interpret God’s Word in accordance with the meaning of His Spirit.

Jude wrote in order that the “common salvation” might be preserved. We and our children are entrusted with God’s Word, and as a means to preserve the doctrine of the “common salvation”—which is set forth perfectly in His Word—the Lord has also given (among other works)

the Confession of Faith, the Canons of Dort, and the Heidelberg Catechism. They are not inspired, but if we study them alongside God’s Word, we clearly see that the Lord has granted these men much light to preserve the doctrine of salvation. God’s true children have been granted much instruction and comfort from the discerning and discovering nature of these works. They are not just dry doctrinal truths, but they contain the path of salvation as it is wrought experimentally in the heart of God’s people. Dear reader, do you also find your spiritual life, soul’s struggles, and riddles contained in them?

The “common salvation” is the way to be saved from my sin upon which the eternal wrath of God lies. Has sin become your guilt? Has the necessity of regeneration, of true saving faith been bound upon your heart—God’s righteous demand...an utterly impotent sinner...and the manner in which God glorifies His grace in the heart of a sinner? How much there is, also in our time, that seeks to shroud and corrupt the simplicity of the way of “common salvation.” May the Lord graciously grant the heart-renewing work of His Spirit—the reformation of the heart. “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10). □



Bible Study

The Names of the Mediator (10)

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

Example

*“For I have given you an **example**, that ye should do as I have done to you”* (John 13:15).

Christ is the great example for His Church. He is not only an example; those who see Him only as an example grossly undervalue Christ’s work as the Surety. How poor it would be if His mediatorial ministry consisted in this only. Yet, He *also* is an example, though no one is able to *follow* His example perfectly. We find this clearly in the text above. Jesus washing the disciples’ feet was an example. The Dutch annotators refer to 1 Peter 2:21: “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.” His patience was an example—1 John 2:6: “He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.” His obedience to God’s commandments was an example also. Yes, everything Christ did is worthy of following.

After the Mediator washed His disciples’ feet, He asked them a question: “So after He had washed their feet, and

had taken His garments, and was set down again, He said unto them, “Know ye what I have done to you?” He did not wait for their answer but gave the application Himself. This He did to them by way of example. “Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.” The example here is—serve. The Master became the least of all. The disciples had striven among themselves which of them should be accounted the greatest. Haughtiness flared up in them, but Christ bowed down at their feet. Then their pride ceased.

Some believe that washing feet is to be imitated literally, but the Dutch annotator writes: “That is, to show preferably, if necessary, all sorts of services of love to each other, also those which are otherwise done by the least, but not to use the same as a sacrament; as this is not Christ’s aim here.” It is not about the literal example but about the spiritual lesson. This example permeates the whole life. The disciples ought to follow His example. It is not just an example without obligations. Those who do not follow this example

become guilty. A true disciple should be conformed to the Master's image. He owes it to the Master. Therefore, it becomes the prayer of all God's children, "Oh, Son, conform us to Thy image."

If two do the same thing, it is not always the same. The word "as" in the text has a much deeper meaning. Christ's serving came from the principle of love. He loved His own "unto the end," to *that* end. This is how it must be with His disciples, also. How many ulterior motives can remain in our hearts. With Christ, serving was accompanied by perseverance. Peter rejected his feet to be washed, but Christ continued to serve. By nature, we are proud slaves of sin. Even after having received grace, we do not always know our place, but this service is so commendable. It is a service of love. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

—November 18, 2010, Rev. A. Schot

Fellow

*"Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My **Fellow**, saith the LORD of hosts" (Zechariah 13:7a).*

Being alone can be good when you want to come to reflection for a while. Always being alone, however, is difficult. You are completely on your own. Everything that comes your way in life has to be dealt with alone. What a longing there can be for someone who stands beside you and sympathizes warmly! What do we call such a person who stands and goes beside another? A fellow (or a companion). It is a friend who does not leave you alone. Every time, he or she is present to travel with you on life's journey. We are all traveling. By nature, we are alone, without God on our way to meet God. No one on earth

(To be continued)

can travel with us to the throne of God. Even a good friend cannot exist before God. We live on our own account, black with sin, guilty, and unspeakably alone.

The prophet Zechariah called the Mediator "Fellow." Does he mean that Christ can be a companion of a sinner? No, if we read the above text closely it is about the Son of God who is the Fellow of the Father. The Father and the Son are connected with an inseparable tie. In the Dutch annotation we read, "Namely, My only begotten Son, co-essential with Me." We cannot imagine a closer tie. The name Fellow refers to the close union between the first and second Persons of the divine Trinity—an eternal, deep bond of love.

However, what is incomprehensible? Zechariah speaks of a sword of the Father that would strike His beloved Fellow. Who would kill one's own friend to whom one is bound with close ties? This is how Zechariah presents it. The sword of God's justice would strike the Mediator. The Fellow of the Father would die. Christ would be alone in His being forsaking of God. Why? To glorify the Father's virtues. The Fellow being forsaken of God—who can comprehend this? However, the sword also struck God's Fellow so that people who should have been alone eternally would be brought back to God. Then it becomes true—not alone after all!

Has this Fellow become precious to you? Have you been brought back to Him who brought down the sword on His beloved Son? Those who are privileged to experience something of this great miracle are also warmly united to one another. They may sing Psalter 328:4—

*All those who fear Thy name
Shall my companions be...*

—July 15, 2010, Rev. A. Schot

Without Excuse

We have nothing which can render us acceptable to God. This certainly can be no serious objection if we reflect that God requires nothing more of us in His Word than an inclination, a willingness to receive every blessing from the hands of a covenant God. If sinners, though red with guilt and black with filth, look unto God in Christ, the Scriptures assure us that He will receive and embrace them in the arms of His love....

Say not, "We have been taught that we cannot give ourselves grace and are unable to go to God." It is true, sinners, ye are unable. This is not the point of the difficulty. Your wills are rebellious, sin and the world have captivated your souls, ye will not part with your lusts; therefore, to you the service of God is hard, for it is incompatible with the service of sins, and whoever will serve God must forsake the world. Your pleading inability is only to excuse yourselves and to cast the blame of your being in a graceless and Christless state upon God.

Let me ask you, "Has a sense of your inability ever brought you so far as to seek at the hands of God, in secret, the Holy Spirit to effectually shed His influences on your hearts?" Ye may, for a little while, endeavor to comfort yourselves with thinking that ye want ability to enter into covenant with God and that on this account ye are excused, but remember that ye will not dare to plead this on the Day of Judgment. Conscious of your guilt, and convinced of the holiness and justice of God, ye will observe an awful silence and...the dread sentence of your Judge.

—Taken from The Pious Communicant
Rev. Petrus Immens



A Word in Season

Thanksgiving Meditation (1)

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

(Taken from the November 1987 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

“For Thy mercy is great above the heavens” (Psalm 108:4a).

This month we will have our Thanksgiving Day. On that day people are coming together in all parts of the land to praise the name of the Lord for the blessings received during the past season.

It is most fitting and needful that we do so. Amid all the judgments of God, the Lord has again confirmed the words once spoken to Noah when he established the covenant of nature: “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” In spite of the fears which filled our hearts in the beginning of the year, nevertheless, the Lord made all things well, beyond expectation. He gave seed to the sower and bread to the eater.

Some had an extended dry spell this summer, but even then, the Lord made all things well. It would indeed be most fitting for us all to bow ourselves in the dust before the Most High Majesty of God, in whose hand our breath is and in whom are all our ways.

Although the harvest yielded considerably less than last year, due also to floods in various places, the Lord has still given us abundant reasons to acknowledge

His holy name. May our hearts and lips praise the name of the Lord. It may well be a wonder to us that we may still be alive. Some have entered into eternity, but we have mercifully been spared.

We could have separated from each other, but the Lord extended our days, also. Oh, how great and manifold is the lovingkindness of the Lord! In our personal life, our family life, our social life, but no less in our church life, this is so.

Surely, there are many reasons to complain because of the great darkness which reigns everywhere and because of the withholding of the Spirit of God. We so seldom hear that the Word bears fruit and that God is still extending and establishing His Church. Yet, on the other hand, we may still possess the pure truth, and we may still attend the sound preaching of the Word. The way of salvation is still proclaimed to us, and Christ is still preached as the complete Saviour of His people. If God were to give us eyes to see, we would see nothing but the goodness and lovingkindness of God everywhere. I hope we may receive deep and lively impressions of this at this time and that we may bow before God in true humility of heart. He is most assuredly so worthy to be acknowledged, to be served, and to be feared

by every living creature in heaven and upon the earth. May the Spirit of God accordingly favor us and stir up our hearts to do so, as explained in the text.

The heart of the psalmist has been prepared for singing. He even calls upon the psaltery and harp to join in glorifying the Lord. Things have taken place in the life of the psalmist which have given him particular reasons to praise the Lord.

Not only in his inner chamber but also among the people, among the nations, will he do so. Here we can see that the desire of those who fear the Lord is to make known His perfections everywhere. For this very purpose the Lord had planned in eternity to create His people, that is, that they might show forth His praise. Now God Himself enables His people to do so, by His Spirit; otherwise, it would never take place.

As Surety, Christ remained silent in His state of deep humiliation when He stood before Caiaphas and Pilate. Not at all times, surely, for He spoke on more than one

occasion when it came to upholding the honor of His Father, but there were times when He kept silence so that the people whom He purchased with His own blood would not have to keep silence

forever. The Lord opens the lips of His people here so they may cry out to God from the depths of their misery and so they may obtain relief in their soul's trouble.

He also opens their lips by His power so that they will sing praises to His name. There are special times in their life when the Lord counts them worthy to do this. Oh, what a wonder it is that they do not have to stand speechless forever but that they receive grace to give vent to that which goes on in their soul. God indeed gets the uppermost place in their heart, and it is the desire of their heart to extol His name. Those are times of solemn feasts when, in the course of their life, they may do this, to the vexation of Satan, sin, and the world. However, they will never do it here to the extent that they should. They constantly feel how poor they are; nevertheless, there is a most pure longing in their heart to give glory and honor to God. There are moments when they may already begin this heavenly work here upon earth. For truly, there will never be any keeping silence there, but the high praises of God shall be in their mouth forever.

There they shall forever sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb. □

*If God were to give us eyes to see,
we would see nothing but the goodness
and lovingkindness of God everywhere.*

(To be continued)

Before Our Maker Let Us Bow

Rev. J.C. Van Ravenswaaij (1918-2002)

(Translated from the Augusts 20, 1970 issue of *De Saambinder*)

“*And when I saw Him*” (Revelation 1:17a).

We meet the disciple of love on the island of Patmos, a lonely island of the Cyclades. What was he doing there? Was he resting from tiring labor in order to soon be able to bring the Word again with renewed vigor? Was he on vacation abroad to recover?

No, he was a prisoner, an exile. What had he done wrong? He had preached the pure truth in Ephesus, one of the seven churches in Asia Minor. He had spoken good words of Jesus Christ. His name and work he had faithfully propagated, and the reward which he received from Satan's hand was...exile!

Does Satan, then, have anything to do with the ministry of the Word? We thought so, my beloved readers. If he interferes with anything, it is first and foremost with the ministry of the Word, with the pure ministry of the Word—insofar as it can be pure on earth. Through this ministry of the Word, the devil has already eternally lost thousands of subjects. Those once ministered by Word and Spirit have eternally been saved from Satan's mighty clutches. This is not immediately evident but becomes more and more evident as the Lord, by His Spirit, gives instruction about this. Because Satan loses subjects through that ministry of the Word, he spends most of his time on making God's dear children unhappy. He knows very well that those who do not fear God will automatically come to him.

Thus, he is still busy today like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. He is always to be found in the church, especially the LIVING CHURCH, to make things difficult for God's people. This he will continue to do until the Son of Man returns on the clouds to judge the quick and the dead.

Surely you pay close attention, do you not, to how he works in our days in the church also to make apostates? Do you not hear him roaring about ecumenism? Do you not notice and see how he is working to make the church like the world by eliminating boundaries that God's Word has explicitly drawn? Watch and pray! lest ye enter into temptation!

Soon the church will be pushed back on a small front. Yes, the Prince of Darkness will not allow the church a square meter of ground on which she can still live. The Patmos of John, that little island, will become the dwelling place of the Church in tribulation, but then it is very well possible that she will be better spiritually than she is now! We can still move and get by easily. We still have space and freedom, but if we, with John, will one day be persecuted because of the Word, then how will we do in the swelling of Jordan? The Lord knows...!

It happened on a Sunday, on the day of the Lord, that the exalted Immanuel appeared to John. On that day John

was IN THE SPIRIT, that is, in an ecstasy about God and divine matters. Is there any better occupation for the soul? And then on the day of the Lord! When was the last time it happened to us that we were busy with spiritual, eternal matters on the Lord's Day?

Many a churchgoer spends that day in his own way. More and more the habit emerges of going up to God's house only once. The rest of the day we take for ourselves and spend to our liking. Too much of a good thing is always wrong—being in the Spirit, no, not becoming too pious, that is good for nothing. We believe in God and in an eternity; we believe especially in a God who is love, but I do not want sentimentalism and mystery, for that is no longer sober.

Ah, you should know how sober you will be when you come and are in the Spirit. Then truth becomes truth, and **my** truth turns out to be a lie. Then, by God's dear Spirit, my life is discovered to be dead. No, I do not become strange from being in the Spirit, but **true!** Strange are they who, with their so-called sober mind, spend the day in sin, which includes the sins that keep rearing their heads in the church: hypocrisy, untruthfulness, insincerity, etc.!

When John was in the Spirit on the first day of the week, he received a visit from his dear Saviour who was also His King and Lord. On earth He, as the Mediator of God and man, had been dead, but He now lives eternally in heaven. He had something to tell John and would give him a commission.

When John looked back, he saw One like the Son of Man, in full glory, and He was standing among the seven stars which were the seven churches of the Lord. People have sometimes tried to put into words who the Son of Man is. Ah, as long as we are here on earth, we will only be able to stammer. We will remain purest if we use the unadulterated language of Scripture for this. Several times men have tried to express in their own words who the Risen One is, who was dead and became alive again. However, no one will be able to do this; it remains in part. Once again, stay with what is written in Scripture and you will not gain more admiration for human expressions concerning God and divine matters. God is jealous of His glory, which He does not share with another. John SAW Jesus because... Jesus revealed Himself to him! Jesus came to John to tell him what would happen after these days and what he had to do. Stephen and Paul, still called Saul at that time, also saw Jesus after Easter. John was the third to whom the Lord revealed Himself in a glorious manner.

Come, let us bow before Him in prayer for all that this exalted Immanuel has done for His Church. No, He will neither leave nor forsake His own, however dark the road may sometimes be. We sometimes lose all sight and are often still so blind, but the Great Shepherd of the sheep

watches. He does not sleep; no, He does not even slumber. Therefore, "The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil." Blessed overpowering of the Lord, that we cannot resist Him anymore because He taught us to surrender our

weapons, and then, blessed submission to such a revelation of glory! This King is given by Israel's God. That is what the Church has been made to agree with. With what? With that GIVEN blessed GIFT of the Father, full of grace and truth. ◻



From Our Inheritance

The Reformation

Rev. A. Vergunst (1926-1981)

(Taken from the October, 1979 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

(Maschil of Asaph.) ***"Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength, and His wonderful works that He hath done"*** (Psalm 78:1-4).

It is proper that we should remember the works of the Lord, the wonderful and great deeds of God. The prophets of the Old Testament have again and again called to mind the works of the Lord and sought to bring the people to consider the obligation that flows forth from God's deeds in the past. You can read it in the verses quoted above. The poet thinks about what the fathers had told him and declares that he will show it to the generations to come so that the praises of the Lord and His strength and wonders shall not be forgotten. October 31 is also a day on which we should remember especially these words of the poet. For that day reminds us of the great strength and faithfulness of the Lord.

It had become so dark in the Church of God. The darkness of superstition seemed to have extinguished the light of the truth. Humanly speaking, there was no expectation that the Church would be restored, for the authorities of the world had united with the authorities in the church. Nevertheless, the authorities of the world were humbled by God's almighty hand. If God works, who shall let it?

When we think of Luther's nailing his theses on the castle door, we must not forget that Luther never thought that by doing so he would start the movement which we call the Reformation. Being convinced of the evil of the sale of indulgences, Luther sought to have a theological disputation and, therefore, nailed the ninety-five theses that concerned indulgences on the doors of the castle church of Wittenberg on October 31, 1517. He did not arbitrarily choose that date. For on the following day the Roman Catholics would celebrate All Saints' Day, and the festivities associated with it would bring many to the city; therefore, probably also

someone who was prepared to discuss the indulgences that were prominent in the church. By means of these theses, Luther did not address himself to the common people but to the learned men who knew the Latin language, and that is why the theses were written in Latin. He never thought of organizing a movement of the common people against popery. Moreover, his thoughts had, as yet, not gone so far as to break with Catholicism, although a trip to Rome had convinced him of the errors that clung to the papal system.

Luther wanted to speak about indulgences and hoped that a theological discussion would also convince others of its evil because in his own parish he had observed it with people who thought that because they had bought an indulgence, they could rejoice in the forgiveness of their sins without any true sorrow or repentance, or having any sincere or true faith. Indeed, those were Luther's plans, but God's thoughts were otherwise. God caused Luther's deed to be the beginning of a movement that in a few weeks stirred all of Europe and sent deep roots in the hearts of the people. Although the 31st of October brings to our mind the person of Martin Luther, still this is the day we must especially commemorate the deeds of God. God has wrought the Reformation of the Church, just as God had caused the Reformation to be prepared by men as John Wycliffe and John Hus, who have worked in other countries, and long before Luther, have sowed the seed which, at God's time, brought forth its beautiful fruit of the Reformation. Let us not forget these works of the Lord.

Read God's Word which gives us the message of God's revelation. Read, also, the book of history in which we can hear the footsteps of the God of Ages. Read that book of history; read it to your children so that they may know the praises of the Lord, His strength, and His honor. That is necessary, also in our days, indeed, especially in our days. It is one of the saddest signs of our days that there is so little desire to learn what has happened in the past. In these days of unbounded superficiality in all areas, we see the desire to remember God's wonders of old steadily diminishing. Yet those wonders have such great significance. For when

we study history, we must not be content with the knowledge of the facts as they took place, but we must learn to hear God's message that is brought to us in these facts.

History also contains a message; it, too, is instruction. Therefore, it is necessary to consider what we have done with the message of the works of the Lord in the course of history. The heritage of the Reformation is entrusted unto us. We still have the privilege of hearing the doctrine of the sovereign grace of God by which lost sinners shall be saved. Besides many other gifts which have come to us by the struggles of the fathers, we have in our homes the living and true Word of God, for the free preaching of which hard battles were fought. Therefore, it is necessary to ask ourselves whether that doctrine of God's grace and that Word of God have the same value for us that they evidently had for the fathers. For they have suffered the spoiling of their goods; they have suffered reproach and persecution. Indeed, they did not count their lives dear for themselves but would rather possess the Word of the living God and direct their lives according to its precepts. There are many who gladly call themselves sons and daughters of the Reformation but have as little regard for the Word of God as if no blood had been shed for it.

Let the commemoration of the Reformation, then, move us especially to consider the serious and necessary question whether we truly are still sons and daughters of the Reformation.

Let the commemoration of the Reformation, then, move us especially to consider the serious and necessary question whether we truly are still sons and daughters of the Reformation. If the fathers would arise and could watch us in our lives, would they recognize us as such? Has the doctrine of God's grace also become so precious to us that we would give our possessions, yea, even our lives for it? Do we still appreciate the heritage of the Reformation? Do we not, generally speaking, live by traditions, which because of

historical bands are still precious to us, but of which we do not understand the actual origins?

Therefore, it is so very necessary to reflect on these things. There is no true child of the Reformation unless he or she is a partaker of the spirit of

the Reformation. Then the Reformed doctrine also becomes precious to us. Then we desire to direct our lives accordingly. The Lord grant that the commemoration of the blessed Reformation will awaken in us the prayer that the Lord who formerly worked so efficaciously may again cleanse the garden of His Church of all the dead branches, yea, of all that is displeasing to Him, so that by His grace the dead formalism, the unholy legalism, and dry traditionalism may be swept away and we may be given a life that reveals the fear of His name, that life which the fathers had. □

The Strengthless Waiting

Rev. M. Golverdingen (1941-2019)

“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength” (Isaiah 40:31a).

In Isaiah 40 the prophet saw before him Judah bowed down under the captivity in Babylon. God's children who were in captivity had become fainthearted by their prolonged affliction. The Lord had promised that He would deliver them out of captivity. Ten years had passed already and still they were not delivered. Their discouragement, powerlessness, and unbelief the prophet expressed in verse 27, “Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?” They lamented: “The Lord does not take notice anymore of our difficult way of life. He does not hear our prayer. He hides His face.”

Did the Lord cast away this discouraged Zion because of the spiritless condition and frame of soul which she was in? These people of Zion, with all of God's other children, are worthy of being cast away, but He does not forsake the work of His hands. In verse 29 He came to this weary Zion with an encouragement of love: “He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth

strength.” At the same time the Lord warned people who had no single want or need for deliverance. Many showed themselves like strong young men who sparked with energy and needed no help. They did not grieve over the fact that the temple in Jerusalem was lying in ruins. They said: “We will help ourselves in this captivity. We can adjust ourselves to the requirements of the Babylonian way of living, and then we can live comfortably here. Why should we really mourn about Jerusalem?” They could easily endure in Babel. They trusted in their own strength. They did not need the Lord. They knew not a longing for the promised land.

Is this also our picture? Do we show ourselves to be spiritually strong men who can help ourselves? Oh, let us be warned then, in the name of God! All who remain in such a condition shall perish (see verse 30b, “and the young men shall utterly fall”). Oh, ask the Lord for true conversion. Without this renewing of life, you will, with all your self-expectations, plunge into an eternal night. The Lord still calls to you, “Seek ye Me, and ye shall live” (Amos 5:4b).

The words of our text show the great contrast of all who are building in their own strength, “But they that wait upon

the LORD shall renew their strength.” They shall not fall, because they hope upon the Lord. This waiting or hoping presupposes something—it presupposes despairing of our own strength and wisdom.

It has pleased the Lord to use those pressing circumstances of their long captivity to cause His children, by His Spirit, to feel their total weakness. He still uses many kinds of circumstances, oppressions, and trials to teach His children their absolute helplessness. Do you have a knowledge of this? If, in your hopelessness and weakness, the Spirit of Christ works for the first time or by renewal a sighing in your heart to the Lord for a token of His favor, then that God-dishonoring unbelief must go away. Then you will expect all from the Lord.

This waiting is one of the biblical terms for saving faith. The original word says that there is a constant, strong desire of the soul to receive from the Lord the blessings which He promises in His Word.

Many are wrestling with the question whether they really possess an upright faith. “Am I not deceiving myself for eternity?” If this is the question of your heart, examine yourself whether you have experienced this waiting. Do you know of these strong inward desires after the Lord, which accompanies this waiting? When we receive saving grace in regeneration, then it does not leave us idle or inactive; to the contrary, that faith gives exercises at the throne of grace. It brings us on our knees. We experience so clearly and painfully that we are missing God because of our sins. There is a strong longing in us for restoration of communion with God. We confess our unrighteousness before His face. We see the guilt of our life standing open before God. We confess that guilt. We acknowledge God’s righteousness. How unspeakably great it is when, in the midst of our soul misery, a glimmer of light shines out of the gospel of Christ as a way of escape. What a strong desire this gives to know Him as the Surety for our personal guilt. To be sure, this desire can slacken, shrivel, and even temporarily disappear because of our building on our own strength through unbelief. This brings our soul in fetters, and we fall into sin, but at His time the Holy Spirit brings that faith in exercise again. Then He breaks through our darkness, discouragement, and unbelief. In other words, this inward desire after the Lord, this hoping on God, returns again in the life of His people, and that continues all their life long—in every stage of the life of grace. When you once have learned to know this desire, then your soul rejoices when this longing comes in your soul by renewal. It is a longing after Christ and all His benefits.

“But they that wait upon the Lord”—this word contains two elements. It is a constant desire which is directed towards the fulfillment of God’s promises. How unspeakably great it is when the Lord, in the midst of our soul-misery, comes to us with the Word of His promise! It creates great surprise; it gives a prayerful waiting for the fulfillment of His promise. It pleases the Lord to lead His children here

upon earth through His promise. They embrace His whole Word when they, by faith, may come unto the Lord. However, by the Spirit of Christ, some promises are applied in their life with special power and emphasis. The Lord engraves these words on the walls of their heart with indelible Scripture. These promises are not usually immediately fulfilled. Sometimes between the gift and the fulfillment of the promise there can be a long period of time. The Lord does this because He likes to see His people in the interim at His feet with humble, supplicating prayer. He works in them in such a way so that their faith may be exercised and cause them to plead upon His promises. In their inner chambers they time and again bring the Lord’s own Word before Him. They have nothing in themselves to plead upon before the Lord. The waiting of those who have no strength trusts only in the word and strength of the Lord only.

Experiential life knows of a strong longing after God, of a humble pleading upon God’s promises, of a believing expectation of its fulfillment. Psalm 119 is full of this: “Stablish Thy word unto Thy servant, who is devoted to Thy fear” (verse 38); “My soul fainteth for Thy salvation: but I hope in Thy word” (verse 81).

This hoping upon the Word of God must be experienced. Then it is as if you may rest with your hands upon a broad, immovable beam. What a firmness there is in this exercise of faith! Your feet are placed on the Rock Christ which knows of no wavering.

He, who in his powerlessness, may look up to the Lord, will also experience the truth of our text: “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.” The margin reads that “renewing” here also means exchange and/or change. This tells us that God’s children from time to time, by the work of the Holy Spirit (who lives in them) receive new strength out of Christ.

You who fear the Lord, be not apprehensive. In new temptations you will as one who has no strength, receive strength out of Him, and you will be enabled to resist the Prince of Darkness with the Word of God. In new temptations you will receive new strength to cleave to Christ and be enabled to look away from the circumstances. During times of relapse in your life of faith, He shall give you new strength to arise, looking upon His promise. When deep disappointments press you down, He shall give you new strength to look outside of yourself unto Him, and rejoice in Him. There is always new strength in Christ for those who have no strength. Oh, be not surprised that you must end in death, time and again, with everything which is of yourself. There is no renewing of the strength of faith without losing your own strength. His name is “the mighty God.” You must be brought to Christ. It is not a good sign when you can leave that blessed Surety alone, or when you can rest in what you have received in past experiences. He makes His people powerless in order to renew them repeatedly by His strength. Then He becomes everything for them. □



Doctrinal Studies

Private Thoughts About Repentance

Rev. Thomas Adam (1701-1784)

Generally speaking, it is to be feared we do not dread sin but the punishment of it; yet, till we hate sin, as such, and feel our misery under it, it is in vain to talk of repentance. Till we are so convinced of sin, as fully to pronounce the sentence of condemnation upon ourselves, we shall not receive mercy as mercy, but consider it as a debt.

So long as we are joined to the world—acting in the main for worldly ends, attached to its interests, oppressed with its cares, or devoted to its pleasures—we must either totally reject or explain away the gospel.

Corruption is strong, evil predominant, my state is wavering, my soul in danger; Christ does not reign; I am in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity till I fully resolve not to sin.

No man has the least glimpse of the inside of truth till all conceit of merit and self-power is annihilated, and he is pierced through and through with a sense of his vileness and unworthiness.

It is the Spirit's office to convince of sin because **He only** has the power; nothing that others can say, or I can think, will bring me to a true sense and feeling of it without Him. I am all astonishment when I think of the number and greatness of my sins and how long my life has been spared that I might repent.

Pride is seeing the defects of others and overlooking our own. Humility is seeing, feeling, and lamenting sin in ourselves—not only past but present sin—not only actual sin but the root of it in an evil nature—and all sin without disguise or extenuation, in all its guilt and malignity. Humility is knowing that we are not humble.

If my nature, heart, will, and affections must be changed, God must do it, for I can no more change them than I could make myself. God commands to strike at the root of sin; Christ puts the axe, sharpened with His blood, into the hands of all who are willing, and the Spirit gives strength to the blow.

I had rather know a work of the Spirit—in mourning for sin as displeasing to God, in love to Christ, and because it pierced Him—than be at the top of worldly joy. Repentance is forsaking sin for God, for His favor, His blessing, and will.

The moment we sin, there is an absolute forfeiture of life incurred; nothing but mercy can now relieve us, and we must always see ourselves in the light of condemned malefactors, for no future amendment can undo what is past.

Sin should sit heavier on the soul and cut deeper into the heart than the loss of a first-born. Blessed are they that mourn, and who has not cause for it?

No man has any warrant from Scripture to believe that his sins are forgiven unless he repents of them; that is, he is heartily sorry for them and earnestly desires to be delivered from the power of evil habits and an evil nature.

It is impossible for any man to know Christ to be a Saviour till he knows himself to be a sinner. □

(Rev. Thomas Adam was a godly divine and student of John Newton and pastored a congregation in Lincolnshire for fifty-eight years. Like John Newton, he remained within the Anglican Church all his life.)



For Young and Old

Sabbath-Breaking Overturned

(Taken from the May 2004 issue of *The Gospel Standard*)

This remarkable account took place in the life of the famous Welsh preacher John Elias (1774-1841).

There were in his days, especially in North Wales, the very strongholds of Satan, who seemed to domineer over some towns and districts as the prince of those parts, and as if he had the exclusive right to them. The inhabitants

were under his full sway, reveling and rioting in all manner of sin and ungodliness. Even the Sabbath was trampled upon and made subservient to their sinful propensities. No day in the week was so devoted to the service of sin and Satan. This was not only in Anglesey but also in all parts of North Wales in some degree; and it was dangerous for preachers to interfere with them in some places.

Rhuddlan, in Flintshire, was one of these strongholds. It seems that sin here was at the full height of its strength, and no doubt the cry of their abominations ascended to heaven for vengeance, but God, instead of smiting them with the sword of His justice, sent to them the sceptre of peace and reconciliation. Elias, being moved with compassion, having the same spirit as his Master, was induced to go to this wicked place to preach the gospel of Christ to the people. His friends would fain dissuade him from such a dangerous undertaking, knowing what characters were congregated there on a Sunday; what made it still more hazardous, there was also a fair there at that season for some Sundays to dispose of scythes, hooks, and other implements for the harvest. It was apprehended that if Elias went there to preach to the people, it would so excite their evil passions that they would attack him and endanger his life. However, he would go in the name of the Lord. Farmers also hired laborers at the same time. All this had been done every year from time immemorial.

When Elias arrived on the ground, the people were on the point of engaging in their abominable transactions. A great number had their hooks and scythes on their arms and shoulders; there was the sound and noise of harps and fiddles; the players were in liquor. There was the noise of a fair and of making bargains. There was a great concourse of all sorts of persons. He was expected there according to the announcement. Some thousands of people attended the meeting from the surrounding neighborhood and towns to hear him preach and to see the result.

Elias commenced the service in the open air, even in the camp of the enemy, and in the midst of men with sickles and scythes. He stood on the steps of the New Inn, belonging then to a Mrs. Hughes. He manifested amazing boldness and intrepidity, his spirit being moved within him. He appeared also very grave and compassionate. He gave out a stanza of the 24th Psalm to be sung. "I never," says an eye-witness, "heard more serious and impressive singing." He adds, "The sobriety and awe in Elias' voice and manner were very impressive." Such effect was produced shortly on the people that not a hook nor scythe was to be seen. Nothing but opposition and persecution were expected, but scarcely anything of the kind was experienced, for they all put their different implements of husbandry out of sight very soon. Elias read a chapter in the most solemn and impressive manner, then engaged in a very earnest prayer. He was most importunate with the Lord in prayer and supplication; it might remind one of Jacob's wrestling with Him until he was blessed. His heart was in a very melting frame, from which his words flowed, and the tears ran profusely down his grave and serious countenance.

By this time, the people were seized with awe and great sobriety. Elias repeatedly thanked the Lord that He did not suffer the earth to open and swallow them up alive into hell. He most earnestly entreated the Almighty several times to incline the hearts of the respectable and influential men in the neighborhood to regard the Sabbath and to prevent the

evil practices that desecrated it so awfully. He prayed and entreated the Lord, with the greatest feelings of compassion, for the farmers, laborers, servants, publicans, and all the men of evil practices. Amazing effects followed his words in prayer.

Elias took for his text, Exodus 34:21: "Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing time and in harvest time thou shalt rest." His spirit was soon stirred up within him, and the words of the Lord came with amazing force out of his lips, carrying light and conviction home to the consciences and hearts of the wicked. He made some very pertinent and homely observations in a powerful manner, suitable to his audience. "Should we," it was asked, "rest on the Sabbath day if it were a fine day, the harvest being very wet and bad, and the corn much injured?" "Yes," he answered in a most powerful tone of voice; "Yes, you should obey the Word of God at all times. It is said, 'in earing and in harvest thou shalt rest.' The Lord had rather send a legion of His angels to manage thy harvest than that thou shouldest disregard His holy day." He exclaimed repeatedly to the people, with all his might, the following words, with his arm lifted up and tears flowing down his face: "O robbers! O robbers! O thieves! Alas! stealing the day of the Lord! What? Robbing my Lord of His day! O robbers! the most vile and abominable!"

It might be asked again, he said, "What if one should suffer and be unable to pay his way, having not made all exertions even on the Sabbath, when it is a wet harvest?" He observed in answer to this: "Thousands that keep the Sabbath at all times have been enabled to live far better than thou, and certainly die infinitely better than thou art likely to do." Then he made strong allusions to London and other cities that were set on fire, which he represented as a punishment from the Lord for the disrespect shown to His holy day. He particularly observed the threatenings in the Word of God for abusing the Sabbath and enlarged on what is said in Jeremiah 17:27 as a threat to set Jerusalem on fire for disregarding the Lord's Day. He also dwelt on the promises made in the Bible to those that keep the day holy.

The people soon became greatly alarmed, appearing as persons guilty and miserable. There was no idea of lifting up even a silent voice or of giving utterance to a word against the truth; all the men of arms lost their courage and seemed to lay down their weapons of opposition. They seemed panic struck. Indeed, great seriousness and sobriety of mind possessed the multitude. Many were heard saying that they would not on any account go again to such a place to do business on the Sabbath. They kept their word, or such misdeeds were never seen again in Flintshire. A complete stop was put to the evil so rampant and dreadful at Rhuddlan. This was done, not by any human power, authority or force, but merely by preaching the gospel. It was seen then that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."

(continued on page 238)



Questions & Answers

Questions from Our Readers

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

I am reading through The ABC of Faith by Comrie. As I was reading through the chapter over aanhouden, I came across point (iii) under Further Examples. How do we understand Comrie when he writes, "Learn also that generally, before the soul is effectually called, there arises some irresolution, some despondency, a putting, as it were, of the matter beyond hope; therefore, come they to Bartimeus and say, Be of good comfort... He calleth thee"?

Is Comrie writing here that, in general, an unconverted soul, lying unknowingly under the seal of election (not yet effectually called), may continue in the use of the means for a time but then eventually come to the conclusion (incorrectly) or into some form of despondency that the use of the means is fruitless? Then at that time, it pleases the Lord to effectually call the soul and convince of sin and of guilt? I am not asking this to detract from the fact that man remains a responsible creature. I simply ask you these few questions:

How do we understand this explanation of "aanhouden"? Aside from the example of Bartimeus, where else can we find biblically that God's people, before they are effectually called, become despondent or reach an irresolution?

I believe the answer to this very well-worded question must be sought in two matters: first in the context of the whole book of Comrie plus other examples about which Comrie writes, and second, in the very nature of the explanation of the word "aanhouden" or "persevere."

Let me begin with the latter. We must distinguish between persevering in the use of the *means* and the persevering of true saving *faith*. Comrie in this chapter points out, at length, the example of the Canaanite woman and shows that it is God's common way to try the faith of His children by means of postponing the answer of a matter or the fulfilment of a promise. Note, it is God's common way, generally speaking, but there may be *exceptions*. Think of

the text in Isaiah 66:8b, "for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children."

With respect to *regeneration*, I believe, the Lord brings this to pass in the same way, by bringing a soul in a need, but again, this may not always be the case. Of Saul when he was on the way to Tarsus, it cannot be said that he was struggling the way Comrie describes this persevering in faith. On the contrary, dead in trespasses and sin, he was very sure of himself thinking that he was doing the Lord a favor. Certainly, that need in Saul's life, the convincing of sin and guilt took place afterwards (Acts 9:6). The Lord is free in how He leads the sinner, and although a sinner may have impressions, struggles, or questions, these are not to be considered as some preparatory works for regeneration but certainly can be present as a result of the outward call. Paul writes about the terror of the Lord, *persuading men* (2 Corinthians 5:11). Matters such as a true sorrow for sin or a sincere desire for grace are not natural to man in his original state, even as a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit.

For further study, read what Rev. Kersten explains in his *Reformed Dogmatics*, on the chapter of Regeneration. It is God who quickens a *dead* sinner. The opening of the eyes of the blind is a work *without us*. He is found of them that asked not for Him and of them that sought Him not (Isaiah 65:1).

Hence, I believe Comrie refers here—in line with the very title of the book—to the ABC of faith and not to an ABC of *regeneration*. I believe Comrie himself gives the answer at the close of the chapter: "The soul knows what he comes for, what he has need of. Jesus asks him, 'What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?'

'Lord,' says he, 'that I may receive my sight.'" □

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

The Need for True Repentance

It evinces more depravity not to repent of sin than it does to commit it at first. A good man may be hurried away by temptation to commit sin, but he will invariably repent of it afterwards. To deny, as Peter did, is bad; not to weep bitterly as he did, when we have denied, is worse.

—Edward Payson (1783-1827)



Reflections

Evening Twilight (10)

Rev. P. Blok (1920-2019)

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

A Two-edged Sword

“Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end” (Psalm 119:33).

The great privilege, far from being considered a privilege by everyone, is to be born and live on the property of God's church. As a result, many have been taught in catechism class from Rev. Hellenbroek's old, well-known question book. The first principles of truth are taught in it, and they have often been blessed. “Has God any other particular direction respecting man?” The answer is, “Yes; He governs him in a covenant-way.”

The first question is, “Whence do we know that there is a God?” The answer is clear: “From nature, and from the Holy Scriptures.” Knowledge from nature is insufficient to salvation. Therefore, a saving knowledge is necessary. “From where do we obtain this saving knowledge?” What is the answer? “From the Holy Scriptures.”

Paul describes the function of Holy Scripture on this wise. “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” The power of the Word, through the labor of the Holy Spirit, is known by special grace in the heart of everyone who is born again. Therefore, the Lord brings man to the Word or the Word to man. Thus, we see, in the way of God's providence, that man who is living outside of the covenant is brought under the bond of the covenant. “And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.”

The bringing in is sovereign; with God there is no respect of persons. “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?” God's work of grace generates resistance among many. Jesus' response to the hostile resistance is clear. “But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

Every man lives out his state of death. Through the wonder of regeneration, a regenerated sinner experiences his state of death. He is dead in trespasses and sins and is without God in the world. Sin is made sin; guilt is a personal and consciously made guilt. The grievous missing of God makes one go through life weeping. Bunyan wrote in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, “I had to die, and I could not; I had to

meet God and I could not.” A completely stuck man is left with nothing but guilt and judgment. How is it to go on?

Thus, we met a woman who had run stuck. Through her marriage she had come under the truth without grasping the truth. Yet she lived faithfully with the church. She informed us that her husband was ill and was confined to his bed for weeks. While visiting her husband, she consciously withdrew herself. She clearly avoided a conversation and contact. At the next visit, she wanted to take me to her husband's room again, but I asked her, “Why are you avoiding me?” She wept and told me she had been avoiding me out of shame. Under the preaching, her life was exposed, and the law condemned her. She could not exist before a holy and righteous God. She was a person who had run stuck, and she did not know how to proceed. Being an outcast, she did not belong anywhere. The Lord gave her a place in the heart of a people who had learned to pray. Her tarrying in the house was little.

After a failed reformation, the Lord let her run stuck for the second time. From a discovered sinner she became a naked sinner, and under the negotiations of justice she became a lost sinner. That is how I met a sinner who was declared in the Word. From the Word she learned to know there is room in God: “But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word.” In her simple dwelling she told in all simplicity what she had experienced. The Lord gave room in the born Child and the given Son.

The Lord had visited her in the porch of the wounded, and she was given a place in the poorhouse where she received further instruction. Here she lived, lacking nothing, neither having anything left.

When the wise virgins enter in, the foolish virgins stay outside. Paul's words show the sovereignty of God and His electing good pleasure. “That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

*Jehovah is my strength and tower,
He is my happiness and song;
He saved me in the trying hour,
Hence shall my mouth His praise prolong.
The voice of gladness and salvation
Is in the tents of righteousness;
There do they sing with adoration,
The Lord's right hand is strong to bless.*

—Psalter 427:2 □

(To be continued)



Current Events

Never Even a Thought of an Abortion

A mother was able to hold her newborn twins for just one hour after they were born on February 29—but every minute was filled with “peace” and “awe,” she said. Three months before that she and her husband—expecting one baby—learned that a single heartbeat on the monitor was shared by two girls. Conjoined twins were fused at the torso. Doctors told the couple there was little-to-no chance of their survival. She was offered the choice of having an abortion—but she said it was “never even a thought.” Despite the twins’ prognosis, she believes they were a gift from God who came to them for a reason. As the pregnancy progressed, she faced tough emotional struggles. The girls came into the world the same way they had appeared in ultrasounds—with their arms wrapped around each other. After their time with the babies came to an end, the parents were faced with a long road to healing and recovery. “It comes and goes,” the mother said. “Sometimes I feel OK, and then I’ll have really hard moments, hard days or even hard weeks.” She described her time with them, “Just to know that they were there, and that I held them alive, brought a sense of peace...I couldn’t imagine not getting to meet them.”

—FoxNews.com

School Choice a Reality in Louisiana

Louisiana is the latest of several states to take a significant step in support of education freedom. Louisiana legislature recently passed—and the governor signed—Senate Bill 31, establishing the Louisiana Giving All True Opportunity to Rise (LA GATOR) program. This program is a groundbreaking initiative to significantly empower families to choose the optimal educational paths for their children. The LA GATOR program introduces Education Scholarship Accounts for K-12 students starting in 2025. These accounts allow parents and students across Louisiana to select educational environments that meet their academic needs and match their values. “The LA GATOR program puts parents in the driver’s seat and gives every child the opportunity for a great education. This initiative permits funds to be used for a variety of educational purposes including private school tuition, textbooks, uniforms, and even transportation, ensuring that financial limitations do not hinder a child’s educational opportunities. By enabling money to follow students to schools that meet their unique needs, the LA GATOR scholarships support a personalized education system.

—CapeNetwork.org

Denied for Faith-based Hiring

After decades of resettling refugee families and placing unaccompanied refugee children in foster homes, Bethany Christian Services announced Tuesday that it is suing the state of Michigan for denying its contracts due to long-standing faith-based hiring practices. Bethany—the country’s largest Christian adoption and foster agency and one of ten refugee resettlement agencies in the U.S.—says Michigan’s requirement that partners must hire from across faith traditions is discriminatory and violates the free exercise clause as well as exemptions for religious nonprofits in the Civil Rights Act. Leaders say that restricting

Bethany’s involvement is hindering urgent efforts to care for vulnerable children and families. This case represents the latest First Amendment legal tussle around Christian social service agencies, as more ministries eager to offer services find their basic statements of faith clashing with nondiscrimination provisions of their government. Bethany has been contracted by the state of Michigan since 1981, and last year helped over six hundred refugees and immigrants and placed around three hundred unaccompanied minor refugees in foster families in the state. Bethany’s leaders said that before moving forward with the lawsuit they reached out nineteen times and prayed fervently for resolution. Bethany is headquartered in Grand Rapids and serves more refugees in its home state than any of the other twenty-seven states where it operates.

—ChristianityToday.com

Do We Know About the Persecution in Nigeria?

The killing, persecution, and displacement of Christians in Nigeria is “unrelenting” and “a time bomb,” according to a major new report by *OpenDoors*. Christians “are deliberately targeted.” Christians are reportedly becoming “an endangered species” there. It is reported that, “Last year alone, in Nigeria there were more people that were killed because of their Christian faith than all other places in the globe combined; to be specific, there were 4,998 Christians that were killed because of their faith in Nigeria last year.” The report adds, “Christians have been singled out for violence, face harsh living conditions, and experience faith-based challenges throughout their displacement journey.” It is also reported that Christian children are not spared from trauma. One parent interviewed for the *OpenDoors* report explained, “My children, each time they hear anything, they panic or go into hiding because it triggers the trauma.” Yet the world stands by, ignoring the “time bomb” as militants shout, “we will destroy all Christians.” People are not talking about it. People are not aware of the realities; therefore, people are not doing anything about it. *OpenDoors* is trying to bring attention to all this and trying to do something about it.

—FoxNews.com

Persecution in Nicaragua, Central America

After months of diplomatic negotiations between the United States and Nicaraguan governments, thirteen Nicaraguan pastors and attorneys affiliated with a Texas-based ministry were released from a Nicaraguan prison. The thirteen were among one hundred thirty-five unjustly detained political prisoners. “No one should be put in jail for peacefully exercising their fundamental rights of free expression, association, and practicing their religion,” a representative from the U.S. said. Nicaraguan authorities arrested the thirteen in December 2023 following a large evangelistic event. In March, they were convicted of money laundering and sentenced to up to fifteen years in prison. They were also fined nearly one billion dollars. There are more issues of religious freedom in Nicaragua. More than five hundred churches and religious organizations have been attacked since 2018.

—Persecution.org

The wrong that man hath done to the divine majesty should be expiated by none but man and could be by none but God.

—John Howe (1630-1705)



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

The Life of Rev. G.H. Kersten as Told to His Grandchildren (5)

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

A sickness not unto death *(continued)*

On his sickbed my father had a desire to write a well-known child of the Lord in Ryssen, namely, Dika. Listen to what he wrote her:

Dear Friend and your loved ones,

As in my healthy days, and now again on my sickbed, I was thinking of my friends. I was privileged to have had communion with those who already praise the Lord before His throne. We miss them because of the divine lessons they had received which were evident in the knowledge of God and self. These are seldom found in our days. Therefore, it is such a sensible loss.

Last night I thought of D.J. and his family. Warn him in my name because the day is coming that they with their glorified mother shall stand before the judgment seat of God. Oh, what that day shall reveal!

You may have heard what befell me. While many succumb, the Lord called me back to life, but, oh Dika, words cannot express how everything changed in one moment! The whole world disappeared. It was as if I were made loose from all who are on earth. I might give myself into the hand of the Lord in a sweet inexpressible unity with the Father's will. Oh, that nothingness in myself! Hell-worthy! However, the perfect reconciliation and cleansing in the blood of the Lamb made my soul taste the sweetness of the embracing of the Father by virtue of His eternal good pleasure He has had in His elect Church: "for the Lord delighteth in thee."

Oh, who will bow before God as deeply as hell? Who, yes who, shall be able to praise the sovereign bequest made by God the Father in Christ through the Holy Spirit to all His people? They will be presented to Him as a chaste virgin, not having spot or wrinkle. Oh, let God's dear people not rely so much on themselves, but go out, leaning upon their Beloved.

Greet all those who love Zion. I have a little hope that I shall recover. It may be the last time we hear from each other. May the living hope of salvation strengthen us, whereunto we are kept in the power of God by faith,

and of which I have had the foretastes in my heart (Psalm 17:15).

Greetings to all of you,
Your well-wishing Rev. G.H. Kersten

Saved from a concentration camp

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16b).

It was war—the Second World War. The Netherlands was invaded by the German Army in May, 1940. After four days of fighting, Holland capitulated, but the war in Europe and a great part of the world continued. In spite of this capitulation, secret organizations were formed called "The Underground." These were trying to weaken the German Army by sneakily killing German officers and men, damaging war installations, sabotaging, etc., thinking they could shorten the war in this way. The opinions about the activities of the Underground Movement were divided, also among those who adhered to Reformed doctrine. Some agreed with them, whereas others condemned the sneaky actions of the Underground Movement. Among those who opposed this movement was my father, who, with most of God's servants and people, opposed such secret actions. Listen to what my father wrote about it:

I saw the World War coming as a judgment upon the people who hardened their necks. Not only in Parliament but also in sermons, especially in Prayer Day sermons, I spoke of the judgments of God which must follow upon sin, since God is not mocked. When the heavy blow came and the Germans treacherously attacked and invaded our country, when Rotterdam was heavily bombed, the streets and the houses were burning and even hospitals were destroyed, then I was privileged to bow under God's justice and to worship His Majesty in His judgments.

This urged me in writing and in preaching to bow down before God and to acknowledge that He has done this because of our sins. With Jeremiah we should cry

out, "It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not" (Lamentations 3:22). I preached from these words the first Sunday after the capitulation. This acknowledgment of God's righteousness gave me freedom to commit the country's needs unto Him, and to hope on His mercies.

This concludes my father's words. Does not the Lord say in Isaiah 45:7b, "I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things"? The Underground, however, thought it knew better, but it will be held responsible for the loss of many lives as a result of its actions. Where was a bowing down before the Lord as my father experienced?

It should not surprise us that the German authorities grew tired of the sneaky attacks by the Underground. Knowing that a great part of the Underground consisted of many officers of the conquered Dutch army and navy, a German order was published in the newspapers that all who had served in the Armed Forces were to be sent into German concentration camps. What a blow that was, especially to those who had nothing to do with the Underground activities! Fear, even terror, beset many—the boys, but also the parents. Many were aware of the dreadful life in the concentration camps, consisting of hunger, sickness, and even death.

The news about the abduction of the Dutch Army into German concentration camps hit us very hard, also your mother and me since I also had to be abducted. Beset with worries and troubles, I wrote your grandfather, who lived, as you know, in Rotter-

dam, asking your grandmother and him to take care of your mother and the baby (Shona), and commending myself in his prayers.

This letter was mailed on Monday, exactly one week before I had to be shipped to one of Germany's concentration camps. On Thursday I had not yet received an answer from my grandfather. By Friday I did not go to work; I was too much in fear and tension as what would become of your mother and the baby. I was picking strawberries when I suddenly heard:

"Good morning, Sam."

"Dad, where did you come from?" I asked in great surprise.

He had borrowed a bike and came cycling from the "tram" to our house. In the house he seemed to be in a cheerful mood. He spoke on different things, but never once mentioned my letter, so I asked him:

"Dad, did you receive my letter?"

"Oh, yes," he answered in a tone as if unaware of any concentration camps at all.

Then we had lunch. I'll never forget my father's prayer at the table. He said, "O Lord, do not put the hope to shame which I have on Thee when Thou did bind this on my soul: God will surely send relief" (Psalm 42, Psalter 117:4).

Hearing this, I had a faint hope that the Lord would give deliverance, although neither my father nor I knew how that deliverance was to be effected. Now, mark how the Lord directs everything in His providential care.

(To be continued.)



Bible Stories for Little Ones

David and the House of God

(Based on 2 Samuel 6&7 and 1 Chronicles 13-17)

Where had the ark of the Lord been all these years? You will remember that after the battle with the Israelites, the Philistines had taken the ark into their country, but wherever they had brought it, the people had gotten sick, so they were very glad to send it back to Israel on a cart.

The ark was brought to a man's house in a city called Kirjathjearim, and for many years it stayed there. Saul didn't care about it. He didn't have a love for the things of God.

Now that David was king, he thought to bring the ark to Jerusalem. He could bring it back where it

belonged, into one place in the middle of Israel, where everyone could come and worship. David asked the leaders of Israel what they thought, and they all thought that bringing the ark to Jerusalem was a good idea.

So, David took a new cart, clean and never used, and made the trip to Kirjathjearim. Thousands of people followed him. This was a special day for everyone. How happy they were. They finally would get the ark of God back! Some of the older people may have cried for joy. How long it had been since they had had this blessing of God.

Carefully, the ark was picked up by the handles across the top, and gently it was set on the cart. Two sons of Abinadab, the man who had kept the ark, led the oxen who pulled the cart. How the people sang and played music to the Lord for giving them the ark back! The ark was so special to them. It had many things from God in it that had been saved over the years.

The oxen slowly pulled the cart along, but then they stumbled. One of the two drivers, Uzzah, quickly reached out and took hold of the ark, so it wouldn't fall off the art. Suddenly—he fell down, dead. God was not pleased with what he had done and had killed him.

Why did that happen? Was Uzzah doing anything wrong? He was actually doing something GOOD, wasn't he? We might think so, but God was punishing two sins. For one thing, God had told the Israelites that the ark must always be CARRIED by the priests or Levites. It was not to be set on a cart like any ordinary object. God had even set aside a certain group of people, the Kohathites, whose main service was to carry the ark on their shoulders. The other thing that Uzzah had not remembered was that God had said over and over that the ark must never, ever be touched. It was HOLY.

David was not joyful anymore. He was even displeased that the Lord had punished Uzzah.

However, David also became afraid of God. He dared not go anywhere with the ark. He dared not be near it. He saw the power and holiness of the Lord, and he could only bow before Him, but the ark couldn't just stay on the cart, so a man named Obededom said he would take it into his house where the ark rested for the next three months.

David soon heard how the family of Obededom was blessed while they had the ark of God, and again he wished to bring it to Jerusalem. This time he said that they were going to CARRY the ark in the manner they should have the other time! Oh, how happy they were then; this time they knew that God was with them. Trumpets sounded, people sang, and what a happy noise there was!

David's wife Michal was not in that crowd of people.

She looked out her window as the people entered the city, and in her heart she despised David, for she did not love the Lord. When she saw David leaping and dancing with joy, her heart burned in hatred. She couldn't wait until David came home.

"You certainly looked silly out there!" Michal sneered. "Do you really think you looked like a king, dancing and acting so childish out there? What is everyone going to think of you?"

"You are wrong to laugh at me," David told her quietly. "I was praising the Lord, who made me king over the people of Israel, and I will keep on praising Him. The people aren't going to think less of me; they will think more of me for praising my God."

Michal didn't say much more, but the anger still burned within her heart, and God did not like it. He punished her in such a way that she was never able to have any children as long as she lived.

David often thought about how God was with him and had given him peace and rest from his enemies. As he thought, his eyes looked around his house. He saw how rich, how new, how beautiful his house was. Really, it hadn't been built so long ago, but another thought struck him. Here he lived in a big, beautiful house—but the ark of God was in the tabernacle, covered only by curtains! Why not build a big, beautiful house for the ark? Before he began, David did a wise thing: He talked to Nathan, a prophet.

"I know what you want to do," Nathan said to David. "Go ahead and do it! The Lord is with you."

However, the next morning Nathan came back to David's house. "O King David," he said, "last night I had a message from the Lord. He does not want you to make Him a house, but one of the sons you are going to have will do it. You are a man of fighting, of killing, and of blood, but you will have a son who will be king, and he will be a man of peace; he shall build the Lord a house."

David was satisfied when he heard that message, and later he prayed, "O God! Who am I, that Thou hast chosen me to be the king, and now Thou wilt have another from my family as king! What a great God Thou art!"

Has God ever made us so humble before Him?

Many persons who appear to repent are like sailors who throw their goods overboard in a storm, and wish for them again in a calm.

—Matthew Mead (1629-1699)



Bible Quiz

Earthquakes

Dear Boys and Girls,

“What about Jake?” Anna cried. “What about Jake?”

Mom hugged her little girl. “We have to stay downstairs, honey, do you feel the house shuddering?”

Anna could only think about her dog. They had run down the basement stairs so fast that poor Jake hadn’t had time to follow them, and now the door was shut!

A crash sounded above them as a picture fell from the wall.

A moment later, it was over. The house stopped shaking, and the rumbling was replaced by complete silence.

“Come on, Anna, let’s go make sure Jake isn’t stepping on any glass, okay?”

Anna didn’t have to be told twice. Soon, she had her arms wrapped around Jake’s shaggy neck. “Poor Jakie, were you left all alone? Were you scared of the earthquake?”

Jake slowly wagged his tail as if to say, “It’s alright, Anna; I’m fine!”

When we here in New Jersey had an earthquake this past spring, it showed two things very clearly. It showed something about God. It also showed something about us as people.

Perhaps a scientist was testing a great new discovery; somewhere else, a teacher was teaching her students a very complicated algebra problem. A crane operator was using his enormous machine to lift steel beams to the top of a tall, modern office building; a jeweler was using tiny tools to fit a diamond into a beautiful ring, and a tree cutter was angling the wedge he had cut in the tree in such a perfect way that the tree was sure to fall exactly between two other ones. People can do such big things. They are often very smart. They have discovered and invented many things. Mankind can seem quite powerful with all its knowledge and wisdom.

However, no matter what people were doing at that moment when the earthquake began, suddenly, they were completely powerless. They all stopped what they were doing, sought safety, and wondered how long and how severe it would be. For thirty brief seconds, it was clear that this was something NO man could do anything about. Each person stood or sat

trembling for a moment, feeling a power infinitely greater than their own power. One person saw the fences move as if being shaken by an invisible hand, and another woke up from a late sleep thinking that the house was rocking off its foundation, all by itself.

In one moment, we all saw God’s great power. Really, there are no words for it. The only way to describe it is to feel it—to feel how insignificant we really are. How small we are compared to the power that shook the earth for a moment! We have all our wisdom, our computers and digital intelligence, but God takes His hand and shakes the earth, that magnificent planet, as though it is but a small sphere. How great is His power!

There was a time after the period of the Reformation when people started thinking that they no longer needed God. During this time (called the “Enlightenment”), people realized the human brain could discover so much; people were smart, so who needed the Bible? It was but a book of fairytales to them.

Do we push God aside? Do we not need Him either? Yet...God still holds the world in His hands and hasn’t let it go. The earth trembles at the majesty of God, yet we do not. He can make the earth tremble with one look of His holy eyes, and His eyes also behold us.

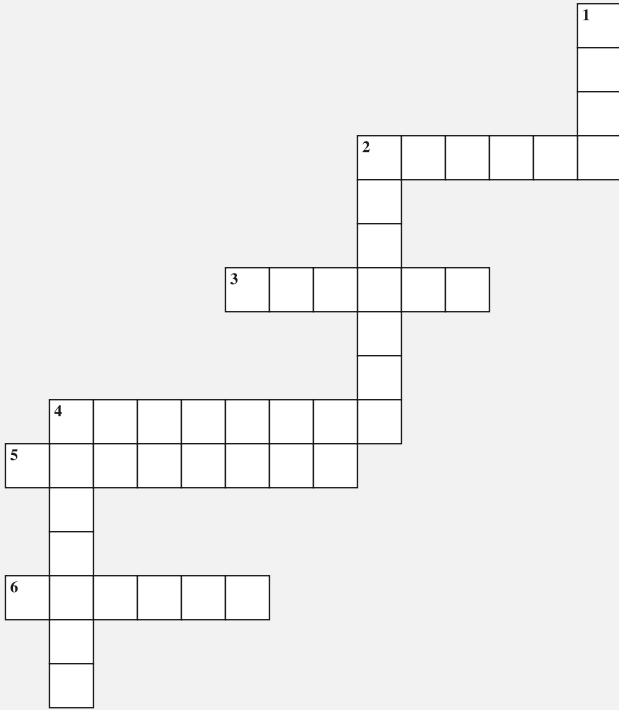
The earthquake in New Jersey had many aftershocks. This is very common. For a few days, people would tell each other about them. “Did you feel that one? No? I did.” “Did you see in the news that there was another little one?” “Apparently, there have been dozens.”

Soon, the excitement was over; the aftershocks were not felt or spoken about; the news went on to bigger things. No one thought about the aftershocks anymore, and if some felt them, they no longer mentioned them. How soon we become used to things!

That tells us something about us as people. That is the second thing the earthquake showed us—God is all-powerful, but we people are so forgetful, so *unconcerned*, by nature. Aren’t we this way about the most important concern of all? Do we generally feel the concern and need for our soul? Or are we busy with things that are more important to us? Do we usually remember and take to heart each and every sermon that we hear? Or have we become

used to it? When we are nearly in an accident, or someone passes away, do we take it as a warning? Or are we used to those things, too?

* * * * *



Across

2. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they _____ greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. (Matthew 27)

3. Yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of _____ king of Judah. (Zechariah 14)

4. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and _____: these are the beginnings of sorrows. (Mark)

5. In the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of _____ the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake. (Amos)

6. And, _____, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. (Matthew)

Down

1. But the Lord was not in the _____: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake. (1 Kings 19)

2. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be _____, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. (Matthew 24)

4. Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and _____, and the flame of devouring fire. (Isaiah 29)

For the Older Children

Revelation speaks often of earthquakes. Match the verse to the correct earthquake.

7. Chapter 6:12 _____

8. Chapter 8:5 _____

9. Chapter 11:13 _____

10. Chapter 11:19 _____

11. Chapter 16:18 _____

A. An earthquake with which the city fell and seven thousand men were slain

B. Along with an earthquake and thunder came great hail

C. An earthquake with which the sun became black, and the moon became red

D. An earthquake with voices, and thunderings, and lightnings

E. A greater earthquake than was ever experienced before

12. List the signs of the end times mentioned in Luke 21. _____

13. How was an earthquake used in Acts 16? _____

14. When did Mount Sinai quake in Exodus 19? _____

15. Who trembled along with the earth in 1 Samuel 14? _____

For the Younger Children

Unscramble the words.

16. The earth shall (kquae) _____ (Joel 2:10)

17. The (mtaounins) _____ quake (Nahum 1:5)

18. The (rhaet) _____ did quake (Matthew 27:51)

19. The earth (dletrmbe) _____ (Judges 5:4)

20. The earth (kohos) _____ and trembled (2 Samuel 22:8)

21. The pillars thereof (bemletr) _____ (Job 9:6)

22. The foundations also of the hills moved and were (kshane) _____ (Psalm 18:7)

23. (uhTo) _____ hast made the earth to tremble (Psalm 60:2)

24. He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: He toucheth the (his) _____, and they smoke (Psalm 104:32)
25. Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the (dLro) _____ (Psalm 114:7)

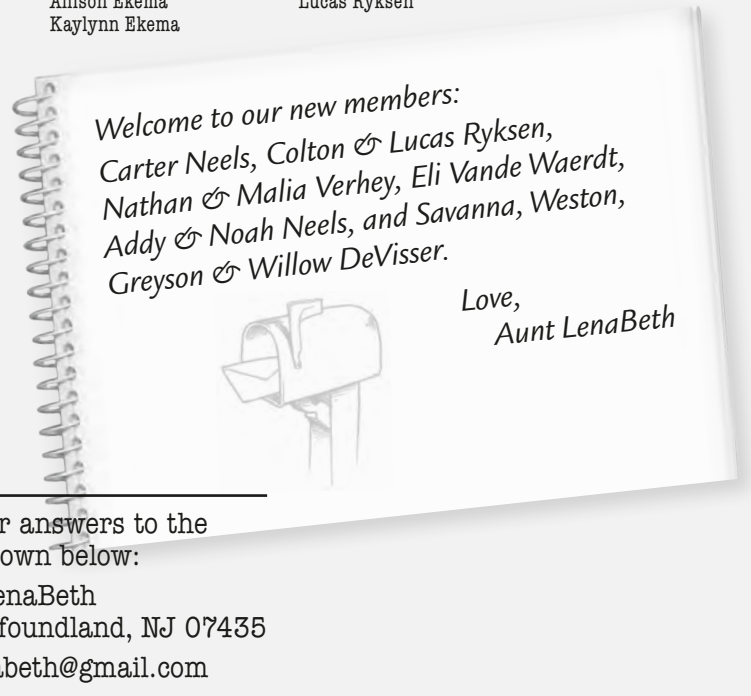
* * * * *

Answers to September's "Remember" quiz:

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Noah | Genesis 8:1 |
| 2. Covenant | Genesis 9:15 |
| 3. Bow | Genesis 9:16 |
| 4. Iniquity | Isaiah 64:9 |
| 5. Abraham | Genesis 19:29 |
| 6. Rachel | Genesis 30:32 |
| 7. Groaning | Exodus 2:24 |
| 8. Bondage | Exodus 6:5 |
| 9. Old | Psalms 25:6 |
| 10. Goodness | Psalms 25:7 |
| 11. Speedily | Psalms 79:8 |
| 12. Mercy | Psalms 98:3 |
| 13. Frame | Psalms 103:14 |
| 14. Salvation | Psalms 106:4 |
| 15. Hope | Psalms 119:49 |
| 16. David | Psalms 132:1 |
| 17. Butler | |
| 18. Dreams | |
| 19. God | |
| 20. Psalm 20:7, Psalm 45:17, Psalm 119:55 | |
| 21. Psalm 77:11 | |
| 22. Psalm 78:35 | |
| 23. Psalm 119:52 | |
| 24. Ecclesiastes 12:1 | |
| 25. Song of Solomon 1:4 | |
| 26. of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar, the ends of the world | |

Answers to previous quizzes were received in August from:

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Britni Blom | Bereket Engelsma | Anna Spaans |
| Christina Blom (2) | Ronna Geuze | Asher Spaans |
| GaryJon Blom | Kate Hoogendoorn (2) | Samuel Spaans |
| Jairus Blom | Elizabeth Kooyman | Tessa Spaans |
| Jenina Blom (2) | Krysten Kooyman | Brandon Ten Hove |
| Joseph Blom | Kendrik Mantel | Hannah-Jo Ten Hove |
| Lawrence Blom (2) | Abraham Mol | Ava Van Maanen |
| Martena Blom | Teddy Mol | Kaiven Van Middendorp |
| Martha Blom (2) | John Murphy | Konner Van Middendorp |
| Tiffany Blom | Andrew Murphy | Brianna Van Roekel |
| Willem Blom | Addy Neels | Janessa Van Roekel |
| Greyson DeVisser | Carter Neels | Leah Vande Lagemaat |
| Savanna DeVisser | Noah Neels | Eli Vande Waerdt |
| Weston DeVisser | Blake Pannekoek | Joelle Vande Waerdt |
| Willow DeVisser | Lauren Pannekoek | Sophia Vande Waerdt |
| Eva DenBok | Andrew Remijn (2) | Wyatt Vande Waerdt |
| Hudson den Bok | Daniel Remijn (2) | Malia Verhey |
| Zoey denBok | Lauren Remijn (2) | Nathan Verhey |
| Jackson Dendekker | Collin Rus | Jayden Weeda |
| Jordan Driesse | Kaela Rus | Keegan Weeda |
| Kailyn Driesse | Lakia Rus | Nathan Wesdyk (2) |
| Lindsey Driesse | Colton Ryksen | |
| Allison Ekema | Lucas Ryksen | |
| Kaylynn Ekema | | |



The traveler Humboldt gives an interesting account of the first earthquake he witnessed.

It was at Cumana, in South America. The first shock came after a strange stillness. It caused an earthquake in his mind, for it overthrew in a moment all his lifelong notions about the safety of the earth. He could no longer trust the soil which up to that day had felt so firm under his feet. He had only one thought—universal, boundless destruction. Even the crocodiles ran from the river Orinoco howling into the woods; the dogs and pigs were powerless with fear. The whole city seemed “the hearth of destruction.” The houses could not shelter, for they were falling in ruins. He turned to the trees, but they were overthrown. His next thought was to run to the mountains, but they were reeling like drunken men. He then looked towards the sea. Lo! it had fled; and the ships, which a few minutes before were in deep water, were rocking on the bare sand.

He tells us that, being then at his wit's end, he looked up and observed that heaven alone was perfectly calm and unshaken. Many strange things are yet to come upon the world—earthquakes, overturnings, upheavings. But amid them all, as the Book tells us, the Christian shall look up to the heavenly One, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,” and to His heavenly home which cannot be moved.

—From the book Bible Echoes: Addresses to the Young by James Wells, 1877

News & Announcements

■ Ministerial Calls

Extended:

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

To Rev. P.D. den Haan of Rijssen-West, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Grand Rapids-Covell Avenue, Michigan.

To Rev. E. Hakvoort of Norwich, Ontario, by the congregation of Kalamazoo, Michigan.

To Rev. P.C. Vlot of Krabbendijke, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Sioux Center, Iowa.

To Rev. J.J. Witvoet of Rock Valley, Iowa, by the congregation of Franklin Lakes, New Jersey.

Declined:

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

■ Obituaries

OUDSHOORN, Engena ("Ena," nee Middelkoop) – Age 85, August 27, 2024; Picture Butte, Alberta; Husband – Harry; Children – Martin & Wilma, Nel & Art Lindhout, Harry & Christina, Diane & Ken Slingerland, Els & Dick Veurink, Carla & Nathan Neels, John & Tamara; 50 grandchildren, 87 great-grandchildren; 9 siblings; predeceased by granddaughter Jolene, great-grandson Landon Korporaal, and 2 siblings. (Rev. P. Kleijer, Matthew 3:12.)

VERSTEEG, Marius – Age 35, August 6, 2024; George, Iowa; Wife – Elizabeth (nee Blom); Children – AaneKors, Tena, Gerdina, Linnea, William, Lydia, Alyssa, Rachel; Parents – Aane-Kors & Gerry; Siblings – Trijntje & Jan-Kees Troost, Adriaan & Renda, Frans & Catherine, Truus & Wim Roos, Gerline & Arie Blom, Geertje & Willem Wisse, Hermieneke & Chedy Olela; Parents-in-law – William & Tena Blom; Grandmother-in-law – Elizabeth Vander Waal; In-laws – Gary & Molly Blom, Arie & Gerline Blom, Clazina Blom, Trina & Devon Fluit, William Blom; predeceased by his grandparents Adriaan & Truus and Frans & Trijntje Visser, a stillborn brother, and uncle Marius. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, 1 Samuel 20:3c.)

■ Post-High School Young Adults' Winter Conference

January 2-4, 2025

The Timothy Youth Group of Franklin Lakes & Clifton, New Jersey, is planning the annual Winter Conference for January 2-4, 2025. All post-high school young adults are invited. For more information and to sign up, please visit www.timothygroupnrc.org (password: January2025).

■ Seniors' Care Home Positions

The NRC of Chilliwack Sunset Manor Care Home is looking to enhance our health care team. Opportunities are available for health care professionals (RN, LPN, RPN) and care aides. If you would enjoy working with our elderly residents, please contact us. We are willing to assist with obtaining the required recognition of professional credentials in B.C. Please contact board chairman, Neil Stam, at castam71@outlook.com or vice-chairman, Jake Klaassen, at jklaassen@jakesconstruction.ca.

The light of the sun, moon, and stars is of such concern to men that without them the beauty of the old Creation would be buried in darkness, and therefore the children of God have given the Most High the credit of those greater and lesser candles (Psalm 136:7-9)... The light of God's Law and Word is of infinitely more worth, for by it the glory and beauty of the new creation, and that curious piece of man's redemption, is seen and known. What honor God deserves for this favor!

—George Swinnock (1627-1673)

Sabbath-Breaking Overturned (continued from page 228)

It is said that the following observations of Elias, under God's blessing, aided in producing the desired effect: "It may be hinted by someone," he said, "that this fair is an old custom, it will recover itself." He replied in a very awful manner, "If anyone will give the least encouragement to its revival, he will be accursed before the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, but blessed is the man that opposeth this and every other species of iniquity."

It seems that several persons were truly converted under that extraordinary sermon. One man was so alarmed by hearing the things Elias said of Sabbath-breakers, that on his way home he imagined that his arm on which the hook rested was really withered; consequently, the instrument fell to the ground, and he feared taking it up lest the other arm should be disabled. He lost the hook and kept the use of both arms; more than that, he was born again under Elias'

sermon! During the remainder of his days, he lived as a decided Christian; he walked by faith and died a happy death.

In his prayer after the sermon, Elias again entreated the Lord to put it into the heart of some of the great people to come forward in behalf of His holy day and the cause of His dear Son; he prayed with great respect for the Bishop and Dean of St. Asaph, the magistrates and clergy. The Dean soon afterwards heard of the circumstance and sent a threatening letter to the place, but the nuisance had already been broken in its main strength.

Elias has himself noticed the above remarkable circumstance in his autobiography, as follows: "The Lord strengthened me, in the face of a great tumult, to preach at Rhuddlan in a fair held there on a Sunday during the harvest season. He gave me the victory. Very soon the custom was discontinued." This astonishing event occurred in the summer of 1802. □

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/Managers

CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, COAL-HURST, ALBERTA, is seeking a qualified candidate to take over the position of **Operations Manager** at our school by the end of 2024. Teaching certification is not required, but the successful applicant will play a meaningful role in supporting delivery of Christian education as part of our leadership team. Core tasks include oversight of janitorial, maintenance, and transportation operations including human resources and policy. The ideal candidate will have demonstrated leadership experience, excellent communication skills, and a devotion to promotion of Christian education. Inquiries may be addressed to inquiries@ccschool.ca or to the principal, Mr. Marc Slingerland, at 403-381-3030.

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. Arthur Verhoef at 905-563-3077 or principal@ecschool.ca. Please send applications to the secretary of the school board, Mr. G. Brouwer, 1372 Gregory Road N., St. Catharines, Ontario, L2R 6P9 or call 647-271-8984, or email gerry@ecschool.ca

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

Relocation expenses and financial incentives will be discussed upon inquiry. For more information or to apply, please contact Tom Van Vugt (education chairman) at 973-703-1511 or email tomv@plainviewgrowers.com, or John Van Der Brink (administrator) at 973-628-7400 or email nrcs_office@nrdsnj.org

Teachers/Assistants

CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, COAL-HURST, ALBERTA, is in urgent need of Educational Assistants to begin as soon as possible, particularly for our secondary school. We also invite inquiries from elementary or secondary teachers for the coming school year. 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 inquiries@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. Arthur Verhoef, at principal@ecschool.ca or call 905-563-3077.

Please send applications to the secretary of the school board, Mr. G. Brouwer, 1372 Gregory Road N., St. Catharines, Ontario, L2R 6P9. Email: gerry@ecschool.ca

EBENEZER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN, is in urgent need of a teacher for the 2024-25 school year. We have a very small, multigrade classroom school. Certification is not required for this position although it would be helpful. Currently, the school board acts as principal with further oversight by the consistory. May this position and our need be bound upon someone's heart to come over and help us. For any questions regarding this position and all interested applicants, please contact Randal Teunissen at 920-828-0225 or e-mail rdteunissen@yahoo.com

EMMANUEL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, LYNDEN, WASHINGTON, 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@nrclslynden.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@nrclsia.org

PLYMOUTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, has a temporary teaching position available for the second half of the 2024-2025 school year. The open position is for upper elementary, Monday through Friday, morning hours only. An interested candidate will have a love for children, Christian education, and a teaching certificate (or working toward certification). If interested, please contact the administrator, Nathan Bleeker, at nbleeker@plymouthchristian.us

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, NORWICH, ONTARIO, invites applications to fill a grade 6 and middle school positions beginning in January 2025, D.V. 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.

God's promises are never nearer fulfilling than when to sense and reason they seem furthest from fulfilling. This was Abraham's case, when at God's command he was about to sacrifice his son Isaac.

—Samuel Bolton

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.**

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

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SchoolJobs!

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God Our Deliverer

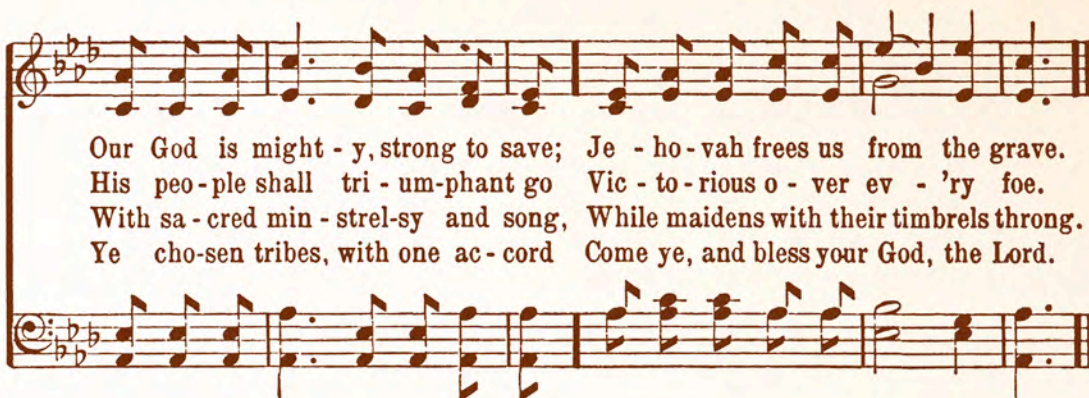
PSALM 68 L. M.

WARE

George Kingsley



1. Blest be the Lord! for us He cares And dai - ly all our bur - den bears;
2. God's un - re - lent - ing en - e - mies No peace shall find in earth or seas;
3. With glo - rious pomp our King and God Has en - tered in - to His a - bode,
4. As - sem - ble ye be - fore His face, All ye that spring from Is - rael's race;



Our God is might - y, strong to save; Je - ho - vah frees us from the grave.
His peo - ple shall tri - um - phant go Vic - to - rious o - ver ev - 'ry foe.
With sa - cred min - strel - sy and song, While maidens with their timbrels throng.
Ye cho - sen tribes, with one ac - cord Come ye, and bless your God, the Lord.