

the **Banner** *of Truth*

November 2024
Volume 90, No. 11

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



In this issue...

Thanking God Always for All Things
Advent Expectations
God's Incommunicable Attributes

For our young readers...

David and Mephibosheth
Burial

*"O give thanks unto the LORD; for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever...
Who remembered us in our low estate: for His mercy endureth for ever." PSALM 136:1&23*



Meditation Thanking God Always for All Things 243 <i>Rev. W. Hage</i>	For Young & Old What Did Rev. W.C. Lamain Say About Israel? 252 Reprinted with permission from the website <i>EzraForIsrael.ca</i>
Bible Study The Names of the Mediator (11) 244 <i>Rev. C. Neele & Rev. A. Schot</i>	Current Events 254
A Word in Season Thanksgiving Meditation (2) 246 <i>Rev. W.C. Lamain</i>	TIMOTHY – for the Young The Life of Rev. G.H. Kersten as Told to His Grandchildren (6) 255 Adapted from <i>Religious Stories for Young and Old, Volume IV</i>
From Our Inheritance Advent Expectations 247 <i>Rev. A. Moerkerken</i>	Bible Stories for Little Ones David and Mephibosheth 257 <i>Submitted</i>
Doctrinal Studies God's Incommunicable Attributes (1) 249 <i>Rev. A.P. Baaijens</i>	Bible Quiz Burial 258 <i>Aunt LenaBeth</i>
Questions & Answers Antinomians 250 <i>Rev. B. Labee</i>	News & Announcements 261
Reflections Evening Twilight (11) 251 <i>Rev. P. Blok</i>	Brief Report of the Synod 2024 262
	Back Cover Shortness of Life and Goodness of God 264 <i>Isaac Watts</i>

Cover: New England church surrounded by autumn foliage | © AudleyTravel.com

THE BANNER OF TRUTH

Publication Number: (USPS 041-540)

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

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

Rev. J. den Hoed, Editor
972 Hemlock Loop, Lynden, WA 98264
Home: 360-354-0210 • Study/Fax: 360-354-0216

Rev. A.H. Verhoef, Assistant Editor
1142 Lakeshore Road W., St. Catharines, ON L2R 6P9
905-935-4934

Rev. P. Kleijer, Assistant Editor
54-90022 RR 211, Lethbridge County, AB T1J 5N9
403-380-1984

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

Mike Greendyk, Subscription Manager
2 Krasco Road, Oak Ridge, NJ 07438
862-462-5201 • E-mail: nrcbannersubscriptions@yahoo.com

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

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

PERIODICAL: Postage paid at Mahwah, NJ

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
The Banner of Truth
2 Krasco Road, Oak Ridge, NJ 07438

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 Ruitenburg, Secretary, 8920-3 Broadway Street, Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada V2P 5W1; NRCEA School Journal *Learning and Living*, Calvin Christian School, Box 26, Coalhurst, Alberta, Canada T0L 0V0.

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

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

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

Printed in U.S.A.



Meditation

Thanking God Always for All Things

Rev. W. Hage (1912-2003)

(Translated from the November 10, 1977 issue of *De Saambinder*)

“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”

(Ephesians 5:20).

Everything in this life continues to be subject to change. This is evident in personal life, and it is experienced in social life, in the great world events, in the realm of the church, as well as in the changing of the seasons. It was only a moment ago that the farmers tilled the fields in order to entrust the seed to them, and now most of the fruit of the fields has already been gathered, and Thanksgiving Days are held in many places. Thanksgiving Days—these are days (if it is right) to acknowledge the Lord for all His benefits, both of general and personal blessings enjoyed, in the “assembling of ourselves together,” to dwell on and be reminded of God’s goodness, wisdom, and faithfulness. Surely there are abundant reasons for this. Yes, God’s Word calls believers to do this in all circumstances. The Apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, did so, too.

In this chapter, the apostle exhorts that believers were to be like “dear children”—followers of God. As children of the light, they were to reveal that the Holy Spirit had wrought a new life in them. He showed them what God had done for them, to them, and in them, yes, who He still was for them. This was to encourage them in “giving thanks always for all things unto God.”

Giving thanks to God—not like some in our days, who are always able to give thanks and to praise, which was not strange among the Pharisees in Jesus’ days either. This, however, is a stench with God. True gratitude can only be practiced in Christ and is manifested in the child-like humility of the heart as Jacob said, “I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast shewed unto Thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.” David also said in 2 Samuel 23:5, “Although my house be not so with God,” etc. Giving thanks is to appreciate and esteem the benefits and the good that one receives, to be moved by them with satisfaction and joy in the heart. “In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth” (Luke 10:21a).

Giving thanks also means to recognize God alone as the first, supreme cause and source of all good from whom it comes unto us, whether immediately or through the intervention of others and not by attributing it to our ingenuity or by wisdom of others. “For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but Thy right hand, and Thine arm,

and the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favour unto them” (Psalm 44:3).

Giving thanks testifies of the glory and perfection of God, which is revealed by praising with joyful lips: “And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon His name, declare His doings among the people, make mention that His name is exalted” (Isaiah 12:4).

Rightly giving thanks to the Lord is also reciprocating the benefits bestowed by God with all kinds of acts of love and obedience: “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God” (Psalm 50:23).

Giving thanks also includes having and keeping a lasting, vivid impression of divine favor, acknowledging and honoring God for it not only now but our whole life: “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits” (Psalm 103:2). The great object of that practice is God and the Father. The name of God leads us to the most perfect Being, the Creator and Sustainer of the whole universe. “God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). “Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea” (Job 11:7-9). He is unfathomable, eternal, independent, holy, omnipresent, all-sufficient, merciful, gracious, and just—a glory, indeed, that makes Him a worthy and proper object of our thanksgiving. When something of it is revealed in the lives of God’s children, they cry out in amazement with the poet, “O Lord, our strength, to Thee we bow, for great and terrible art Thou out of Thy holy temple” (Psalter 420:6b).

Even more, the apostle adds, “Giving thanks...unto God and the Father,” who, reconciled in Christ, has and exercises all fatherly attributes and deeds. Giving thanks unto God and the Father, that is, God, who is a Father, not only because of an eternal generation, but by grace also of all His people. As a Father, He also exercises all His paternal attributes and deeds concerning His own. From Him they receive not only natural but also spiritual life. “Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures” (James 1:18). As a Father, God has a paternal right and power, who is sovereign in leading and dealing with His own as He pleases: “Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?” (Hebrews 12:9). As a Father, He unlocks the riches of His kindness

and generosity, through which He grants His children everything that belongs to life and eternal happiness. As a Father, He is also worthy of paternal awe and honor: “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our Maker” (Psalm 95:6), and “If then I be a Father, where is Mine honour?” (Malachi 1:6b).

For what is God to be thanked? The apostle mentions in the text, “For all things.” After all, all the good that one enjoys, both in the physical and the spiritual, is descending from Him. “For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things” (Romans 11:36a). “For all things” to teach us that we should esteem none of His benefits as small but notice them all. For though one is more excellent in comparison with another, yet there is none small in itself while they all descend from the great God. Yes, they all are dearly paid for by the precious blood of the Mediator and are bestowed upon creatures who have deserved nothing but death and destruction.

“For all things.” This also includes ways of oppression and adversities, chastisements, and trials. “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Hebrews 12:11). Then it is understood what the prophet Isaiah says, “O LORD, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me” (Isaiah 12:1b).

Finally, the apostle points out to us how one should thank God the Father: “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Outside of Christ, God is a devouring fire and everlasting burning with whom no one can dwell. Outside of Christ, there is no access to God for a sinner, but in Christ, access to God is opened for His own. He lives at the right hand of the Father as the praying and thanking High Priest. Where thanksgiving in Jesus’ name is brought to the Father, it is an incense that ascends to God from the golden altar of His Mediatorial merits and glory and is pleasing to the

Father. The Father loves the Son and obtained satisfaction in His sacrifice. For the Son’s sake He will accept the believers and their thanksgiving. “And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 14:13a). Giving thanks in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ indicates that the Church in itself possesses neither righteousness nor virtue but is poor and miserable, having forfeited and become unworthy of all benefits and blessings.

Finally, thanking God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ indicates to us that such a one agrees with God in His ways and works; yes, he wants to be saved by no other way than that which God Himself has devised from eternity and has revealed in the time to the glory of His name and the salvation of Zion.

Have we ever held Thanksgiving Day like this in our lives? It does not have to be an official Thanksgiving Day for this. Sadly, such days often pass by in mere routine and habit. Let each of us stay with our own heart and home. Does God not make His thoughts and miracles innumerable to us? Where is the recognition for all God’s benefits to us? Oh, then shame must cover us. How sin increases hand over fist. The Sodomites break out in crowds, and sin is committed freely. God’s laws are trampled underfoot. It is like in the days of the prophet Jeremiah: “We are lords; we will come no more unto Thee” (Jeremiah 2:31b)!

How is it in God’s Church? God gave to Israel food according to their request “but sent leanness into their soul.” Do we not also experience these times today? Where is the grace of ancient times? This is also true in making use of Christ. After all, “praise is comely for the upright.” Not as a glorifying Christianity, rich in its own virtue and righteousness—God loathes this, and it leaves the soul empty—but by constantly making use of the thanking High Priest at the right hand of the Father. God grant you this in the beginning and the furtherance. Then one day it will be an eternal and perfect Thanksgiving Day. □



Bible Study

The Names of the Mediator (11)

Rev. C. Neele (1962-2022) & Rev. A. Schot, Nunspeet, the Netherlands

(Translated from the 2010 issues of *De Saambinder*)

Firstborn

*“Who is the image of the invisible God, the **firstborn** of every creature” (Colossians 1:15 [and verse 18]).*

The word “firstborn” appears in the Holy Scriptures in various forms and meanings in reference to the Mediator. First, Jesus is the firstborn Son of Mary. “And she brought

forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes.” Here the word does not appear as a proper name but as an adjective. Firstborn here means that Mary did not bring any other children into the world *before* Him. It also implies that other children were born of Mary after Him. The firstborn had a prominent place in the family. The birthright gave honor and dominion over the brothers.

Furthermore, the firstborn sons were sanctified to the Lord, and they received a double portion of the inheritance.

In a spiritual sense, the birthright applies so beautifully to Christ. Of the Mediator, the word is also used in a figurative sense. For example, we read in Colossians 1:15 that the Mediator is “the Firstborn of every creature.” By this, Paul does not mean that the Son is a creature of God. He does not say the first-created, but the firstborn. The Dutch annotators point to His divine nature, His eternal birth from the Father *before* all creatures. Second, they point to His dignity above all creatures. Christ is exalted above all Creation. Thus, He must also receive the highest place in our personal lives. He must not become much for us but everything.

In Colossians 1:18 He is called “the Firstborn from the dead.” We read the same in Revelation 1:5. How are we to understand this? Were there not others who rose from the dead before Christ? Just think of the resurrection of Lazarus. The name “firstborn” here means that He is the first in the order. He is the cause of the resurrection of others. Moreover, also in His resurrection He is more glorious than others. What riches are found in this name. The spiritually dead can still be quickened through this Firstborn. Life issues from Him.

Finally, He is also the Firstborn among many brethren (Romans 8:29)—this means, the first, the most important of all His spiritual brethren. He is not to conform Himself to His brethren, but all His brethren must be conformed to His image. Is that also your greatest desire? Oh, what a miracle if this may happen to us. What a happy prospect this is!

His children are also referred to as firstborn. The letter to the Hebrews speaks of the Church of the firstborn. This Church may soon share with Him in the inheritance. Here too, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

—March 18, 2010, Rev. A. Schot

Foundation

*“And are built upon the **foundation** of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20).*

The Son of God is called Foundation. He also bears other names with the same meaning: Cornerstone, Rock,

and Foundation Stone. A foundation of a building is important. If defects affect the foundation, a structure cannot stand. Recently, this became clear in Amsterdam. During the construction work of the subway, the foundations of the old houses on Vijzel Street were undermined. As a result, the old buildings collapsed and became uninhabitable.

Paul writes in the letter to the Ephesians about Christ as the foundation whereupon rests the building of the Church, consisting of Jews and Gentiles. They are joined together on the same foundation, by the same Spirit. Paul also speaks of this in the letter to the Corinthians. “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11). The apostle knows of no other ground for salvation. Christ has acquired salvation and will also appropriate it by His Holy Spirit. The whole building of the Church rests on this one foundation which is an unmoveable cornerstone and rock. He who rests upon it shall not be moved for ever.

The poet of Psalm 73 may look to the immoveable God through Christ: “My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever” (verse 26). Oh, how the life of grace can waver! How often

the walls of the spiritual Jerusalem are attacked, but the foundation of the Church shall not be moved. Do you have knowledge of this?

Isaiah also wrote about this Foundation: “Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone...” (Isaiah 28:16a). The Dutch annotation to this text reads, “Christ is the true Cornerstone of Zion, that is, of His Church, which secures us against death, hell and all calamity.” It is a tried stone. Attempts have been made to overthrow this foundation. The powers of hell have been on the rise. Religion did not understand that the foundation of the cross was necessary. The Church had to be won over to it. There is only one Foundation. What a miracle it is when, by grace, we may gain insight into this, yes, may rest upon the accomplished Surety-work of Christ. Then He becomes for us a precious Cornerstone, a precious Rock, an indispensable Saviour.

—April 8, 2010, Rev. C. Neele

(To be continued)

*“Christ is the true Cornerstone of Zion,
that is, of His Church, which secures us
against death, hell and all calamity.”
It is a tried stone.*

During family devotions, Luther once read the story of Abraham sacrificing Isaac. When he had finished, his wife Katharina said, “I do not believe it; God would not have treated His Son like that.”

“But, Katie,” answered Luther, “He did.”

—From the book *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* by Roland H. Bainton



A Word in Season

Thanksgiving Meditation (2)

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

(Taken from the November 1966 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

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

The mercy of God which is great above the heavens and His truth which reaches unto the clouds have not only been seen by this psalmist but also personally enjoyed and experienced. In Psalm 136, David declared twenty-six times that the mercy of God endures forever and with good reason. Time and again he mentions the instances when this mercy was shown. It is the same way in this psalm.

This is certainly no vain boasting, no lip worship, no beating the air, as it were. To the very depths of his soul, he feels the greatness of God’s mercy and the power of God’s eternal truth.

God is good to all creatures; He makes His sun to rise on both the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. Day by day God manifests that He is slow to anger but that His mercy is great. The loud call comes to us from heaven that the Lord has no pleasure in the death of the wicked but in this—that the sinner turn from his evil way and live. It is indeed because of the mercies of God that the earth still retains a person and that the heavens still cover him. Because of God’s mercy man is not swept away from before His face, but he is still permitted a place upon the footstool of God.

It is because of the mercy of God that He still follows after a person with the warning calls of His Word and His ever-enduring testimony. It is a mercy when God visits a person not only with blows and afflictions, with judgments and adversities but also with manifestations of His compassion and mercy. It is because of God’s mercy that mankind may continue to enjoy the light of the gospel and that the Lord still causes that only name whereby we must be saved to be proclaimed.

God is not obligated to us in the least, but we are debtors to Him in all things. We have separated ourselves from God deliberately of our own free will; also, we have sold ourselves to the Prince of Darkness and surrendered ourselves to the devastation of sin. We have chosen death rather than life and cursing rather than blessing.

It is indeed worthy of our consideration that God still surrounds such as we who do nothing from day to day but corrupt their way before God with so many mercies. For this reason, the Apostle Paul said, “Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” Oh, beloved, we do not know this unless God

comes to teach us; this will be such an infinite wonder to those who are enrolled in this school. The heaviest and most fearful judgments will never humble us. In Luke 16, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the Lord Jesus went so far as to say, “Neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

Every person who is enlightened by the Spirit to see the disease of his own heart and the depth of his fall will agree to this wholeheartedly. He will not go against it, much less deny it, but he will say, “Yes, it is exactly so.” Only the mercies of God humble the soul. Those mercies melt the heart and make it as water in the presence of the Lord.

Think only of Manasseh. It certainly was a great miracle to him in that prison in Babylon that God had not cast him out of his presence long ago.

It was the same with Saul on the way to Damascus. The fact that he was still permitted to rise from the ground, in the mercy of God, was a miracle to him, too great to be comprehended. What did he expect as he lay there upon the ground? Nothing less than to perish like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Truly, this always far exceeds the expectations of those people. God’s chosen people exult with Asaph, “Truly, God is good to Israel.” The Lord is plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Him (Psalm 86:5). The people of God shall sing of these mercies forever (Psalm 89:1).

These mercies of God upon His people become manifest in this, that He dispenses saving benefits to them, things that accompany salvation (Hebrews 6:9). These are: election, redemption, and deliverance through the satisfaction of Christ; the call to salvation by the proclamation of the gospel; regeneration, justification, sanctification, and union and communion with Christ.

The Lord shows them His marvelous kindness (Psalm 31:21); that He is of great mercy (Psalm 145:8); that His loving kindness is excellent (Psalm 36:7); that His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting (Psalm 103:17); and, as our text declares, that His mercy is great above the heavens. “Above the heavens,” that is, it can go no higher; it is infinite.

May the God of all mercy bless and sanctify these few lines to our hearts and souls. We are sinful creatures, worms of the dust. What a wonder it would be if the Lord in His Beloved Son Jesus Christ would look upon us from heaven, filling our hearts with His mercies which are from eternity to all eternity. That would be not only to the honor of the most High God but also to our joy and gladness. We would never forget such a Thanksgiving Day. □

(This installment marks the end of this series.)



From Our Inheritance

Advent Expectations

Rev. A. Moerkerken (1947-2024)

(Taken from the November 1993 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

We count four advent Sundays in the church year. The preaching directs itself in those weeks to the four thousand years when the Lord's Church looked for and hoped for the coming of Christ in the flesh. In this article we want to make four remarks about this advent expectation.

In the first place, it must have our attention that the advent expectation of God's Church was a founded expectation. In the Old Testament God's children had a sure foundation for their expecting, hoping, and looking. Never can the most holy faith be there if God has not first laid the foundation for that faith. Faith must have an object. Comrie explained in his explanation of the catechism that there is mention of a twofold object of faith; Christ Himself is the immediate object of faith, and the Word of God is the mediate object of faith. In this way the faith of the devout of olden days was directed to the promised Christ, who had been promised in the Word spoken by God.

Wherever the Lord does not speak, faith cannot obtain a firm hold. The fallen pair of mankind would never have been allowed to exercise advent expectation if God had given no ground for this in the mother promise. After all, from man's side, after the breaking of the covenant in Paradise, all expectation was cut off; the state of death, our debt reaching unto heaven, and our loss of God's image gave only a view of eternal death! However, God opened a way where there was no way. He revealed to the fallen pair of mankind the covenant of grace, which went back to the eternal council of peace. As in summary, all the benefits of that covenant were comprehended in that mother promise.

"I will put enmity." That is the mother promise. That is what Genesis 3:15 is called, not because it had been spoken to Eve, the mother of all (in essence it was spoken to the serpent!), but because out of it, as out of a mother, all the following promises of the covenant have come forth.

In the second place, we want to point out that the first advent promise has been renewed countless times. It is the golden thread which runs through the Scriptures of the Old Testament. God's servants should really not have to run short in advent weeks if the issue is the choice of a text; there is no book in the Old Testament in which the advent thought is missing. Luther sought in every book of the Bible for that which was *Christum treibet* (urges us toward

Christ –Ed.), that is, that which speaks emphatically about Christ, and he found it in every book of the Bible.

It has to strike us, indeed, that the Lord in the course of forty centuries between Creation and Bethlehem did not just repeat the advent promise but that He renewed it with steadily greater accuracy and precision. If there was at first but mention of the seed of the woman, after the flood it became evident that the holy line would run through the generation of Shem. Then the Lord promised the seed to Abraham, which was approximately the twentieth century before Christ. On his deathbed, the old patriarch Jacob spoke, "Judah, thou art he!" Moses made mention in the plains of Moab of that Prophet from among Israel's brethren. At about the same time (in the fifteenth century before Christ's birth) Balaam, in spite of himself, said, "there shall come a Star out of Jacob" (Numbers 24:17b).

What else shall we say about the renewing of the advent promise throughout the centuries? It can be summarized with the words of the Heidelberg Catechism in Lord's Day 6, "From the holy gospel, which God Himself first revealed

in Paradise; and afterwards published by the patriarchs and prophets, and represented by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law; and lastly, has fulfilled by His only begotten Son."

Regarding the precision of the advent promise, we can add the following: In the eighth century before Christ, it was Micah who was the spokesman

of the Lord in pointing out the place of birth of Him that would be a Ruler in Israel, namely, Bethlehem Ephratah. In that same century Isaiah spoke of the incomprehensible sign of Immanuel: a virgin would conceive and bear a Son. Two centuries later and over five centuries before that night of Christmas, Daniel spoke in veiled words about the time of Christ's birth and dying. Seventy weeks were determined to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.

In the third place, when viewing the advent promise in the Old Testament, the way in which God has fulfilled this promise strikes us. To be brief, it has been a way of impossibility. Time and again it seemed as if God had brought His own work to naught. At the flood, the whole human race seemed to perish, and the advent promise ran through the

Never can the most holy faith be there if God has not first laid the foundation for that faith. Faith must have an object. Comrie explained in his explanation of the catechism that there is mention of a twofold object of faith; Christ Himself is the immediate object of faith, and the Word of God is the mediate object of faith.

narrow door of Noah's ark. In Abram's tent Sarai seemed to be past age. Twenty years did Isaac and Rebekah have to wait before the Lord again extended the golden thread. In Egypt, Satan, by way of the Pharaohs, seemed to win the battle for good. When David fell in the abominable sin with Bathsheba, all advent expectations seemed to be cut off. Athaliah seemed to bring the golden thread to naught by her murders. The low point came in the year 586 B.C. when city and temple were burning and Judah was being taken captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. "There we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion" (Psalm 137:1). After the anxious night of captivity, God caused the hope to dawn again; the temple was rebuilt, the city arose again.

Zechariah prophesied around the year 500 B.C. about the coming BRANCH, who would build the temple of the Lord. Again, a century later Malachi spoke of the Angel of the covenant who would suddenly come to His temple, and of the Sun of righteousness who would arise. Then it became dark again, so dark as it had never been before. The royal house of David became a cutoff trunk, robbed of stem, branches, and crown, in which no life seemed to be present. Then, really, the Church rightly entered the night of impossibility.

That which had never happened before then took place; the voice of the prophets was silent for four full centuries. The scepter seemed to be departing from Judah, for an Edomite mounted the throne. The Romans ruled with a harsh hand. There was reason for the lamentation of Psalm 77:7&8, "Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will He be favourable no more? Is His mercy clean gone for ever? doth His promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Selah." The well-known Professor G. Wisse remarks about this time period, "It was as if the night would always remain. Thus, it also happens in the soul. When it is light, they think it will never become dark again; and when it is dark, they fear it will never become light again. It is, among others, so that you will learn and understand well that darkness is from us and light from God."

This brings us to our fourth remark. All these matters that we mentioned have not only had their meaning in the history of salvation, but they also have much to say concerning the order of salvation. After all, in this world God still has an advent Church. It is not as if Christ would have to be born anew in Bethlehem. The events of salvation

are one-time events and do not repeat themselves. God's children know that. However, they so look for the subjective application of the fruit of the events of salvation in their heart. With a theoretical knowledge of the Christmas gospel, either according to their mind or their feeling, they cannot help themselves. The matter which the advent Church is after is that the Mediator as Person must be revealed to their soul and must come to their soul.

These people live a missing life. They know an expectation, and as it went in the history of salvation, so it also goes in the life of the soul. A foundation was laid for that expectation. God has spoken to them. These people, worthy of damnation, guilty of death, miserable, and having no hope anymore, He has refreshed by His promise. Oh, how that Word of God at times did refresh them exceedingly! Then they walked in the light. They could still be saved, and as it went objectively, so it went subjectively; at times the Lord renewed His promise! Sometimes He came back to His

The events of salvation are one-time events, and do not repeat themselves. God's children know that. However, they so look for the subjective application of the fruit of the events of salvation in their hearts. With a theoretical knowledge of the Christmas gospel, either according to their mind or their feeling, they cannot help themselves. The matter which the advent Church is after is that the Mediator as Person must be revealed to their soul and must come to their soul.

own work. His comfortings have quickened their soul. Sometimes, through the lattice of the Word, they saw the Mediator, whom they could not miss, as they so keenly felt. As the Old Testament Church, they sometimes saw the promise afar off, believed it, and embraced it. Yet, it was to them as if the Person of the Mediator still remained covered with a veil. It did go as far as an embracing of the promise but not yet to that full embracing of the Christ Himself. Yet, they thought to be near salvation.

Again, we must say, God's ways in the history of salvation determine His ways in the life of the soul, also, subjectively, the way with God's Church leads into the night—not only once but time and again. Being saved shall become a wonder, and only there where it becomes impossible from our side and where nothing is left but a cutoff stem of the whole house of our conversions and of the tree of our advent expectations, does the Rod come forth. How important it is to continue to keep these matters in view during a time in which the world and religion sing of the Child, without ever a place having been made for this Child.

May the Lord teach us in our life, in a scriptural way, to know that mystery of salvation so that, by the applying power of the Holy Ghost, the Person of that blessed Child might be laid in our arms and that we might embrace Him as the One given of the Father. □

Rejoice that the immortal God is born so that mortal men may live in eternity. —John Hus



Doctrinal Studies

God's Incommunicable Attributes (1)

Rev. A.P. Baaijens, Aagtekerke, the Netherlands

(Translated from the January 28, 2021 issue of *De Saambinder*)

God Is Independent

In five articles we want to dwell on the incommunicable attributes of the Lord. Various attributes are attributed to God in His Word, through which He makes Himself known to us humans in our weakness. Reverence and awe fit us in speaking and thinking about Him. We are so inclined to think very humanly about God, but He is God!

God's attributes are not something of God to distinguish Him. That is how it is with human attributes. There are wise people, but no one is wisdom itself. With the Lord, however, His attributes are God Himself. Therefore, He is Wisdom. There is no contradiction among the attributes of God. In Him everything is one infinite perfection. That is why we speak of God's virtues or perfections.

We probably know from catechism class what God's incommunicable attributes are: His independency, simplicity, eternity, omnipresence, and immutability. Hellenbroek teaches in his question book that "incommunicable" means that there is not the least resemblance of them in any creature. Of these attributes, God has given nothing to man. To understand it a little, we just need to remember that we, humans, are the opposite.

He is sovereign

We first want to say a few things about God's independency. It means that He does not depend on anything or anyone or needs anything. He is sovereign. He does not need anyone to exist. He is self-existent and self-sufficient. He is exalted above all creatures. There is no higher power above Him. He is the supreme Majesty. Paul says in Acts 17:25a, "Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed any thing." What a miracle that He still wants to have to do with people!

God is independent when it comes to what He wills, what He does and does not do, in His decisions and in all His actions, in His knowledge, and in His power. His counsel shall stand, and He will do all His pleasure (Isaiah 46:10b). He is sovereign. He is accountable to no one. Man, in his prideful, sinful existence, can ask so many questions and call God to account, as an entitled person. "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Daniel 4:35b). There

is no higher authority above Him. He is holy, wise, and good. Therefore, His decrees and all His actions are also holy, wise, and good. Have you, as someone who has no rights, already learned to bow under that?

Everything and everyone depend on God. He is not only the Creator of our life but also the Sustainer. The sin of Paradise is that we wanted to be independent, just like God. A person likes to be in control of everything himself and thinks he knows and can do it himself. This is especially evident in this time of a global pandemic, in a world where the idea of social control and of self-determination is central, but how very dependent we are in everything. Think not only of our breathing but also of rain and drought, health and sickness. The Lord has determined not only the beginning of our life but also its end here on earth and everything in between.

What a privilege that He has brought us—according to His sovereign decree—under His Word, for our salvation! What has the Word done in our lives? Our dependency does not relieve us of our responsibility. We will once have to give an account before the holy, righteous God. Is this visible in our life?

His fatherly hand

It is grace when we may confess and experience with Lord's Day 10 of the Heidelberg Catechism that all things do not come to us by chance but from God's fatherly hand—to be able to give everything into His hand for time and eternity. That gives a quiet assurance in the LORD, whatever the circumstances may be (Psalm 62).

Right through everything, God accomplishes His counsel. He will receive His glory. Nothing will get out of His control. A Church will be saved, elected in Christ to eternal life, brought in a way that He Himself has devised.

Here shines the electing love of the Father, the purchasing love of the Son, and the applying love of the Holy Spirit. Happily, in this the Lord was not and is not dependent on man. If the Lord would have been dependent on one sinner of man, it would be altogether lost, but it is through Him alone because of His eternal good pleasure. Now, that is grace. That is why it is precisely possible for lost sinners. Do you know something of that miracle? □

(To be continued)

Before Christ could marry us He must be born in our nature, for the husband and the wife must be of one nature.

—Richard Sibbes



Questions & Answers

Antinomians

Rev. B. Labee, Veenendaal, the Netherlands

(Translated from the December 28, 2023 issue of *De Saambinder*)

Can you explain to me what antinomians are?

Human work

Several times we have been asked to write something about the term “antinomians” in a simple way. At the risk of oversimplifying, we will try to do so. Especially also because today all kinds of similar errors are mistaken for Reformed doctrine.

There are several kinds of antinomians. The word literally speaks of people who are *anti-nomos*, against the law. There were such people in the days of Paul. We read in the letter to the Romans (6 verse 1): “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” Now if the Mediator died for the sins of His bridal church and fulfilled the law, then a Christian is free from the law, is he not? The reasoning was: Only a commandment of love remains, so all other laws and rules can be abandoned, and the evil human existence likes to hold onto sin when there is abundant grace for sinners. Then comes an easy life, without sanctification, but God’s Word emphatically teaches us, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

Although Christ has completely fulfilled the law, it still remains a schoolmaster to bring unto Christ and a rule of life for the life of gratitude. Although even the “holiest men” have only a small beginning of the new obedience, it is unmistakable that “with a sincere resolution they begin to live, not only according to some, but to all the commandments of God” (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 44, answer 114b).

Around 1700, the negative term “antinomian” was brought up in God’s church. Antinomian, then, meant that salvation could in no way be obtained by the works of the law. Even faith does not qualify for obtaining salvation. All calls to repentance, conversion, faith, and improvement of life are

but legalistic matters. You just have to believe that you have everything in Christ. Then, there is an enormous danger that the necessity of a miracle of God is going to be lacking. Surely, all human work is deficient after Genesis 3, is it not? The “being dead” in sins and trespasses is an awful reality and—when God works by His Spirit in the heart of a sinner—is **truly** lived through.

Work of God

Now we need to be very careful here, for Holy Scripture gives no reason to hide behind man’s state of death. What our fathers summarized in the Canons of Dort *also* remains: “Moreover, the promise of the gospel is, that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be declared and published to all nations, and to all people promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of His good pleasure sends the gospel” (Canons of Dort, Head II, Article 5). The sinner must be called to repentance and faith, but if the matters are like this, how should we speak of the “gift” of faith? We cannot say it more clearly than with the words of our Dort fathers at the conclusion of Article 12 of Head III/IV. This article speaks first of regeneration and then of faith; therefore, we hear: “...so that all in whose heart God works in this marvelous manner are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated, and do actually believe. Whereupon the will thus renewed is not only actuated and influenced by God, but in consequence of this influence, becomes itself active. Wherefore, also, man is himself rightly said to believe and repent by virtue of that grace received.” □

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

Thanksgiving

A highly favored people, mindful of their dependence on the bounty of divine Providence, should seek fitting occasion to testify gratitude and ascribe praise to Him who is the Author of their many blessings. It behooves us, then, to look back with thankful hearts over the past year and bless God for His infinite mercy in vouchsafing to our land enduring peace, to our people freedom from pestilence and famine, to our husbandmen abundant harvests, and to them that labor a recompense of their toil.

—Benjamin Harrison (1833-1901)



Reflections

Evening Twilight (11)

Rev. P. Blok (1920-2019)

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

A Companion

“What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah” (Psalm 89:48).

Ethan, the Ezrahite, puts this question to each of us. It will not be accepted by everyone. Man in his deep fall chose death and seeks life in the things of time and sense. Man does not feel that his soul is in bonds of death and destruction. “For there are no bands in their death.”

In every village or town there are cemeteries. We know where to find them, and many have seen the power of the grave in attending funerals. The grave insatiably claims the lifeless body. “The grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, It is enough” (Proverbs 30:16). Man’s life journey leads to the end which is death and eternity. This truth is indelible, although many do not accept it as the truth. Therefore, the question of Ethan, the Ezrahite, is worthy of examination. “What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.”

It is important to examine who asked this question. Ethan lived during the time of Solomon and later, when the kingdom was rent under Rehoboam, his son. This was when Shishak, king of Egypt, took the fenced cities in Judah as well as Jerusalem and spoiled the temple. Ethan was a subject of Solomon’s kingdom of peace. He experienced the breach of the rending and saw the spoiling of the temple treasures. He saw the judgment because of the forsaking of God and His service. What remained was an empty religion without God. “If his children forsake My law, and walk not in My judgments; if they break My statutes, and keep not My commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.”

It is a miracle of grace that Ethan believed in the God of the people and His unchanging choice of the Man after His heart. Therein lies room for a people who may bow under the judgment and under God’s righteous punishments.

When we know the life and place of Ethan spiritually, there is also room for the labor of Him who is David’s Son and Lord. These are the true companions on the way to eternity. They understand one another and the wonder of God’s gracious dealings on the way to eternity. They also learned that the coveted wisdom of Rehoboam does not deliver in judgment. “But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him.” The true companion may choose the

counsel of the old. If we have not learned who Adam is, we will not desire Christ.

One of the first visits in our ministry was with a family of a simple man. He owned a business by which he was strongly tied to the farms in the congregation. For many he was the go-to person, and he was a helper for the poverty-stricken. Moreover, being active with his own soul and the souls of those who were his was most important to him. Death and eternity were bound upon him, and that gave a hidden life with God. He was cordially bound to the experiential truth and the offices in the church. There was also a cordial bond with the parsonage and the concerns of the residents of the parsonage. He was very discreet when it came to the lives of God’s people. He saw where it had to come but experienced that he could not bring himself there. His life was declared in the preaching. He kept at a distance those who could not bow under the preaching.

He was diagnosed with a serious disease. A difficult time began for him and his family. It was a wonderful time on the sickbed and a blessed time in pastoral visits. Subjected to the leadings of God, and because of a breakthrough in the labor of Israel’s Physician, he lay there, united in God. Thus, after spending weeks at the sickbed, the evening twilight of life dawned. It did not become dark; the Lord showed the light of salvation. In this manner we sat around his deathbed with the family the last night. “Death is swallowed up in victory,” and the fruit was a wonderful peace.

One by one, the children were called to his sickbed. It was a moving farewell. Then he extended his hand to me. In a weak voice he spoke, “I never dared to say it, but now it is allowed: Dear brother, till we meet again.”

After entrusting his children to our care, he passed away and was taken up into the rest that remains for the people of God. Immediately, the Lord pointed to the testimony from Psalm 34: “The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.”

With this testimony we entrusted him to the bosom of the earth. Verily, he was a companion. “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.”

*My feet from falling and my soul
From death Thou hast restored,
And ever in the light of life
I walk before the Lord.*

—Psalter 153:4 ◻

(To be continued)



For Young and Old

What Did Rev. W.C. Lamain Say About Israel?

(Reprinted with permission from the website *EzraForIsrael.ca*)

It was an event in October, 1942, that deeply affected him. In the family of Rev. W.C. Lamain (1904-1984), a sixth child had been born. At the Mijnsheerenplein, the square in Rotterdam where the family resided, another child was born, this one, to Jewish parents. This child was just nine days old when a police van stopped in front of the house. The little family was arrested and led away. The minister and his wife were hardly able to sleep during the night that followed. Together they sighed and groaned while one question in particular occupied their minds: Have the Jews sinned more grievously than we? When the minister recounted this event later, he wrote, "We have also prayed for ourselves and our family that these matters might bring us to the right place before God."

Rev. Lamain never saw the Jewish family again. However, something else happened. The following day, the minister was scheduled to preach in the village of Ouddorp. Before the church service, a lunch was provided for him in the house of one of the deacons. When this man asked him what he should read at the table, Rev. Lamain dared not answer this question. Then the deacon himself chose a chapter. It was Romans 11. "Never, no, never in my life have I heard that chapter as at that time" the minister once said. "It was as if God Himself read it." Like a sharp sword God's Word wounded his soul, but the fifteenth verse of Romans 11 also gave hope to his heart: "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"

After that memorable visit to Ouddorp, **never a Sunday passed on which Rev. Lamain neglected to remember the Jews in his public prayer.** Afterwards he was greatly delighted to read that Theodore Vander Groe was granted to believe that the Jewish people would be readopted by the Lord.

Years later, when Rev. Lamain had meanwhile moved to the United States, he had another unforgettable encounter.

This time he met a Jewish woman who had been converted to God. "Oh, it was such a wonder to her that Christ had died for Jews, for the very people who had nailed Him to the cross. She said, 'It is great when a heathen is converted, but it is much greater that the Lord is still pleased to receive Jews!'" Not only did it touch the minister that this Jewish lady wept because of the hardening of her people, but he was also impressed that she received much liberty in her prayers for God's Church and its future.

The congregations perceived that the heart of Rev. Lamain had begun to throb with love for the Jewish people. A year after the liberation from the Germans, he led a commemoration service in the congregation of Rijssen. While looking back on the anxious years of the Second World War, he remarked, "A persecution broke loose against the Jews. The Netherlands had to be cleansed from the descendants of Abraham. Their fate had been sealed. There were still unfulfilled promises for them in stock (see Romans 9-11), but no, nothing would come of that. There would be no chance that those promises would ever be verified. Hitler had daringly taken upon himself to prevent this. By the thousands and ten thousand, yea, by the millions they were exterminated and gassed to death. It cannot be described how much these people have suffered." In that light, the liberation from the German yoke was a double wonder to Rev. Lamain.

Years later, in 1973, the old minister preached a Prayer Day sermon on Zechariah 12:10 in Grand Rapids. The state of the church and the world weighed heavily upon his heart. He dreaded God's judgments. After asking the congregation why the world was still existing at this present time, he himself gave the answer: "Because there are still people who must be converted. Because Jewry still has to be brought back to the Lord. There are yet promises that await their fulfilment, and so long as the last of the elect has not yet been gathered in, Christ cannot return on the clouds of heaven." □

The interest that this proposed journey excited in Scotland was very great. Nor was it merely the somewhat romantic interest attached to the land where the Lord had done most of His mighty works; there were also in it the deeper feelings of a scriptural persuasion that Israel was still "beloved for the fathers'" sake. For some time previous, Jerusalem had come into mind, and many godly pastors were standing as watchmen over its ruined walls (Isaiah 62:6), stirring up the Lord's remembrancers. Mr. M'Cheyne had been one of these. His view of the importance of the Jews in the eye of God, and, therefore, of their importance as a sphere of missionary labor, was very clear and decided.... In his preaching he not infrequently said on this subject, "We should be like God in His peculiar affections; the whole Bible shows that God has ever had, and still has, a peculiar love to the Jews."

—Taken from *Memoir and Remains of the Rev. Robert Murray M'Cheyne*, by Andrew Bonar

Romans 11:1-24

I say then, Hath God cast away His people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

2. God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

3. Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

4. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

5. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

6. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

7. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded

8. (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.

9. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them:

10. Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

11. I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

12. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

13. For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

14. If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.

15. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?

16. For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.

17. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

18. Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

19. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

20. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:

21. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee.

22. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

23. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.

24. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? □

(Taken from the King James Bible)

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”

(Zechariah 12:10).

The day here spoken of, is the day of Jerusalem’s defence and deliverance, that glorious day when God will appear for the salvation of His people. In Christ’s first coming He bruised the serpent’s head and broke all the powers of darkness that fought against God’s kingdom among men. In His second coming He will complete their destruction, when He shall put down all opposing rule, principality, and power; death itself shall be swallowed up in that victory. The Holy Spirit is gracious and merciful and is the Author of all grace or holiness. He, also, is the Spirit of supplications and shows men their ignorance, want, guilt, misery, and danger. At the time here foretold, the Jews will know who the crucified Jesus was; then they shall look by faith to Him, and mourn with the deepest sorrow, not only in public but in private, even each one separately. There is a holy mourning, the effect of the pouring out of the Spirit; a mourning for sin which quickens faith in Christ and qualifies for joy in God. This mourning is a fruit of the Spirit of grace, a proof of a work of grace in the soul and of the Spirit of supplications. It is fulfilled in all who sorrow for sin after a godly sort; they look to Christ crucified and mourn for Him. Looking by faith upon the cross of Christ will cause us to mourn for sin after a godly sort.

—Taken from Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary



Current Events

Christians' Role in Israel

An editor of an Israeli news source provided insights into where things currently stand regarding the threat of revenge attacks against Israel by the Iranian regime, highlighting the gravity of the situation. "Israelis are stocking their bomb shelters afresh... Many are canceling summer vacation plans. Others are returning, like we did, back to the country to be with our people as we face these threats." He noted that Israel has achieved significant victories in the last few months. He said it was divine intervention and the prayers of millions of Christians worldwide for Israel's protection and safety thus far. He offered his perspective on how different segments of the Israeli population have reacted to the current threats. He said that Christians, in particular, continue to trust the Lord and draw strength from their faith in God. He said they "have a great sense of hope and a great sense of confidence that the God of Israel hasn't abandoned us." The feelings among non-believers in Israel are more complex and the ongoing threats on multiple fronts against Israel have worn down even the most resilient spirits. He noted that Israel is confronting not only the threat of military attacks but also faces attacks from the media, members of the United Nations, and various segments of the U.S. political landscape, and also the growing trend of antisemitism around the world. He urged Christians to continue praying, reminding them Christians play an active role in defending the nation of Israel through prayer. He encouraged them to stay informed.

—AllIsrael.com

China Ends International Adoptions

The Chinese government has officially ended its international adoption program, the foreign ministry spokesperson announced, ending hopes for hundreds of U.S. families who were matched with children before the COVID-19 pandemic but had adoptions put on hold in 2020. Senior director of international adoptions at Lifeline Children's Services said the announcement was shocking to the adoption agency and to its forty-eight families who were matched with Chinese orphans before the pandemic. "We actually had thought things were moving in a more positive direction over the past couple of weeks, and then received this email out of the blue regarding China no longer carrying out the foreign adoptions," she said. "Families waited with anticipation, and suffered a range of emotions including anger, sadness, and disbelief at the news." "Several of these families had actually met their children and spent time with them through a program that we have where we host children here in the United States," she said. China's announcement ends a thirty-year program, with exceptions for international residents adopting blood relatives or stepchildren. The program officially ended August 28. The forty-eight families must now grieve and process their loss, and work to consider their options.

—ChristianityToday.com

Are Abortion Numbers Declining?

A six-week abortion ban in Florida led to a sharp drop in the number of abortions provided in the state and drove down national trends too, a new report shows. Monthly abortions in Florida were cut by more than 30% according to the report from the Guttmacher Institute. There were an average of about 2,600 less abortions in the state each month in May and June. Nationwide seven thousand fewer abortions occurred each month—the drop in Florida accounted for more than a

third of that decline. The tighter restrictions in Florida were expected to reverberate through the state and the broader region. More than one in ten abortions in the country happened in Florida before the more restrictive policy took effect in May. It had become a key abortion access point for the South in the years since the U.S. Supreme Court's Dobbs decision revoked the federal right to an abortion in 2022. Despite the recent declines, Guttmacher estimates show that there have been more abortions in the U.S. the first half of 2024 than there were in the first half of 2023. Things continue to change rapidly in the U.S., and it is not clear what pattern will hold through the end of the year. Abortion numbers have gone up in states without bans, suggesting people are going to other states for an abortion.

—MSNBC.com

Sharia Courts in Predominantly Christian Philippines

The president of the Philippines recently signed a law, expanding the Sharia judicial system in the Philippines by creating three new judicial districts and twelve additional circuit courts nationwide. This development amends the current law, significantly increasing the reach of Sharia law outside of the Muslim majority areas. Sharia districts are designed to manage civil matters, particularly for Muslim communities but not criminal cases, which remain under the authority of national courts. However, the nationwide spread of Sharia courts has sparked concerns among non-Muslim communities, especially Christians. With the Philippines being predominantly Christian, the expansion of Sharia courts has raised questions about religious pluralism and how these courts will coexist with the country's secular judicial system. Christian leaders have expressed apprehension about the potential for this expansion to deepen religious divides in regions where both Christians and Muslims reside. The presence of these courts in predominantly Christian regions could create social and political tensions, particularly in areas where interfaith relations have historically been delicate. For Muslim communities, expansion is seen as a positive step toward greater self-determination. Christian leaders are urging the government to provide clear guidelines and ensure that the expanded Sharia system does not affect non-Muslims.

—Persecution.org

North Korea's Violations of Human Rights

A new report finds "unparalleled violations of human rights" in North Korea. The report finds that "the Kim regime continues to act with flagrant disregard for international standards and citizens face unparalleled violations of human rights, including of the right to freedom of religion or belief." It finds that there has been no improvement in the last ten years. It states that "there is no freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief in North Korea, and any citizen who expresses an opinion or a belief which differs from the regime's propaganda faces severe punishment." It adds that punishment for offenses such as possessing a Bible may include torture, detention in brutal political prison camps, forced labor, or even execution. While all religions face repression, Christianity is particularly targeted, probably due to the extent to which it counters Juche, the official state ideology. A country expert explained that when Kim Jung Un succeeded his father, he was deeply concerned that if Christianity took root in a meaningful way, it had a great capacity for explosive growth...so he turned the screws down as hard as he could.

—ChurchInChains.ie



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

The Life of Rev. G.H. Kersten as Told to His Grandchildren (6)

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

Saved from a concentration camp *(continued)*

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

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.

When my father left, I brought him back to the station, taking my own bike to accompany him. As I neared home, I had a flat tire, so I brought it to the bicycle shop to have it fixed. The owner of the shop, who also had been a soldier, was in a busy conversation with an official of the city hall about an exemption from going to the concentration camp. I was highly interested in this conversation, of course, and said, “Excuse me, but what is this all about?”

“Oh,” the official answered, “all the members of the Fire Brigade may be exempt from going to Germany.”

“Oh,” I said, “place me on that list, too, please.”

“Well, let us go to the mayor, maybe...” “Burgomaster, Mr. Kersten would like to be in the Fire Brigade, is that possible?”

“I would like to help you,” he said to me, “but we received express orders from the German authorities not to make any alterations in the list of the members of the Fire Brigade.”

“Can you not make one exception for Mr. Kersten?” the official pleaded. “It would keep him in the country.”

It was about 5:30 P.M. The burgomaster looked at his watch and said: “This is what I will do for you. If the Chief of the Dutch Firearms in Arnhem approves of it, I will place your name on the list. Go and see him tonight. You can still make it. I’ll call him up for you.”

A ray of hope flashed through me. Thanking the burgomaster, I rushed home, had something to eat, and left for the bus to Arnhem.

“Mr. Kersten, what can I do for you?” Dr. R. asked.

“Please put my name on the membership list of the Fire Brigade.”

“You? I wonder if you know how to handle a fire hose.”

I laughed a little, but then he asked me: “Have you served in the army?” “Yes, sir, I was a lieutenant.”

“Aha, you want to be placed on the list to be exempt from being sent to Germany.” “Yes, sir, that is the very reason.”

“I don’t know, I don’t know.”

“Sir, I’ll tell you something. My wife is Scottish. You don’t want me to leave her and the baby behind, do you?”

“Uh...no. Now...okay then; tell the burgomaster that I agree with it.”

“Thank you, very, very much.” The next day, Saturday, the six members of the Fire Brigade and I went to The Hague where we received the proof of exemption and I was freed from going to the concentration camp. With that signed proof—a special card, I went to my father in Rotterdam. When I showed him my exemption card, tears of joy filled his eyes. At the table he prayed: “Lord, Thou hast not put to shame the hope we had in Thee that Thou wouldst give deliverance.” If we by faith may put our trust in the Lord, He shall confirm it, that we shall not be ashamed (Psalm 25:20).

Now I would like to tell you about something that happened to me. A great help—about another wonder, namely, that it pleased the Lord to give the same words your grandfather received, in the heart of one of His children in Leiden, the place where we were living at this time, during the last war years.

A brother and sister, John and Marie, lived on a farm just outside of our town. They hardly associated with anyone. They never went to church either

because experiential truth could not be heard in the only church of the town. Marie longed for that truth because she was no stranger of the work of grace in her heart. Therefore, John and she spent the Lord's Day reading the sermons of godly forefathers at home.

It was 1943. All of Holland was occupied. The Germans had become irritable and fierce because of many sneaky attacks made upon them by the Underground. These attacks consisted of such actions as throwing tacks and nails on the roads, causing flat tires, and placing TBC (tuberculosis) bacteria in cans in canning factories where meats were processed mostly for export to Germany, etc. I will give you an example of the irritability of the Germans. One day, four German officers passed the cemetery by car. They suddenly stopped and read the words printed on a piece of cardboard fixed to the gate of the cemetery: "Reserved for the German Army!"

"What?" they shouted, "That is an offense to our army." An officer stepped to the gate, snatched the board off and looked furiously at a man who just passed by.

"Halt," he snarled at him, and pointing to the board said, "Who hung this board on the gate of the cemetery?"

"How should I know?"

"It is an offense to the army; they'll pay for it. Where is the town hall?"

The man pointed in the direction of the building, and off they drove, to the man's relief. It was about 7:00 P.M. The doors of the town hall were closed.

"Halt," one of the officers growled at a passerby. "Where does the mayor live?" He told them.

They inquired at the mayor's house, "Are you the mayor?"

"Yes," he answered timidly.

Then putting the board under the mayor's nose, he bellowed: "Who stuck this board to the cemetery gate?"

"I don't know, officer. I did not even know it had been placed there."

"You as mayor ought to know. It is an offense to the army which cannot be tolerated. Don't you know who did it?"

"No, I don't."

"Then mention three men who could be guilty."

After some thinking, the mayor mentioned three men. The officers drove up to their houses, took them by great surprise, and had them sent to a German prison camp where they stayed until the end of the war.

After this incident, the mayor asked me to come and see him. "You know," he began, "that the Germans are getting more vicious against the English and their sympathizers. The incident that occurred a few days

ago can happen again. A few men were lifted from their beds in the night, as you know, and brought to Germany. Still worried that I would be sent to the prison camps in the night, he said, "Would it not be better if you spend your nights in someone else's house?"

I thanked the mayor for the hint, but where was I to go? My attention was drawn to that godly woman, Marie, who lived as I told you with her brother John on a farm just outside of town. I had never met her but knew that she feared God. That was the place where I would like to spend nights, but knowing how they avoided contact with others, I did not have courage to ask them the favor of lodging me. I consulted a friend of ours as to what he thought of the idea. "Knowing them," he answered, "I would say there is no sense in even asking them, but it is up to you."

However, I could not dismiss the idea from my mind. John and Marie were constantly on my mind so that on a Saturday I took my bike and went to ask them. I had no hope whatsoever. Now mark the wonder of the Lord. When I arrived at the farm, I saw to my surprise that the front door was slightly opened!

"Hello," I called through the door opening... and who came to meet me? It was Marie.

"Come right in," she said, "I knew you were coming. Therefore, I left the front door open. Come in and follow me."

(To be continued)



Map of the Netherlands during World War II (1945)



Bible Stories for Little Ones

David and Mephibosheth

(Based on 2 Samuel 9)

One day, David sat thinking about his dear friend Jonathan who had been killed in the battle against the Philistines, the same battle in which Saul had been killed. How he missed Jonathan! Jonathan loved God as David did, and they understood each other.

David remembered how many years before he had made a covenant of friendship with Jonathan and had promised to show kindness to Jonathan's family even after he was dead. He wondered if Jonathan had any family left alive. If there were, then he could do something kind for them. It would fulfill his promise and show how much he loved their father.

David asked if any of Saul's family were still alive. One of his men said, "There is a servant of the house of Saul, named Ziba. Why don't you ask him? He should certainly know."

Soon Ziba was standing before King David. "Do you know if Saul has any family left yet?" David asked.

"Yes, O king, he does," replied Ziba. "Jonathan had a son, who is living in the house of Machir, in Lodebar. He once fell, and both his legs were broken, so he is lame."

This was enough for David, and he commanded his servants to bring the man to him. Jonathan's son probably trembled with fear when he heard the news. King David wanted to see him! Saul had been David's enemy, and he, Mephibosheth, was Saul's grandchild. Now David was the new king, and new kings often killed the family of the former king.

What else could he expect? He was not very important. Even his name meant "a shameful thing." He was quite helpless since he couldn't use his legs. People had to carry him wherever he wanted to go. He hadn't been very old when that had happened, either. His nurse had been running away from the Philistines with him during the battle in which his father had been killed, and she had dropped him. From then on, he had been lame.

Now King David wanted to see him. How Mephibosheth must have trembled! What would such a powerful king do to a weak, helpless cripple like him?

Finally, the servants were ready to bring him to David, and soon he was standing in front of the king. Mephibosheth bowed low before David; he didn't dare to look up. He bowed down with his face to the ground. He didn't know what to expect.

Then he heard one word. David said, "Mephibosheth." The lame man looked up. What? The king was not

angry! His face was kind and loving! He was smiling.

"Here is your servant," whispered Mephibosheth, and then he listened with wonder in his heart as David spoke; these were not words of death, but of life!

"Don't be afraid," David said. "I am going to be kind to you because of your father, Jonathan. I am going to give you all the lands that belonged to your grandfather, Saul; you shall eat with me and my house for the rest of your life."

"O king! Who am I, that you are doing such a wonderful thing to me?" cried Mephibosheth. "I'm no better than a dead dog!"

Then David called Ziba over. "Mephibosheth gets all the land of Saul," he told Ziba. "You and your sons will farm the land for him, but Mephibosheth is to eat with me just like the rest of my children. His son may come here, too."

Thus, the wonderful thing happened. It was better than Mephibosheth had ever dreamed! Ziba and his sons obeyed him just as they obeyed the king! Even though he never could walk, he had David's promise that he would be provided for from David's table.

This story reminds us of another covenant which was made many years before this one. It is the covenant of grace made from eternity by God with the Lord Jesus as Mediator. In that covenant He promised to provide His people, who are, by nature, spiritually "lame Mephibosheths," with blessings for Jesus' sake. These blessings are not just daily food and drink but blessings which shall be provided throughout eternity. We know that God spoke of this covenant to Abraham many centuries ago, and He still speaks of it to His people today. It is a surer word of promise than that promise of David, and we often sing of it at the time of baptism from Psalter 425:

*Jehovah's truth will stand forever,
His covenant-bonds He will not sever;
The word of grace which He commands
To thousand generations stands;
The covenant made in days of old
With Abraham He doth uphold.*

In His Word, the Lord also calls to boys and girls, as well as adults, to come unto Him with all their needs. Because of our fall in Paradise, we, too, live far from God, but may the Lord, by His Holy Spirit, bring you and me into His presence and provide us with His eternal blessings, for Jesus' sake.



Bible Quiz

Burial

Dear Boys and Girls,

"I'm sorry, but I can't come by today," a message from my neighbor read. "My grandfather passed away suddenly."

A week later, I saw her and asked her about her grandfather.

"He was 102 years old," she explained. "He lived a colorful, beautiful life, so we aren't mourning; we are celebrating his life. That's the way he wanted it: a celebration; it was like a party!" She laughed merrily.

"That's how he wanted it..." Yes...but that poor man did not know that death is final and that he needed a new heart in this life....

A week later, my uncle passed away. Deep family ties were cut off by death; his family would miss him. They would miss his prayers.

Messages spoke not only of the empty place he left behind but also of the joy that awaited him—death for my uncle was a passageway into eternal life.

Thoughts multiplied—death is solemn. It is a calling to each one of us. We need to be prepared for the day of our death which will, one day, come to us, too.

The obituaries of my uncle did not speak of celebrating life with a party; they were solemn, containing a quiet sorrow, a need for the Lord's comfort, and a hope for eternal life.

His funeral held a message: the Lord had given grace with which to live and die; his time was past, but we may still hear a calling from God's Word.

What a difference there was in these two funerals! Two men were being buried; but how sad...one of them had never heard that life and death are not a party. He had never heard that we were created to serve God and that we have fallen away from God. He had never learned that he needed to be restored and renewed.

Funeral processions can be quite different, too. There is mourning, but different cultures and different circumstances contribute to varying processions. Some are escorted by police to honor their service to the country; there may be a special car, or the people may walk in the procession. Some are silent while elsewhere, the people wail loudly. However, all are solemn. Death is a solemn matter—do we see it?

Yes, when a child of God is buried, there can be a quiet peace, or a quiet joy, but that joy goes toward God; it does not end in the celebration of a man. It can be that others can almost see how that child of God is now delivered and singing before the throne, but that person's life on earth remains nothing but a "body of death." It is nothing to celebrate.

What about us? Yes, you are young, but you have heard often enough that the old must die but the young *can* die. Seek the Lord and ask Him to prepare you to meet Him!

"They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave" (Job 21:13).

"For in death there is no remembrance of Thee: in the grave who shall give Thee thanks?" (Psalm 6:5).

* * * * *

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the _____ shall hear His voice," (John 5).

2. "For the grave cannot praise Thee, death can not celebrate Thee: they that go down into the pit cannot _____ for Thy truth" (Isaiah 38).

3. "If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say, that an untimely _____ is better than he" (Ecclesiastes 6).

4. "Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of _____ shall never be renowned" (Isaiah 14).

5. "He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the _____ of Jerusalem" (Jeremiah 22).

6. "For in that she hath _____ this ointment on My body, she did it for My burial" (Matthew 26).

7. "She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint My body to the _____" (Mark 14).

8. "Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of My burying hath she _____ this" (John 12).

9. "And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the LORD God of Israel in the _____ of Jeroboam" (1 Kings 14).

For the Older Children

Follow the directions below. If done correctly, you should have "three in a row" in your square.

10. "And the prophet took up the carcase of _____, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him" (1 Kings 13). — Place an O over the correct answer in the box.

11. "And devout men carried _____ to his burial, and made great lamentation over him" (Acts 8). — Place an X over the correct answer in the box.

12. "Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it" (John 11). — Place an O over the correct answer in the box.

13. "And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him" (Genesis 37). — Place an X over the correct answer in the box.

14. "So _____ slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings; for they said, He is a leper: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead" (2 Chronicles 26). — Place an O over the correct answer in the box.

15. "Then took they the body of _____, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury" (John 19). — Place an X over the correct answer in the box.

16. "And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of _____: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of _____, he revived, and stood up on his feet" (2 Kings 13). — Place an O over the correct answer in the box.

17. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, _____, I say unto thee, Arise" (Luke 7). — Place an X over the correct answer in the box.

18. "And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before _____. And king David himself followed the bier"

(2 Samuel 3). — Place an O over the correct answer in the box.

Young Man (Widow's Son)	Jesus	Elisha
Man of God (Prophet)	Stephen	Lazarus
Uzziah	Abner	Jacob

For the Younger Children

Color the picture of Abram and Sarai on their journey.



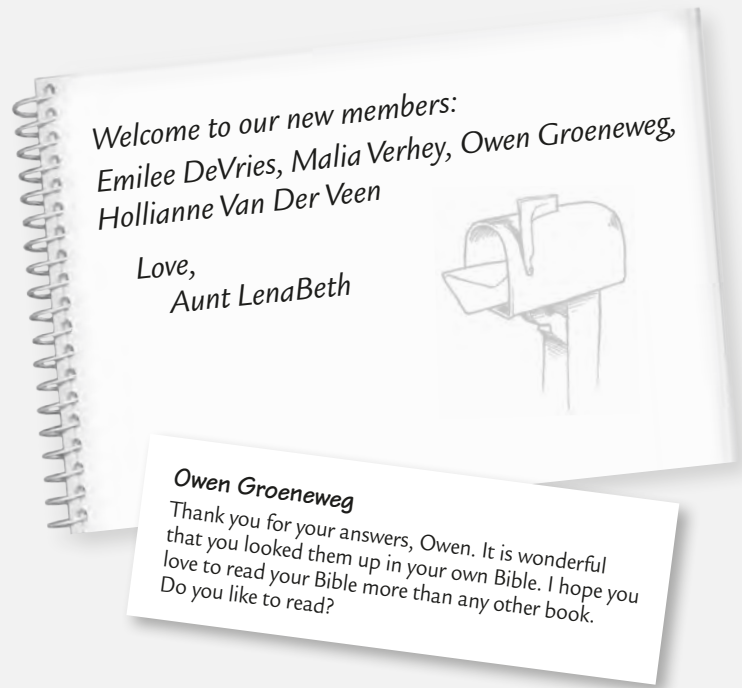
19. Write Genesis 23:1&2 on the lines and circle the words in the verse which answer the following questions:

- a) How old did Sarah become?
- b) Where did she die?
- c) Who mourned for her?

* * * * *

Answers to October's "Earthquakes" quiz:

- 1. Wind 1 Kings 19:11
- 2. Feared Matthew 27:54
- 2D. Famines Matthew 24:7
- 3. Uzziah Zechariah 14:5
- 4. Troubles Mark 13:8
- 4D. Tempest Isaiah 29:6
- 5. Jereboam Amos 1:1
- 6. Behold Matthew 28:2
- 7. C
- 8. D
- 9. A
- 10. B
- 11. E
- 12. great earthquakes, famines, pestilences;
fearful sights and great signs (vs.11)
- 13. The prison doors opened and the bands
fell off (vs.26)
- 14. When the LORD descended upon it in fire
(vs.18)
- 15. The host, the field, all the people, the garrison,
and the spoilers (vs.15)
- 16. Quake
- 17. Mountains
- 18. Earth
- 19. Trembled
- 20. Shook
- 21. Tremble
- 22. Shaken
- 23. Thou
- 24. Hills
- 25. Lord



Please send your answers to the address shown below:
 Aunt LenaBeth
 180 Jacobs Road, Newfoundland, NJ 07435
 E-mail: auntlenabeth@gmail.com

Answers to previous quizzes were received in September from:

- | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Clay Bakker | Kaylynn Ekema | Isaiah Spaans (2) |
| Kyle Bouman (4) | Owen Groeneweg | Wilson Spaans (2) |
| Aryanna Breeuweg (2) | Abe Mol | Brandon Ten Hove |
| Carly Brouwer | Teddy Mol | Hannah-Jo Ten Hove |
| Derek Brouwer | Madeline Mol | Hollianne Van Der Veen |
| Thomas Brouwer | Zachary Mol | Janessa Van Wingerden (2) |
| Brooklyn DeJager | Carter Neels | Taylina Van Wingerden (2) |
| Laurel DeJager | Blake Pannekoek | Joanna Verhoef |
| Emilee DeVries | Lauren Pannekoek | Malia Verhey |
| Allison Ekema | Nevaeh Rozeboom | Nathan Verhey |

*Oft as the bell, with solemn toll,
Speaks the departure of a soul,
Let each one ask himself, "Am I
Prepared, should I be called to die?"*

*Only this frail and fleeting breath
Preserves me with the jaws of death;
Soon as it fails, at once I'm gone,
And plunged into a world unknown.*

*Then, leaving all I loved below,
To God's tribunal I must go;
Must hear the Judge pronounce my fate,
And fix my everlasting state.*

*Lord Jesus! help me now to flee,
And seek my hope alone in Thee;
Apply Thy blood, Thy Spirit give,
Subdue my sin, and let me live.*

*Then, when the solemn bell I hear,
If saved from guilt, I need not fear;
Now would the thought alarming be,
Perhaps it next may toll for me.*

—John Newton

News & Announcements

■ Ministerial Calls

Extended:

To Rev. M.H. Schot of Hendrik-Ido-Ambacht, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Chilliwack, British Columbia.

To Rev. J.J. Witvoet of Rock Valley, Iowa, by the congregation of Nobleford, Alberta.

Declined:

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

By Rev. E. Hakvoort of Norwich, Ontario, to the congregation of Kalamazoo, Michigan.

By Rev. P.C. Vlot of Krabbendijke, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Sioux Center, Iowa.

By Rev. J.J. Witvoet of Rock Valley, Iowa, to the congregation of Franklin Lakes, New Jersey.

■ Obituaries

LOEDEMANN, Heather Arjette – Age 14, September 10, 2024; Diamond City, Alberta; Parents – Rein & Lorraine; Siblings – Walter & Daneka, Sherilyn, Jason, Bradley, Steven, Janelle, Melissa; Grandparents – Aalt Loedeman, Anneke Slingerland; numerous uncles, aunts and cousins; predeceased by grandfather Kees Slingerland, grandmother Aartje Loedeman, and uncle Brian Slingerland. (Rev. E.C. Adams, Job 6:2-4a.)

SCHEP, Geertje (Gerry) – Age 90, September 27, 2024; Agassiz, British Columbia; Husband – Henry; Children – Rita & Dan Brunski, Wilma & Clarence Bisschop, Veronica & Bob Korotkov, Gordon & Viola; 9 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren; also survived by 1 brother and 2 sisters in the Netherlands. (Rev. J. den Hoed, Psalm 37:18.)

VAN BEEK, Gerard Edward (Gerry) – Age 52, September 27, 2024; Norwich, Ontario; Wife – Adriana Martina (“Amy,” nee Rozendaal); Children – Jennifer & Wayne Van Harten, Corneil, Matthew, Jeffrey, Kevin, Trevor, Nathan, Arianna, Ryan; 3 grandchildren; Mother – Klazina Van Beek; Father-in-law – Jake Rozendaal; predeceased by father Cornelis Van Beek, mother-in-law Jeannette Rozendaal, brothers, sisters, brothers-in-law, and sisters-in-law. (Rev. H. de Leeuw, Ecclesiastes 3:14.)

■ 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). The deadline to sign up is December 7, 2024.

■ 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 Lord has given us a table
at which to feast, not an altar on
which a victim is to be offered;
He has not consecrated priests
to make sacrifice, but servants
to distribute the sacred feast.

—John Calvin

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.**

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

1. **Title of Publication:**
The Banner of Truth
- A. **Publication Number:** USPS 041-540
2. **Date of Filing:** 1 October 2024
3. **Frequency of Issue:** Monthly
- 4-5. **Location of Publication:**
The Netherlands Reformed
Congregations of the United States
and Canada
3 Joseph Court
Hackettstown, NJ 07840-4664
6. **Publisher:**
The Netherlands Reformed
Congregations of the United States
and Canada
James Okken. *Managing Editor*
3 Joseph Court
Hackettstown, NJ 07840-4664

Editor:

Rev. J. den Hoed
972 Hemlock Loop, Lynden, WA 98264

Managing Editor:

James Okken
3 Joseph Court
Hackettstown, NJ 07840-4664

Subscription Manager:

Mike Greendyk
2 Krasco Road
Oak Ridge, NJ 07438

7. Owner:

The Netherlands Reformed
Congregations of the United States
and Canada
3 Joseph Court
Hackettstown, NJ 07840-4664

8. **Known bondholders, mortgages, and other security holders owning or holding one percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities:** None

Total Number of Copies Printed:

3,200 per month — 38,400 per year

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

— Editor

Brief Report of the NRC Synod of 2024

On Tuesday evening, September 17, 2024, the prayer service for the Synod was led by Rev. A.H. Verhoef in the church of Grand Rapids Covell Avenue. His text was Acts 20:28, *“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.”* The theme was Paul’s exhortation to the Ephesian elders, with the following thoughts: 1. A double charge; 2. A holy appointment; 3. A solemn reminder.

The next day, September 18, Synod was opened by Rev. H. de Leeuw, minister of the calling church of NRC Brant County. His opening meditation included Psalm 81:10, *“I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.”* Many significant events since the last synod have taken place. Candidate P. Kleijer has been ordained as minister of Lethbridge. Some office bearers have gone the way of all flesh, others are no longer an office bearer, others have commemorated an anniversary.

The following moderamen were chosen: Rev. A.H. Verhoef, chairman; Rev. J.J. Witvoet, vice chairman; Rev. E. Hakvoort, first clerk; Elder J. van Brugge, second clerk, and Elder W. Grisnich, treasurer. Rev. W. Harinck and Rev. G.P. van Nieuw Amerongen from the Gereformeerde Gemeenten, our Dutch sister denomination, and Rev. M. Rojas from the Iglesia Reformada de Bolivia were invited to be non-voting advisory members.

Rev. G.P. van Nieuw Amerongen received the opportunity to convey the greetings from our sister denomination. He spoke about the brotherly bond that exists already for many years and referred to the words of Nehemiah 1, *“And prosper, I pray Thee, Thy servant this day.”* Rev. M. Rojas brought heartfelt greetings from the denomination in Bolivia. He expressed that it is a great wonder that the Lord is willing to use weak, sinful people. He wished the meeting the Lord’s blessing, and that everything may be done decently and in order.

The various appointments to the Synod Committees have already been distributed to the congregations. The following is a brief summary of additional points discussed:

- In the future, the Synod will need to appoint the instructors of the Netherlands Reformed Theological School. The three current instructors were approved by majority vote.
- The Synod approved the recommendation of the North American General Mission that a missionary minister needs to remain on the mission field for at least seven years, due to the time and effort necessary to learn the culture and language.
- Synod decided to commence a Committee Regarding Mission Work among the Jews. The charitable organization Ezra for Israel (EFI) will be taken over including the name, and the *Israel* magazine. This committee will closely work together with the Board for Israel from our sister denomination. In due time they can possibly expand their work to evangelizing among the many Jews in cities in North America. Members on this new committee were chosen: Rev. H. de Leeuw, Rev. J. Slingerland (Rev. E.M. Maljaars as alternate),

Elder W. Grisnich, Elder S. Mol, Deacon B. van Maanen, and as additional members H. Arnoldussen and K. Vis.

- The Synod discussed and approved the report of the committee regarding Embryo Adoption. This committee was requested to provide Biblical information and to prepare a pastoral letter that can be sent out to the congregations. This proposed pastoral letter was approved and will be sent out by the moderamen to the congregations. Synod also decided to make a brochure available to our members regarding more detailed IVF and Embryo Adoption information, which will also include more details of the Synod decision.
- Synod decided to form a committee to review and update the current appeal procedures. Rev. A.H. Verhoef and Rev. J.J. Witvoet will provide a report at the next synod.
- Synod also decided to review the updated version of the Church Order and the book entitled *With Order*, which have been adopted by the General Synod of our sister denomination in the Netherlands. A committee was formed, consisting of Rev. A.H. Verhoef, Rev. E. Hakvoort, Elder H. de Kok and Elder W. Grisnich who will review and translate the books and provide a report to the next Synod.
- The Synod reviewed a classical point regarding the funding of deposed ministers. A committee was set up to formulate a policy on this matter and submit it for Synod review and approval. A previous decision regarding the reading of sermons of deposed ministers was upheld, as they no longer hold the teaching office.
- While the Synod met in executive closed session, a confidential request was reviewed and decided upon. In addition, an appeal case was heard and decided upon.
- In order to save cost for printing and shipping, in the future only delegates of the Synod will receive a copy of the finalized minutes, along with all ministers and one copy for each consistory. In the past all consistory members received a copy of the minutes. It was also confirmed at the meeting that the moderamen of each Classis and Synod should approve the minutes of the meeting that was held.
- The next Synod will be called together by the Lethbridge consistory and hopefully will be held in the Grand Rapids Covell Avenue church on September 16 and 17, 2026, DV. Rev. E. Hakvoort hopes to conduct the prayer service on Tuesday, September 15, DV.

At the end of the meeting, some heartfelt words were spoken by the chairman. Rev. J.J. Witvoet then acknowledged the chairman, wished everyone the Lord’s indispensable blessing, and closed the meeting with the singing of Psalter 345 and prayer.

It was good to meet together in peace and unity, as the delegates considered all the needs in our denomination. The needs are manifold, but may we all be found as unworthy beggars at the throne of grace, sighing for the Lord’s undeserved mercy. May the Lord crown all the labors in the individual congregations with His indispensable blessing.

—The Moderamen

The Sword Given to the Saints

Can we go against sin and Satan with a better weapon than Christ used to vanquish the tempter with? Certainly Christ did it to set us an example how we should come armed into the field against them, for Christ could with one beam shot from His deity (if He had pleased to exert it) have as easily laid the bold fiend prostrate at His foot as afterward He did them that came to attack Him. He chose rather to conceal the majesty of His divinity and let Satan come up closer to Him, that so He might confound him with the Word and thereby give a proof of that sword of His saints which He was to leave them for their defense against the same enemy.

—William Gurnall

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

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@ecs.school.ca. Please send applications to the secretary of the school board, Mr. G. Brouwer, 1372 Gregory Road N., St. Catharines, Ontario, L2R 6P9 or call 647-271-8984, or email gerry@ecs.school.ca

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

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

To All Candidates for Education Positions

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

User Name:

advertising@nrcea.education

Password: **SchoolJobs!**

Teachers/Assistants

CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, COAL-HURST, ALBERTA, invites inquiries from elementary or secondary teachers for the coming school year. Teacher applicants must be eligible for Alberta certification. We are also seeking educational assistants and have openings for several support positions (custodian, transportation safety coordinator, technical support). Please visit www.ccs.school.ca/employment for a current listing of available positions. Applicants must be members of the NRC or a closely-related denomination. Any inquiries should be directed to the principal, Mr. Marc Slingerland, at 403-381-3030 or inquiries@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 for a teacher and a 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@ecs.school.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@ecs.school.ca

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

EMMANUEL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, LYNDEN, WASHINGTON, invites applications for teachers at the elementary, middle, or high school level. To apply or request more information, please contact the administrator, Ms. Beth Bleeker, at bbleeker@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.

Reasons to Meditate on the Word of God

The Word of God we are to meditate on, to meditate on God and the things of God upon this account. Now here are four things that will lead you out to meditation: the exactness of the commandment; the faithfulness of the promise; the terror of the threatening; and the weightiness of the examples, all which meet in the Scriptures and in the Word of God. Accordingly we are to meditate on the Word of God upon this account.

—William Bridge

From **THE BANNER OF TRUTH**
Publication Number (USPS 041-540)
2 Krasco Road
Oak Ridge, NJ 07438

Shortness of Life and Goodness of God

Time! what an empty vapor 'tis!
And days how swift they are!
Swift as an Indian arrow flies,
Or like a shooting star.

[The present moments just appear,
Then slide away in haste,
That we can never say, "They're here,"
But only say "They're past."]

[Our life is ever on the wing,
And death is ever nigh;
The moment when our lives begin,
We all begin to die.]

Yet, mighty God! our fleeting days
Thy lasting favors share;
Yet with the bounties of Thy grace,
Thou load'st the rolling year.

'Tis sovereign mercy finds us food,
And we are clothed with love;
While grace stands pointing out the road
That leads our souls above.

His goodness runs an endless round;
All glory to the Lord!
His mercy never knows a bound;
And be His name adored.

Thus we begin the lasting song,
And, when we close our eyes,
Let the next age Thy praise prolong
Till time and nature dies.

—Isaac Watts

the
Banner
of Truth

November 2024
Volume 90, No. 11

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