

the Banner of Truth

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The Official Periodical
of the Netherlands Reformed
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Jesus' Death on the Cross
Onesimus, a Runaway Slave

For our young readers...

The New King
Fire



*"Therefore will I save My flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle.
And I will set up one Shepherd over them, and He shall feed them...and He shall be their Shepherd." EZEKIEL 34:22&23*



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Meditation

Quaking and Rending

Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Rock Valley, IA

“And the earth did quake, and the rocks rent”
(Matthew 27:51b).

And the earth did quake

It pleased God to accompany the death of His Son with powerful and miraculous signs. Not only were there signs seen in the heavens and in the sanctuary—the three hours of darkness and the rending of the veil—Matthew also records that which affected the earth, *“And the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.”* Earthquakes in the Bible are associated with the judgments and coming of the Lord. The fountains of the great deep were broken up at the destruction of the first world. Mount Sinai quaked greatly because the Lord descended upon it. We learn from the psalmist upon his deliverance from the enemy, *“Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because He was wroth.”* The Lord came with His judgment by way of earthquakes in the time of King Uzziah and the prophet Amos. From Revelation we learn, upon the pouring out of the last vial of God’s wrath, that there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth. Yes, there was an earthquake when the Lord Jesus arose, so that the keepers also did shake and became as dead men, but also the earth trembled and shook upon the death of Christ. This, no doubt, was to convict and convince some that stood about the cross that truly this was the Son of God (Matthew 27:54 and Luke 23:48).

Have we thus been convinced? Oh, how it speaks of the awful judgment against sin and the sinner. When Cain slew his brother, we read, *“And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother’s blood from thy hand.”* God is just. Man has brought the curse upon himself and likewise upon the earth. He is of the first Adam who has lost God’s image and, therefore, is of the earth earthy. His wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish (James 3:15). Yea, his heart is as the adamant (hard and immovable) stones of the earth (Zechariah 7:12).

Yet now, is it no wonder that the immovable earth is reeling? Whose lifeless form hangs there between heaven and earth? It is He who formed the earth and made it, and in so doing declared, *“I am the LORD; and there is none else”* (Isaiah 45:18b). It is that of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven (1 Corinthians 15:47). It is He who is the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of His Person, who upholds the earth and all things therein by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3). It is also the same One, who in Gethsemane became as a writhing “earthworm”

and no man. It is He, who here upon Golgotha, no longer has a place on the earth. It is He under whom the earth has again opened her mouth to receive the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh of better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:24).

Have we received a view of the awfulness of sin? Have we felt the trembling earth under our feet because of our sins? Have we considered our sins and the curse due to us for them, to the end that we have learned to abhor and humble ourselves before God? Have we considered that the wrath of God against sin is so great, that rather than it should go unpunished, He hath punished the same in His beloved Son Jesus Christ with the bitter and shameful death of the cross? Oh, how the trembling earth at the death of His Son speaks of the descending and unbending justice of God! Is it then no wonder that the earth quakes? Here the God-man hangs as a curse between heaven and earth to satisfy the justice of the Father for guilty sinners. Oh, wonder of wonders for the Church! *“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree”* (Galatians 3:13).

And the rocks rent

The earthquake was not without effect. The evangelist records, *“And the rocks rent.”* It is said by some today that outside of Jerusalem, at the supposed site of the crucifixion, there is clear evidence of such an earthquake by the unnatural but noticeable splits in the rocks. We can have little doubt that this is true, and no doubt it moves the feelings of many. However, let it be enough that the Bible says it is so, and dwell rather on whether the proofs can be found in our own heart. It will be a far greater wonder to those, like it became for the centurion, when their own rocky heart is rent at a view by faith of the crucified Christ as the Just for the unjust.

Ah, friend, has your rocky heart been thus rent? Have you learned to tremble and quake upon the discovering and conviction of sin? If considering the punishment of sin in the spotless Son of God does not make you do so, what more shall be said to you? Oh, how adamant is your heart! How then shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

“And the rocks rent.” We read also that by such a rending of the rocks the graves were opened, and the many bodies of the saints which slept, arose. For God’s people, their death is but a sleep. Their Redeemer has conquered not only death but also the grave. Soon He will come again, as John saw Him between heaven and earth, not hanging

upon the cross but upon His throne. The earth shall then quake and the heavens shall tremble, but for His Church there will be a great deliverance: “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him” (1 Thessalonians 4:14). For His

enemies, though they say to the reeling mountains and rocks, “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,” it will be to no avail. “For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Revelation 6:16&17). □



Bible Study

The Names of the Mediator (16)

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

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

Lord

*“Which in His times He shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and **Lord** of lords”* (1 Timothy 6:15).

The first name in this text is the name “Potentate.” This name is “Dynastēs” in the Greek and means Ruler or Officer. This name reminds us of the word “dynasty.” The name “Lord” in Greek reads “Kyrios” and means Owner, Possessor. Scripture knows yet another name for “Lord”: the name “Despotes,” which means Lord, Master, absolute Ruler. We will confine ourselves to the name “Kyrios.” This name occurs over six hundred times in the New Testament. The name Kyrios has the same meaning as the Hebrew word “Adonai.” This name indicates a relationship of authority between the Mediator and those who are His. Paul knew himself to be a “doulos” (slave) of this Kyrios.

The Mediator is called the Lord of lords here. This indicates that there were more who called themselves lord. Some Roman emperors allowed themselves to be worshipped more or less like gods. When one addressed them, the title “Kyrios” had to be used. The Christians objected to this because they recognized only one Kyrios as Lord.

We cannot describe the meaning of this name any better than we find it described in Lord’s Day 13 of the Heidelberg Catechism. There the question is asked, “Wherefore callest thou Him our Lord?” The answer is: “Because He hath redeemed us, both soul and body, from all our sins, not with gold or silver, but with His precious blood, and hath delivered us from all the power of the devil; and thus, hath made us His own property.” It is so clear from our Heidelberg Catechism that the name Lord contains unspeakable riches for those who may learn to spell this name by faith. After all, the only comfort both in life and death is to be able to know oneself to be the property of the Lord.

With the name “Lord,” we may think of the former slavery. Slaves changed owners for a certain price. Thus, the elect have been purchased by Christ and have changed owners

by His application. The price was not silver or gold but His precious blood. Have we already come to know ourselves as a slave of sin? (Romans 6:16&17). We have willfully fallen toward Satan and chosen him as our owner. He is a merciless lord.

The Kyrios has entered the court of that strong man armed to spoil his house. How He brings His own to the experiential knowledge of this name you can see in the life of Thomas. With the appearance after Easter, he called Him, “My Kyrios.” May you know that, too? How true it is what the poet sings:

*Both rich and poor, both bond and free,
Shall worship Him with bended knee,
And children’s children shall proclaim
The glorious honor of His Name.
All earth to Him her homage brings,
The Lord of lords, the King of kings.*

—Psalter 49:3

—May 13, 2010, Rev. A. Schot

Man

*“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the **Man** Christ Jesus”* (1 Timothy 2:5).

Some of Christ’s names refer to His offices. Other names refer to His states or benefits. Again, other names pertain to His natures. One of these names asks our attention here.

The Mediator is Man and is not ashamed to bear that name. He calls Himself “the Son of man.” Paul wrote in the context of this text about the salvation of different kinds of people. Among them are kings and those who are in authority. For a sinner to be saved, a Mediator is needed. How else could these two unequal parties come together? There must be a divider between these two who can lay hands on both. The Mediator had to be partaker of the divine nature and the human nature. He must be able to lay His hand on a holy God on the one hand and on a damnable

sinner on the other. Well, Christ is God and Man. Paul did not go into the divine nature here. This is elaborated elsewhere. Here the emphasis falls on His human nature only.

Through one man sin entered into the world and death by sin. Now God's justice demands that payment should be made by man. Neither an angel nor an animal could give a ransom. Sin was committed with body and soul and needed to be paid with body and soul. Where can one find such a One who is able to pay, who is willing to pay, and who is going to pay?

The Mediator Jesus Christ is Man. He is very Man, conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the virgin Mary. He has assumed her flesh and blood. He is the true seed of David, made like unto His brethren in all things, sin excepted. We ourselves were completely passive in our incarnation, but the birth of Christ was an act. He voluntarily came to assume the human nature.

This Mediator is also perfectly righteous Man. Nowhere is a perfectly righteous person to be found on earth. Adam was the first and at the same time the last perfectly righteous one on earth. Here we are pointed to the last Adam. He came to restore what the first Adam corrupted. Man's origin begins in his conception. We are shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin, but this Man's conception and birth were holy and pure. The Mediator is also eternal Man. His incarnation had a beginning but has no end. He will never lay down His body and soul. Soon His own will be allowed to truly walk with Him on the new earth. Oh, that will be something! Pilate once said, pointing to Him who wore the crown of thorns, "Behold the Man!" Happy are they who may say with John of this Word made flesh, "And we beheld His glory" (John 1:14b). We cannot do with less! How fitting is this Mediator for a completely miserable sinner.

—July 22, 2010, Rev. A. Schot

(To be continued)

Do you complain of a hard heart? The sight of a broken Christ will break your heart, or nothing will.

—William Bridge



A Word in Season

Passion Weeks

Rev. G.J. van Aalst, Nieuw-Beijerland, the Netherlands

(Translated from the March 23, 2017 issue of *De Saambinder*)

You probably know that we call the seven Sundays before Good Friday, Passion Sundays. According to good church custom—no more and no less—we then, in God's house, dwell on the promise and foreshadowing of Zion's Surety in the Old Testament and the announcements and ways of suffering in the New Testament. After all, salvation history is about the *only* ground of salvation in the work of the Mediator. It has been proven so beneficial that, also in the order of salvation, Zion's only ground of salvation thus receives attention in the proclamation of the Word. Meanwhile, with an appeal to the ancient church, there is more and more talk of Lent and even Ash Wednesday and fasting. Let it be clear that the Roman leaven has already invaded the church at an alarming rate. Pharisaism and working our own holiness, which unfortunately appears to be so peculiar to us as church people, should not be encouraged; that is why we have no need for these formalities. However, that does not take away from the meaningfulness of the seven Passion weeks, at least to somewhat "direct" the subjective choice of texts of the minister of the Word and of the elders in the reading services. So, the (silent) contemplation of the suffering of the

Mediator may be promoted on the Lord's Day and beyond.

What is the characteristic of a Passion sermon? This is important for each and every one: for an unregenerate person to hear the only way he can exist before God and how God's Spirit still wants to work that way; and for every newborn person who can never do without the work of the Surety (if it is well). In what is the saving conviction of God's quickening Spirit to be known? Let us just listen to our book of comfort: "*Since then, by the righteous judgment of God, we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, is there no way by which we may escape that punishment and be again received into favor?*" Then follows the so meaningful answer to this contrite sinner. This is the *first* answer in the part of deliverance—pay close attention to this, for it is so essential for the Passion weeks: "**God will have His justice satisfied, and therefore we must make this full satisfaction, either by ourselves or by another**" (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 5). Let question and answer 12 have a central place in our preaching in general, and particularly in these Passion weeks so that Zion's paying Surety will be declared in our hearts. After all, only in this way there will come room for the Other! □

The Mystery of Jesus' Empty Sepulchre

Rev. G. Beens, Kootwijkerbroek, the Netherlands

(Translated from the April 1, 2021 issue of *De Saambinder*)

“He is not here: for He is risen” (Matthew 28:6a).

The impossible happens because God is God. He never did anything else but make the impossible possible. God has paved a way through death, where was no way. In Paradise man ate himself to death, and because of this there is no expectation on man's part. Paul pointed the Ephesians to their former days when he wrote, “...who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1b). Oh, man's awful state of death! Had it remained so after the Fall, it would be lost forever, but over against this stands God's good pleasure. In experiencing the state of death, God's good pleasure takes on an inexpressible value for a quickened soul.

Jesus' empty sepulchre preaches to us the work of a triune God. That is a mystery of salvation. How does a person find out what this great mystery is? It is not a matter of the mind but of saving faith. The life of faith is a flesh-crucifying life because it goes straight through death to life.

A mysterious path

The women experienced something of this. Their names were known by God. They were known from eternity already. These women were found by God in the time and were made known with what was already known from eternity. God's work flows from eternity.

The women had been made acquainted with Jesus. They had been allowed to follow Him in a way of humiliation. That is a mysterious path, for Zion must be redeemed with judgment. Had they known what they needed to know, the secret would not have been so great for them. It, however, is an immense mystery when Jesus goes to the heights through the depths. That is the way the Father had set before Him in eternity. After all, the law had to be disarmed of its curse. When does a cursing law go silent? The law loses its condemning power only through the blood of the Mediator. Is it not a miracle when a person receives light over this? Otherwise, we talk about it, but we understand nothing of it.

The Holy Spirit led the women down a dead-end road. In the early morning, they went to the sepulchre and thought to find a dead Jesus there, to whom they could still show some labor of love. However, they came from one impossibility into another. First, they talked about the stone which they would not be able to roll away. Once they approached the sepulchre, they saw that the stone had been rolled away already. Also, there were no more guards present because

God had made the impossible possible. This sepulchre was no longer a grave because Jesus was no longer in it. What is a grave without a deceased person?

Thy people's sins...

Death had departed. God the Father had been ahead of these women. He had extended His finger to the earth, as it were, not to destroy it but to raise His beloved Son from the dead and from the grave. It had been Good Friday, now had come the day of life of which the poet sang, “Thy people's sins Thou pardoned hast.” Christ carried the burden of guilt of His Church to the hill of crucifixion Golgotha and suffered God's punishment for sins. He underwent the threefold death whereby God's justice had been satisfied, and God's violated virtues were glorified. God's justice had been revealed, especially in the three-hour darkness, when Christ had cried out, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

God makes the impossible possible in and through Christ. Did the women understand all this? Ah, the mystery only became greater for them. What Christ has merited through His suffering and death, He certainly applies. “For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2 Corinthians 1:20). This mystery

is learned on the way to the sepulchre—brought to Jesus' empty grave and not understanding the mystery of His life—not being a stranger to the promises of God in Christ Jesus and not knowing how they are ever to be fulfilled. God makes the impossible possible; He always works in a way of a miracle. My unconverted fellow traveler to an all-decisive eternity, God always works in the way of a miracle. That is the only hope. Is it not a miracle if God wants to have dealings with us?

Instruction in the wonder

At the empty sepulchre, the women received instruction about the miracle by way of the message of a heavenly messenger: “He is not here...” You thought you would find a dead Jesus here. With all their intended labor of love, these women were completely set outside. That is a lesson in the life of faith! A person is saved by grace only; nothing from us counts. It is not at all about our love toward Jesus, but it is about His love toward us. That love flows from God's eternal good pleasure and is given to the soul in a way of justice and righteousness. That will make up the wonder in the life of the Church.

*God makes the impossible possible;
He always works in a way of a miracle.
My unconverted fellow traveler to an
all-decisive eternity, God always works in
the way of a miracle. That is the only hope.
Is it not a miracle if God wants to have
dealings with us?*

Receiving a message at the empty grave from a heavenly messenger, a message with a great mystery—who will understand that mystery? This is only possible through the Holy Spirit. “The meek will He guide in judgment.” God the Father cannot relinquish His justice; He will execute justice. This mystery is experienced at the sepulchre. Christ glorified His Father’s justice. Of this the Father gave testimony through a heavenly messenger: “He is not here...” He has left the grave. He swallowed up death in victory.

Oh, women, had you understood this precious mystery of salvation that God makes the impossible possible for ones who are guilty unto death, so many riddles would have been solved. In and through Christ, God the Father can and will still have to do with such damnable people. In Christ, God the Father can again express Himself in love to such miserable people.

Blessed instruction

“He is not here: for He is risen.” He was dead, but He lives to all eternity. He lives for the good of His Church, to grant all that He has merited, fulfilling all promises which are in Him and through Him so that the soul may have a

triune God as its portion because in Him and through Him the guilt is taken away. That is a precious mystery.

Oh, to be taught that great mystery—to know Him, not only in His deep humiliation, where He was debtor to the justice of God, but also to know Him in His glorious exaltation, where He is the acquitted One by the justice of God. Then the Father grants Him in the soul. It is a wonder if something of this may be experienced. It is blessed instruction in which the soul is made eager for salvation. “Blest he to whom Jehovah imputeth not his sin.” Then that wonderful, heavenly peace is enjoyed—peace with God! He has made the impossible possible. There is no end to delighting in a triune God, here in commencement and hereafter perfectly—to be thus brought to the sepulchre with the women. He has left the linen clothes behind; He has left death behind; He has left the sins of His Church behind; and now they receive the proofs of it. Then God receives the glory and the soul receives salvation.

*Yea, the secret of Jehovah
Is with those who fear His Name;
With His friends in tender mercy
He His covenant will maintain. □*



From Our Inheritance

Jesus' Death on the Cross

Rev. A. Vergunst (1926-1981)

(Translated from the April 11, 1974 issue of *De Saambinder*)

“Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost” (Matthew 27:50).

This scripture verse is full of blessed instruction. First of all, we are pointed to the Person who acted here. His name is Jesus. Has any other name with richer content and greater meaning ever been announced on earth? Is not this name wholly unique, yes, the truly one name, given under heaven whereby we must be saved? Never shall the time be too long to make known the glory of that name, and never shall eternity be too long to advance the greatness of that name. Saviour is the meaning of that name, and therein lies the very nature of Jesus’ work. That name was given to Him by His Father’s command, for He would perform that work of salvation in His Father’s Name.

Surely, it is the eternal will of God to save sinners from the lineage of Adam. The moving cause for this lies in God’s free and sovereign election. The Lord delights in the salvation of those elected by Him to eternal life. Man is completely excluded from that; there all glory on man’s side is already excluded. In this the Church of the Lord will already find matter for adoration. When God’s people are

allowed to look by faith to the moving cause of their salvation, then wonderment will fill their heart, and the song will be sung in their heart: “Why me, since so many perish, to whom Thou showest no mercy?”

How adorable, also, the way in which the course of that good pleasure of God is revealed. To this end the name Jesus is preached on earth. This shows the Lord’s wisdom because the Lord reveals His righteousness and His mercy through *one* Name. In the lifting up of His righteousness lies the lifting up of divine mercy. Of this the cross of Golgotha is a powerful testimony. How the wrath of God discharged itself on Golgotha. Should we not be filled with reverent amazement when the evangelist reveals the events of Golgotha to us? There Jesus hangs on the cross. The guiltless One will be handed over like a lamb to the slaughter. He who did not know sin hangs there for guilty ones, to be subjected to the heat of God’s wrath in their place. How unspeakably great is the magnitude of that wrath of God. Who really knows what this wrath is? Even though the terror of the Lord has moved our hearts to flee to the city of refuge, we have never felt the immense power of

this wrath. No man in this world has ever experienced that.

Only the Anointed of the Father has been in that hour of terror. Three hours of indescribable suffering made Him feel the heat of God's wrath so that He cried out, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Then Christ was in the depths of hell—not that He ever has been in the place of the damned, but He was subject to what the damned will be subject to in eternal perdition. No, we do not believe that Christ ever went to hell to preach freedom and entrance into the eternal state of happiness to the fathers who would be imprisoned there until the day of their freedom. The faithful fathers of old entered on the basis of the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, which He promised to His Father. On the basis of this promise of Christ, they entered into eternal life.

On the cross Christ was in the hellish agonies and distresses, and in pain and terror, to comfort His own in their temptations and to deliver them from all hellish grief and distress. Surely, His name Jesus preaches that He will deliver them from damnation with everything that belongs to it. To this end He was on the cross, to reveal the truth of that name. No matter how much He suffered during the life He lived on this earth, also during the last painful days and hours, His work would not be complete if He did not also die. The justice and truth of God demanded the death of the Surety, who replaced the death-worthy, for otherwise there could be no satisfaction and, therefore, no reconciliation. Now to this our text goes on to point.

Jesus cries out with a great voice and gives up the ghost. Christ died in full consciousness. He did not die through exhaustion of His bodily strength, for then He would not have been able to cry out with a loud voice. The evangelist wants to draw our special attention to this. He died willingly. When He knew that He had accomplished everything He had agreed to with His Father, and what the prophets had foretold of Him, He wanted to die willingly. Never has anyone died like that. Christ willingly wanted to die. He surrendered Himself to death; He overcame at the same time the dominion of death. Death could not overcome Him, for He was pure and guiltless and, therefore, had not made Himself worthy of the wages of sin, but He presents Himself, that in Him the death of all those included in Him might die. He bore the wages of as many as were ordained to eternal life. In His last cry He already declares His victory over death, for death in its fullest form is an eternal destruction.

Christ cries out, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." He knew Himself to be in His Father's favor, for the heat of God's wrath was quenched. With a sure and firm trust in His Father, He entrusted Himself in His hands. Thus, His last word was also a word of victory and, therefore, of consolation.

The congregation has now dwelt again on Christ's sufferings. For a number of weeks, the congregation dwelt on the various events of these Passion histories. However, now we must again ask ourselves the very important question: To what extent have we, by faith, seen preciousness and desirableness in Christ's sufferings? He was the stone "disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious." "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." Now, that is the question of whether He has become precious to us through faith. Christ is this only by faith, and that is the saving faith. The natural man sees nothing desirable in it. The self-righteous man strives to be pleasing to God, which, however, he will never attain, for his righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Then comes the question, but who sees value in it? The answer cannot be other than this: A poor, ashamed, guilty, needy, condemned, and contrite people who, through the Spirit of faith, may behold the fulness in the work of the Surety and obtain a true connection to it. To the degree that the Lord has exercised His own, to that degree He will become amiable to them.

Oh, how sometimes the Church's burden can be lifted when, by precious faith, room is made. During those times there is no lack, and their hearts and mouths may praise the amiability of the Saviour of the Church. At such times they are so joyous in the Lord that they do not fear death. Then they can pass through everything, and their hearts rejoice in the sufficiency and perfection of Zion's Surety and Mediator. This does not always remain so; the days of darkness are many. Sometimes they can no longer see anything of it anymore, and all their previous relations seem to have passed away. However, the solid ground does not lie in their sensitive experiences of the grace of God but in the death and sufficiency of the Lamb of God, in whom the Lord Himself is perfectly well pleased.

The Lord remember also in this week and grant that all His favored ones may rest in that solid ground through faith which deems Him precious. May He by His Spirit and grace make them who still live without Christ a prepared people. From the accursed hill, where the curse was borne and endured, may the blessings of the Almighty also descend into our hearts in such a way that it may be fulfilled in the world:

*The ends of all the earth shall hear
And turn unto the Lord in fear;
All kindreds of the earth shall own
And worship Him as God alone.*

—Psalter 48:5 □

The death of the Son of God is the only and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sin, and is of infinite worth and value, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world.

—*Canons of Dort, Second Head of Doctrine, Article 3*



Commentary

The Distinction Between the Offer of Grace and the Covenant Promises (3)

Rev. A. Moerkerken (1947-2024)

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

Concerning the contents of the covenant promises, Boston, in an extensive passage of his book, distinguishes, on the one hand, the promises of God to Christ alone: for example, the promises of the Lord's assistance in His work (Psalm 89:21), His resurrection from the dead (Psalm 16:10), and God's promise to gloriously reward Him upon His finished work, "the joy that was set before Him" (Hebrews 12:2b).

On the other hand, according to Boston, the covenant promises also include those made by God to Christ's spiritual seed, His elect, which are included in Him because He is the Head of the Covenant. Boston calls each promise "more precious than the gold of Ophir." According to him, all covenant promises made to God's Church can be reduced to the promises of eternal life. This is completely scriptural. Just think of Titus 1:2 and 1 John 2:25, which once was also the promise of the Covenant of Works!

To establish some order in the numerous promises of the covenant, Boston divides them into three time periods: first, the time preceding their union with Christ by faith; second, the time between their union with Christ and death; and third, the promises concerning eternity after death. In a very impressive manner, Boston clarifies this from the Holy Scriptures. The form in which the promises of the covenant to the elect are revealed is quite remarkable. They usually begin with the words "I shall" or "God shall." They are unconditional and in no way dependent on anything in man, but only on the faithfulness of God who has spoken to them.

Thus, we may say that if the Lord promises anything, He also performs it. Neither devil, unbelief, lack of faith, nor sin shall hinder God from fulfilling His promises. So God has promised to keep His bride, His congregation, as long as she continues to be unconverted; to give her His Spirit to regenerate her in the hour of God's good pleasure; to forgive her sin's guilt and wash her from sin's pollution; to give her the gift of perseverance in grace as well as the things belonging to this temporal life; to never leave nor forsake her in the hour of death; and finally, to satisfy her with eternal life in the glory of the redeemed. How blessed are such persons!

Other Scottish theologians

In a striking manner, Thomas Boston's doctrine of the covenant agrees with the other leading Scottish theologians of his day. Rev. A. Vergunst pointed this out in *Keep the Charge of the Lord*. Boston's book about the Covenant of Grace appeared in 1734. Sometime later, in 1753, an exposition of the Shorter Catechism appeared in question-and-answer

form, provided by brothers Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine, and James Fisher. A portion of this book, dealing with the Covenant of Grace was published in Dutch by Rev. G.H. Kersten in 1948. The similarities of view between Boston and the Erskines, regarding the covenant, are striking. Both belonged to the so-called "Marrow men." Boston and his friends owed this notable name to the fierce struggle that erupted in the Scottish church at the beginning of the eighteenth century because of a book entitled *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*. It had been previously published in England in 1646, by a certain Edward Fisher.

The word "modern" should not mislead us since it refers to the "new" doctrine of the Reformation. On becoming acquainted with it, Boston was elated with *The Marrow*. Recently, several reprints of *The Marrow* have been forthcoming in both North America and Holland. The issues brought forward in *The Marrow* deal mainly with the doctrine of the two covenants and the relationship between law and gospel. The Scottish church-historian, J. Cunningham, describes in his church history, how *The Marrow* was condemned by two Scottish synods (in 1720 and 1722) in spite of strong opposition by twelve ministers (the "Marrow men") including Boston and the Erskine brothers. It eventually resulted in a splitting of the Scottish church in 1733.

Let us return to our subject of the book by the Erskines and Fisher. Notably, Rev. G.H. Kersten considered this book (printed in question-and-answer format) to be so important that he published part of it in Dutch shortly before his death.

Rev. A. Vergunst has copied a number of questions and answers from this book for his own previously mentioned book. The similarities between these concise answers and Boston's book are striking. Also, this book has, unfortunately, often been quoted one-sidedly. Questions 83 and 84 are well-known, wherein the authors make a distinction between the right of admission to the promises for the hearers of the gospel, and the right of possession, which is only given through a union with Christ by faith.

Without detracting from this, it also seems useful to me to mention less-quoted answers such as Question 41, where, in response to the question, "Who are they that are represented in the Covenant of Grace?" the answer is given, "The elect of mankind." Also, the answer to Question 76 ("For whom are the promises of the Covenant of Grace?") states, "Such as have their actual and immediate attachment to Christ Himself as Head, or such as have their actual and immediate attachment to the elect who are included with Him, in the covenant." It is as if we hear Boston! □

(To be continued)



Instructive Gleanings

Onesimus, a Runaway Slave (1)

Rev. P. Kleijer, Lethbridge, AB

“Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow-labourer, and to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house”

(Philemon 1:1&2).

Introduction

The Apostle Paul has written many letters. Some of them were doctrinal letters; think especially of his Epistle to the Romans. Some were very practical, for example, those written to the Corinthians. To this congregation he wrote extensively about order in the church. He wrote pastoral letters, like those to the evangelists Timothy and Titus. These also contained much instruction about order in the church.

The letter which the Apostle Paul wrote to Philemon, however, is a personal letter. Also, this short letter is inspired by the Holy Spirit, as is the whole Bible. This letter is of great significance for the Church of all ages. It was written as a result of Onesimus' conversion. In it, Paul pleaded with Philemon to receive Onesimus again. It contains rich spiritual lessons. Have we not all walked away from our rightful Owner and become slaves of Satan? How must we be reconciled to God without a Mediator? What a wonder it becomes when guilty people are uncovered to whom and what they are but are also pointed to the only way of escape. The Lord willing, we hope to go through this letter and will try to find the spiritual lessons that are concealed in it.

A letter to a dear friend

That Paul is the author of Philemon is clear from the introduction in this letter. To his own name, he added the name of Timothy. This may have two reasons. First, there may not be dictators in the church. We must always watch for this. It has ruined and damaged much throughout the ages. Something of this is in all of us, though with one it may be more evident than with others. For all of us, but especially for God's servants, the daily need for the great Prophet, Priest, and King is necessary. We must be kept day by day. The second reason that Timothy's name is added to it is that it gives more weight to the letter. God's Word says, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (2 Corinthians 13:1).

This letter is written to Philemon. The literal meaning of his name is "one who kisses." He was a slave owner, most likely in Colosse, and he appeared to be a wealthy man. He was converted under the preaching of the Apostle Paul. We do not read of Paul that he had ever been in Colosse, but they perhaps met each other in Ephesus, a city close to Colosse. Philemon seemed to have been a leader in the church. This letter is about Onesimus, whose name means "profitable or useful." He was the runaway slave who probably had stolen from his master. Was this because his master was harsh on him? Was it because he was being treated wrongfully? No, this was not the case, but he wanted freedom. We see the same in the parable of the prodigal son. The younger son did not want to stay with his father any longer. His father was so narrow-minded. He wanted to live his own life. Do we not often see the same in our days? Children are leaving the church. We may have different reasons to justify this, but the underlying issue is that church hinders me in the way I want to go. In Rome, where Onesimus thought to have freedom and where no one would know him, a wonder took place. There he came into contact with

May this history give some hope for those who have seen their children going into the world or to a religion of which we must fear that it is nothing more than a man-made religion. We may not be able to reach them, but the Lord is.

the Apostle Paul, and the Lord blessed it. He left his master as a pagan and returned as a Christian. The Lord willing, we hope to hear more of this man in the following articles.

We read in verse 1, "Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ." Paul suffered for Christ's sake. He was

bound and brought to Rome. He had no freedom to go where he wanted, but the Lord still used him in the place where he was. A question comes to you and me: "Are we willing to suffer for Christ's sake?" We need the grace of God to stand; otherwise, we fall for a sour face as Peter did when he denied his Master. Moses, by grace, made the good choice as we read in Hebrews 11:25, "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Young and old, may this be your portion, too.

Paul most likely wrote this letter in the early 60s A.D. He wrote the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians around this same time. As a prisoner he still had some freedom to do his labors. Here we see that although the preacher was bound, God's Word was not.

May this history give some hope for those who have seen their children going into the world or to a religion of which we must fear that it is nothing more than a man-

made religion. We may not be able to reach them, but the Lord is.

Another rich thought lies here. Paul was a prisoner of Jesus Christ. He was not only bound in a literal sense, but he became a prisoner of Christ on the way to Damascus. As a wild beast, he was caught in the net. How happy we are if we may become such a prisoner. These prisoners will never be loosed anymore.

In verse 2, a few other names are mentioned. The first is Apphia. Many think she was Philemon's wife. Her name is mentioned because the case concerned her, also. The second is Archippus who was a minister. We read of him in Colossians 4:17, "And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it." Paul called him his fellow soldier. This is what God's people and servants are called, for they fight under Christ, the Captain of salvation. They have to strive under Christ's banner against a three-headed enemy: Satan, the world,

and their own flesh. They have received the whole armour of God and are more than conquerors through Christ who has loved them. Especially in times of persecution they endure hardness. The question comes to you and me: "Under whose banner are we fighting?" Has Satan's yoke ever become burdensome to you so that you cannot bear it anymore?

Paul speaks of the church in Philemon's house. It is known that the first Christians came together in house churches. It is a great benefit that we may have churches where we can come together, but our houses must be little churches also. Do we still have a family altar? Parents, this is so important. How often do our children hear from us about the service of the Lord? May their souls be bound upon our hearts. When God converts you, the souls of your loved ones will begin to weigh upon you, too. May the Lord give many of those little churches among us. □

(To be continued)



Among All Nations

What Did Augustine Say About Israel?

Rev. J.M.D. de Heer, Rotterdam-IJsselmonde, the Netherlands

(Taken from the book What Our Fathers Said About Israel, Chapter 1)

Dear Readers,

By request of the Ezra for Israel committee and the desire of our Synod, we hope to start a series based on the book What Our Fathers Said About Israel by Rev. J.M.D. de Heer. This book explains what Scripture says and what different church fathers have said about the conversion of the Jews and the need for mission work among them. —Ed.

He is not known as someone who showed much love towards Israel. Indeed, it must be said that Augustine (A.D. 354-430) took up the pen to write against the Jewish people at more than one occasion. Yet, we would not do this church father justice if we call him a despiser of the Jews. This becomes clear when we read his sermon titled, "Adversus Judaeos." Although the word "Adversus" is generally translated to "against," it does not have the negative connotation that we attach to it. "Adversus" in this context simply means the audience that Augustine addressed.

In his sermon, the bishop from Carthage (North Africa) confronts the Jews in a direct and personal manner. He begins by referring to Romans 11:17-24. As a result of their unbelief, the natural branches of the olive tree have been cut off. Nonetheless, Augustine is deeply convinced that the Lord will save some members of the Jewish nation. God is able to engraft them into their own olive tree.

Augustine cannot deny that most of the Jews persevere in their unbelief. "They do not hear what we say because they do not understand what they read." In other words, since they do not understand the Old Testament as a prophecy of Christ, they do not want to listen to the preaching of the Christian church.

Augustine is surprised that the Jews apply several positive utterances and clearly Messianic prophecies to themselves. They—as much as we—should rather apply the rebukes of the prophets to themselves! The church father gives an example of that. When Isaiah says, "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD" (Isaiah 2:5), the Jews will be apt to say that they are meant in this text. Augustine, however, warns them to take note of what follows upon these words. What is it that follows? In verse 6 of the same chapter, the prophet says, "Therefore Thou hast forsaken Thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east." Augustine says, "At this place you must apply this verse to yourselves."

We—as Gentiles—should ask ourselves the question, "Have we already come to this confession?"

Augustine continues by calling on the Jews in a most serious manner: "As you presently have the opportunity to repent, come then at this time! You ought to have done this earlier, but in any case, do not delay it now. The days have

not yet ended for him whose last day has not yet come.”

Evidently, the church father is moved with pity when he quotes a verse from Romans 11, “God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear unto this day” (verse 8). “This light, I repeat, is not in you. That is why you, having been blinded in an exceeding measure, are rejecting the Stone that has been made the Chief Cornerstone. We, therefore, appeal to you to turn to Him that you may be enlightened. What else is turning to Him than believing in Him? Where else must you go if He is the Stone of which the prophet Daniel said that it has grown into a large mountain filling the face of the whole earth?”

At the conclusion of the sermon, the tone of the preacher is very urgent and compassionate: “Do not turn away, but

turn to Him who is proclaimed before your ears. Turn to Him who is glorified before your eyes!”

Does the church still have a calling with respect to the Jewish people? According to Augustine there is no doubt about this. “Whether the Jews hear these things with joy or with indignation, we must, nevertheless, proclaim these matters with love towards them.” With love “and with humility,” the church father adds in a telling manner. “Let us not be proud and boast against the branches that have been broken off, but let us rather realize by whose grace, and with how much mercy, and into which root we have been engrafted.” Grace humbles a person and makes him communicative. That is a scriptural basis for work among the Jewish people. □

(To be continued)



Reflections

Evening Twilight (16)

Rev. P. Blok (1920-2019)

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

Negotiation and Settlement

“It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me” (John 6:45).

In the book of the ancient language of Canaan, we come across many words that only the Holy Spirit teaches us to understand. Let us note that only in the school of the Holy Spirit is this language studied. Man, because of his state of death, without regenerating grace, is unable to grasp the mysteries of this language. Therefore, the bastard language of natural religion shows its enmity against the sovereign instruction of the Holy Spirit. “It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me.” The language of those truly taught by God is unintelligible to religious man. “And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this Man letters, having never learned?” In the time of the Judges, the origin of the tribe was determined by the language one spoke. “Then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right.” The life of grace and the true language of Canaan give a union from God. Their language is the language of my heart.

*O give the Lord wholehearted praise,
To Him thanksgiving I will bring;
With all His people I will raise
My voice and of His glory sing.*

—Psalter 304:1

After Jesus had explained the parable of the seed in the field, the disciples came to Him. “And the disciples came, and said unto Him, Why speakest Thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.”

“Historical faith is a bare assent to the known truth” (Rev. G.H. Kersten). In principle and essence, it is distinct from true saving faith. The knowledge of the Scriptures is indispensable. It is to be feared, seeing the deadly ease and far-reaching insensibility of many who live under the Word of God, that they have no more than such historical faith. Saving faith teaches the secret of negotiation and of settlement. What is this about? The instruction of the Holy Spirit gives true knowledge of God, knowledge of self, and knowledge of Christ. It causes a wonderful relationship with God and His Word. The Holy Scripture is being opened and unlocks secrets of salvation in Christ to a sinner who is broken and crushed by the Law. Thus Ruth, as a poor widow, was allowed to pick up the barley in Boaz’s field and received as a special gift the handfuls from the reapers. The possession received in an honest manner had to be rid of straw and chaff and shown to Naomi. Ruth’s life was known to Boaz, while the meaning of the person of Boaz was still hidden. Of him she was allowed to learn more through the explanation of her exercised mother-in-law. She lived off the goods given by Boaz until the barley harvest and the wheat harvest were ended. To become the property of Boaz, a judicial decision had to take place. Herein she was

entirely passive. "Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day."

"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

We asked the teacher of the old language book¹ a question. How did you learn all this? He answered: "By examining whether my house was built on sand or on a rock. For this the plumbline of God's justice was necessary. That plumbline was in the hand of the Holy Spirit. It showed the inadequacy outside the foundation, Christ. It showed the deficiency and broke down all foundations. The insufficiency of all my soul experiences was pointed out. It did not only teach being guilty to the justice of God but caused to experience being lost altogether. It was a cut-off case from my side.

¹ The "teacher" refers to a random exercised child of God who has learned and been exercised in the language of Canaan.

It pleased the Lord to open my eyes for the necessity of being in Christ. The substitutionary and redeeming labor of Zion's Surety was declared in my heart. 'He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities.'"

Learning, knowing, and understanding God's Word is the work of the Holy Spirit. "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

*How blessed is he whose trespass
Hath freely been forgiv'n,
Whose sin is wholly covered
Before the sight of heav'n.
Blest he to whom Jehovah
Imputeth not his sin,
Who hath a guileless spirit,
Whose heart is true within.*

—Psalter 83:1 □

(To be continued)

Christ Alone

Though one's perception that he possesses grace may be of some comfort, Christ Himself ought to be much more of a comfort to us, for our graces are only the handmaids and servants of Christ. They are marks that originate in Him. In order to go to Christ, one must not only dispense with his works but also with his graces. Do not mistake the friend of the bridegroom to be the Bridegroom Himself. Failure to make this distinction is undoubtedly one of the reasons why God's people are so often in darkness and have no light.

—Anthony Burgess, Faith Seeking Assurance

Curatorium Announcement

The Lord willing, the Curatorium hopes to meet in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on Wednesday, June 4, 2025. At this time Student G.F. Rozeboom is scheduled to take his final exams. At the same meeting, the Curatorium is also available to hear any who may have received an attest from their Consistory, about their conviction concerning a divine calling to the ministry.

Vacant congregations should seek the help of their moderator. Consistories are requested to notify the clerk of the Curatorium as soon as possible if freedom is given to grant an attest. You will then be sent a request for further information. The

applicant is also asked to forward to the clerk, in a timely manner, his own request to be heard by the Curatorium.

May He who watches over His Church be pleased to grant clarity in these most weighty matters, sending forth according to His own good pleasure, saying, "Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:60b).

On behalf of the Curatorium,

Rev. J. den Hoed, *President*

Rev. H.D. den Hollander, *Vice President*
(Acting Clerk)



Questions & Answers

Questions from Our Readers

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

The comment that is often made by people who have left the Dutch Reformed churches (NRC/RCNA/ORC) for a church with a different type of doctrine is that the ministers in the Dutch Reformed Churches do not preach enough Christ. They say that there is so much more of a fullness in Christ than is preached. How would you refute this statement?

This question came from a recent youth get-together which was held in the East, and—as was done in the past—due to time constraints several questions were left unanswered and forwarded to my desk for an answer. In all honesty, answering these types of questions is not my chief delight—not because there is no answer but because in a discussion of these matters so easily a wrong spirit creeps in, both in asking as well as in answering. May we be kept from presumption both in looking towards ourselves as well as others. It is a solemn thought to be a preacher as well as to be hearer. Still, I believe we owe an answer to our young people because they are often confronted with questions and discussions like these. Therefore, I will make a feeble attempt to respond as follows:

1. I fully agree with the last statement made in the question asked. There is always more of a fullness in Christ than what is preached, but who can judge that rightly? *“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled”* (Matthew 5:6).
2. Let every hearer who is under the preaching of the Word take heed to **how** he listens. The times we live in have become extremely vocal and judgmental when it comes to **how** and **what** a minister has to preach. What worries me in all this is that no one seems to remember what Christ Himself foretold us about the last days of this dispensation: “Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not” (Matthew 24:23).
3. Perhaps every preacher, when accused of not preaching Christ, instead of fleeing into the defense-mode ought to take the lower or lowest place by doing what we read in the parable of the Great Supper, in Luke

14:21a. *“So that servant came, and showed his lord these things...”* Ultimately the servant is responsible to his Lord and Sender and not to man.

4. We need to be aware of and warned against the prevailing thought today that preacher or hearer seems to randomly be able to judge what it is to preach Christ. Consider only how shocking it was for the hearers in Christ’s days on earth when He preached Himself and, consequently, met with immense enmity and opposition (see John 6 and many similar instances). Most of the time this opposition came from those whose righteousness did not exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees and scribes. The preaching of Christ crucified remains also today foolishness to the Greek and a stumblingblock to the Jew, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:23&24).
5. Related to the above, we may well ask the question if “preaching Christ” in whatever denomination always refers to the same Christ. He is the Saviour, yes, but when He saves, do we know from what He saves and how? Recently, I read a clear statement in one of the works of Rev. Moerkerken, which, I believe states the work of Christ very clearly. “The dying of the Substitute is the life of the Church, and the life of the Substitute means the dying of His people.” See John 12:25. I hope this deep mystery comes to the foreground when we preach Christ. If it does, my last point becomes reality as well.
6. Where Christ is rightly preached, the sinner will be abased to the lowest and the work of a Triune God exalted to the highest. If this happens by the Spirit’s light and guidance, there remains little room for man to say anything but to bow in guilt and confession, begging the Lord to have mercy upon the greatest of sinners. I hope there are many such beggars among our readership and membership. □

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

Great was the work of Creation, but greater was the work of redemption. Great wisdom was seen in making us—but more miraculous wisdom in saving us. Great power was seen in bringing us out of nothing—but greater power in helping us when we were worse than nothing. In the Creation, God gave us ourselves; in the redemption, He gave us Himself.

—Thomas Watson



Current Events

As Expected, There Still Is Danger in Syria

A congresswoman's warning to the Senate on Syria proves true as the al Qaeda-linked regime who took power there is slaughtering minorities. Al Qaeda-linked terror forces aligned with Syria's interim new president—a former al Qaeda terrorist—are being accused of massacring Alawites (a different sect of Islam) as well as members of the country's dwindling Christian community. In early March, Syrian security forces and affiliated gunmen have killed more than three-hundred forty civilians, the majority of them from the Alawite minority. Confirmed reports state that the Islamist forces murdered the prominent Alawite eighty-six-year-old cleric and his son. A sizable Christian population living in the area has also reportedly been under attack. It has been reported that a young family, including their infant child, were also killed. Elsewhere, a Christian father and son were executed. Israel also has a concern here. Their defense minister said, "Israel will defend itself against any threat from Syria. We will remain in the security zones and Mount Hermon and protect the communities of the Golan and Galilee. We will ensure that southern Syria remains demilitarized and free of threats, and we will protect the local Druze population (a non-Muslim religious people)—anyone who harms them will face our response." The Syrian Alawites now want Israel to protect them too. The former Syrian president was toppled in December; he was a member of the Alawite minority.

—FoxNews.com

In India Christians Protest Anti-Conversion Law

In early March nearly two-hundred thousand Christians in a north-eastern state in India peacefully protested a proposal to implement an anti-conversion law that had remained dormant for forty-five years. There was an act in October 1978 to safeguard the traditional religious practices of indigenous communities from external influence or coercion, but it was never implemented. Now, in September 2024, a high court gave the government an ultimatum to draft the rules by March 2024 to implement the act. More than 30% of this state's population is Christian. While the Christians reject enactment, the members of other faiths have extended their support of the anti-conversion law. They in turn launched a counter-rally and demanded its early adoption, they also organized a foot march to show support. It may be noted that these members are probably concerned about the increase of the Christian population in the state. Meanwhile, Christians warned that this enforcement would create hatred among people of different faiths.

—Persecution.org

Two Christians Rearrested in Iran

Two Christians were rearrested in Iran amid a recent spate of detentions. Recent Christian arrests include two believers in their sixties who have previously spent time in prison for their faith. Several other believers are also in detention. In early February, security agents raided the homes of these two men and transferred them to Tehran's notorious Evin Prison under no specific charges. One, a Christian convert, was previously

sentenced in 2017 to ten years in prison for "acting against national security through the formation and establishment of illegal house churches." He was released in 2022 after serving nearly five years. Following his rearrest, he is said to be on a hunger strike to protest the illegality of his detention. The other man served over a year of a two-year sentence in 2023, also for involvement in house churches. This latest crackdown appears to be another contravention of a ruling made by the Iranian Supreme Court in 2021 that involvement in house churches, or even the propagation of what was referred to as the "Evangelical Zionist sect," should not be considered an "action against national security."

—OpenDoorsUK.org

Residents Reject Plans to Build a Church

Muslim residents in the Southeast Sulawesi province of Indonesia held a demonstration in front of the sub-district office in early March to reject the construction of a church in the area. The application for the construction of the church was submitted in early February. The deliberation regarding the planned construction of the church nearly ended in chaos as many residents rejected the plan to build the house of worship. The deliberation resulted in a decision to reject the church's construction. Last Christmas, Christians there held their Christmas service in the police hall because they did not have a church building. The police have also provided facilities for other Christians to worship.

—Persecution.org

Prosecuted under Abortion Buffer Zone Laws

A retired pastor is being prosecuted for an alleged breach of an abortion clinic buffer zone in Northern Ireland. A former Baptist pastor was cautioned after holding an open-air service on John 3:16 on the edges of an abortion clinic buffer zone near a hospital. The seventy-six-year-old was later informed that he was being charged with two counts of breaking the Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Act. He is due before the court charged with allegedly seeking to "influence" people accessing abortion services at the hospital and for failing to leave the area immediately after being asked to do so by police. A deputy from the organization defending the pastor, called the prosecution "an outrageous restriction on freedom of religion and freedom of speech." He said that the buffer zone had effectively been used "to outlaw the gospel," and that the police and Public Prosecution Service were "overstepping the mark." "Should a law designed to stop abortion protests be used to criminalize gospel preaching?" he asked. He continued, "It's just not reasonable or rational to suggest that preaching the gospel, with no reference to abortion, is a protest against abortion." This service was held on a Sunday, with about a dozen people in attendance, on a patch of grass separated from the hospital by a dual carriageway (two sides of a highway), but the police summons says he "conducted a protest" to try to "influence" patients or staff attending the abortion clinic. If convicted, the grandfather of seven could be fined thousands of pounds.

—ChristianToday.com

If you are in doubt concerning your state, do not expect an extraordinary affirmation of it by an immediate witness of God's Spirit. I admit that God occasionally grants a pervasive sense of peace to the soul... We must be content with His ordinary instruction, consolations, and communications of His grace.

—John Owen, Exposition of Psalm 130



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

The Life of Rev. G.H. Kersten as Told to His Grandchildren (11)

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

Later political career

In the first part on your grandfather's political career, I tried to paint for you the difficulties and experienced enmity connected with defending the principles laid down in the Word of God. The opposition against him from the side of government, other members of Parliament, and last, but not least, the press, was strong and often discouraging. However, there were other far more hurtful events from within the Party—difficulties caused by his own Party-members.

There were two prominent members of our Party who strongly desired to become members of Parliament. Therefore, they wanted to be placed on the top of the official list of candidates for the election. They never saw their desires fulfilled and thus grew bitter. During the war they began to make secret opposition against your grandfather to prevent him from ever becoming party leader or member of Parliament again after the war. (During the German occupation all political parties were dissolved.) What was the accusation the opposition could launch against your grandfather? It was not because of his defense of the principles in Parliament from 1922-1940—they knew they could not do that—but only this false accusation: that he was pro-German during the German occupation (1940-1945).

This accusation demands some explanation. Shortly after the German invasion, the question arose among the Dutch: Must we accept this occupation without opposition, or must we do all we can to drive out the enemy? The majority were of the opinion to never acquiesce in the occupation by a foreign power, cost what it may! The minority was of the conviction that the German occupation was a judgment of the Lord upon the country because of our sins, the forsaking of the Lord, and the refusal to walk in His ways. Now, your grandfather was of the last opinion. In conversations, and from the pulpit, he warned

the people not to take up arms against the Germans but to bow under the punishing hand of the Lord.

This standpoint, namely, to bow under God's judgments, was a weapon in the hands of some of his enemies and even former friends, to accuse him of being pro-German. Let us find out what he said about this burning question. Shortly after the heavy bombardment of Rotterdam, while preaching from Zechariah 1:8 ("I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white"), Rev. Kersten said the following in the application:

"Were we privileged to see God's hand in the judgments upon our deeply-sunk fatherland, when the war broke out and our skies were black with enemy planes; when a foreign army occupied our country; when the bombs shook our houses, collapsing them into ruin, whereby hundreds of people lost their lives? What an appalling horror overcame us! But...have we learned to bow under God, acknowledging His righteous judgment, and adore His Majesty? Many do not see God's Hand in the might of them that overpowered us. Oh, I exhort you in all earnestness, as I have been doing incessantly. Submit yourselves, bow before the High God, be still, since the powers that overcame us were according to God's eternal justice. I wish to make myself free of everyone who hears me—yes, of the whole population, so that when further suppression comes, you will not say that you never warned us. Your heart's bitterness will break if you may acknowledge God's judgment as being righteous. We, with all God's faithful servants, must testify against sin, and we were obliged to announce the coming judgments. Should we then, seeing our debt and general hardening, not acknowledge that God is righteous? Man may rail us for being pro-German, as if we were a traitor, but the Lord is our witness

that we speak for the welfare of our country. Oh, that we may, bowing under the rod wherewith God has smitten, find refuge in Him for time and eternity! We might find mercy, and He might liberate our country in His time. Poor people who, full of bitterness, bite on the stone and go on in their way with stiff necks!

“Should we not, on the ruins of the destroyed cities, cry out with Jeremiah: ‘It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not?’ Shall we resist God any longer? How long yet shall our Dutch people hold to ways of sin? Yes, how long? Oh, land, hear the Word of the Lord before hardening leads to destitution. Oh, that it may become our language: ‘Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up!’”

After the war, the first meeting of the Party members was held in Utrecht. Your grandfather did not know how strong the opposition would be against him. Would the majority of the two thousand people

who met in Utrecht turn their backs on him? The morning before leaving for the great meeting, he bowed his knees and laid his needs before the Lord, the all-knowing God. Oh, children, what a relief your grandfather experienced inwardly when the Lord spoke to him these words out of Psalm 84:11b: “The Lord will give grace and glory!” I remember it as if it happened yesterday, that he came to me obviously rejoicing in what the Lord had spoken saying: “Oh, Sam, the Lord will undertake for me today, He shall give grace and honor.” (I thought, happy Father! Read 1 Samuel 2:1.) Now see how the Lord confirmed His Word. The building of the opposition came down like a house of cards. Even one of the opposition leaders changed completely and openly defended your grandfather. That first party-congress after the war was unforgettable; the Lord undertook for him.

Now he is out of reach of the enemies and is in that place where no lying or slandering tongue shall ever be able to rob him of his eternal joy in the Lord.

(This installment marks the end of this series.)



Bible Stories for Little Ones

The New King

(Based on 1 Kings 1&2)

Many years had passed since King David was a shepherd boy singing psalms to his God. Now he was old and ready to die. Did you read carefully? David was ready to die. Everyone will die, but David was ready to die. Not everyone is ready!

David knew he did not have to worry about what would happen in his kingdom after he died. God had told him that his son Solomon would be the next king, and God never lies! How glad David must have been to know that Solomon was chosen by God!

However, one day someone came into his room. It was Bathsheba, Solomon’s mother. She had bad news.

“Oh, king!” she cried. “Something terrible is happening! Do you remember that you told me that Solomon would reign after you? Well, now Adonijah is making himself king!”

Who was Adonijah? He was a brother of Absalom, the man who had hung himself as he rode under a tree. Adonijah was the son born right after Absalom. Since Absalom was dead, Adonijah was next in line to be king. At least, that is what he thought. Yet, he

must have heard many times that God had said that his younger brother, Solomon, would be the next king! Many years later Jesus Christ Himself would be born from the sons of Solomon.

Adonijah decided he was not going to wait to be made king. His father was about to die, so if Adonijah wanted to take the throne, this was the time! So he killed sheep and oxen and cattle and made a big feast ready. He got Joab, the captain of David’s army, and Abiathar, the priest, and many other men to help him. He did not ask Nathan, the prophet what he thought; he knew what Nathan would say about his idea, and he did not ask David’s friends, either. Certainly, he would not ask his brother Solomon to come to his feast. No one could stop Adonijah now; he would be the next king!

Never forget that you cannot hide from God. His eyes are fixed on you. The prophet Nathan heard what Adonijah was doing. Quickly he went to tell Bathsheba.

“You should tell the king what is happening!” he told her. “Otherwise, you and Solomon will both be

killed when Adonijah becomes king! Right after you tell David, I will come in and tell him the same thing so that he will know that it is true.”

And that is what Bathsheba did.

“My lord,” she said as she told her story, “Look at what is happening—Adonijah is making himself king! All Israel is waiting for you to tell them who shall sit on your throne.”

Then Nathan came to the door as he had promised. He told David the same story that Bathsheba had just told.

David called for Bathsheba again. “I promised you that Solomon would be king after me,” he told her, “And so he shall!”

Then David gave orders to make Solomon king. “Make my mule ready,” he said. “Get Solomon ready, and let him ride on the mule down the streets of the city. Then have Nathan the prophet and Zadok the priest anoint him king over Israel. Blow the trumpets and cry out, ‘God save King Solomon! God save King Solomon!’”

That is what happened. Nathan and Zadok and one of David’s mighty men got Solomon ready and led him through the city on the royal mule. Thus, Solomon was anointed king!

Meanwhile, at the feast Adonijah was so happy. This was his feast, and it was just about time to announce that he was the new king! Suddenly, Joab stopped him.

“What is all that noise I hear?” Joab asked. “Listen—do you hear it? Trumpets! Singing! What is happening?”

Just then Abiathar’s son arrived. “Come in” cried Adonijah. “You are just the one to ask; what is all that noise we hear outside?”

Now when Adonijah heard the man’s answer, he was no longer happy. Suddenly, he was afraid. If Solomon was now king, then he and Joab were Solomon’s enemies and would be killed!

All the guests jumped up from their seats and hurried out the door. Adonijah also ran from the feast. He went to the tabernacle and hung onto the horns of the altar. This was done in those days to show that a person wanted mercy or forgiveness.

Someone told Solomon that Adonijah was holding the horns of the altar. They told him, “Adonijah wants you to promise that you will not kill him.”

Solomon was a kind man. “I promise not to kill him,” he said. “He may go home, but if he ever causes trouble again, he will be killed.”

A short time later, when David was about to die, he called his son Solomon to him and begged him to follow the Lord God of Israel. He also talked to him about ways to deal with some of the problems in Israel.

After David had died, Adonijah had another idea. He decided he would marry Abishag, the maid who had taken care of his father David in his last frail days. So Adonijah asked Bathsheba about it. She didn’t see anything wrong with the idea, so she asked Solomon for his permission for Adonijah to marry Abishag.

God had given Solomon much wisdom, and so, he could see through Adonijah’s plan. This was just another way for Adonijah to claim the throne! No, he could not marry Abishag!

“And not only that,” Solomon declared, “because Adonijah asked such a thing and tried to get the throne again, this time he must be killed!”

And so, he was.

When Joab heard that Solomon had commanded Adonijah to be killed, he also ran and grabbed the horns of the altar, just as Adonijah had done. He was hoping for mercy, but it was no use, Solomon also had Joab killed. David had wanted Solomon to do this because Joab had killed people against David’s approval. Since he had been a good captain for David, he was given a decent burial.

Abiathar, the priest who had been at Adonijah’s feast, was very afraid that he would also be killed, but Solomon spared his life. However, Abiathar could no longer be a priest.

Everyone could see that Solomon was going to be a good king. It was not because his father was so good. It also was not because he himself was so special, but he had the Lord for his God, and he walked in the way that was pleasing in God’s sight.



Anointed King Solomon on David's mule is led through the city.



Bible Quiz

Fire

Dear Boys and Girls,

"Why are there so many firetrucks on our street?" My children peered out of the windows as we pulled into our driveway. "Look, Mom, a helicopter dropping water!"

We soon found out. A forest fire was raging across the street. Weeks went by before the fire was considered completely out; meanwhile, another fire began on the other side of our house, and news arrived of more fires within a half hour drive from us.

Everywhere people went, everywhere people lived, they could smell the fires. Thousands of acres of brush and wood were burned. When the wind began to blow, the fires spread rapidly. The firefighters worked hard day and night. Everyone longed for rain, but the rain did not come. How small the best efforts were over against the wild flames which hungrily devoured everything in sight.

Fire is powerful. Fire is difficult to stop. Fire is sure to destroy everything it touches.

In the Bible, the picture of fire is used for several things. God's judgment—His punishment of sin—is sometimes described as fire, but the opposite is also true—God's saving work, worked by the Holy Spirit, is also described as fire. Even God's presence is sometimes represented by fire.

Sometimes, God's punishment came in the actual form of fire. Think of Sodom and Gomorrah. Fire rained down from heaven onto these wicked cities. Think of the two groups of fifty soldiers who came to capture Elijah. Fire from heaven consumed every one of them. We can also think of God's judgment upon sin as being just as a fire—it is powerful and sure to destroy. "How long...shall Thy wrath burn like fire?" (Psalm 89:46).

Not only is God's anger and punishment as a fire but so is His Spirit's work in the heart of a sinner. How? Well, God's work cannot be stopped. It is irresistible. It is powerful, so powerful that it changes a person from hating God to loving God with his whole heart. Just as a fire is able to burn away and purify, so the Holy Spirit works to cleanse the black heart of a sinner and makes it new.

We read of a fire in a burning bush, in a pillar of cloud, and in tongues as of fire on the apostles' heads. These events of which the Bible speaks tell us of God's presence, power, and glory. When Moses saw the burning bush, he knew God was in the bush and that the ground was holy. When the Israelites saw the pillar of fire in the sky at night, they knew that the Lord was going before them to lead the way and would stay with them through the dark night. When others saw the tongues as of fire on the day of Pentecost, they knew and felt that God the Holy Spirit had come to be with them and be their Comforter.

Do you see in how many ways God can be described as a fire? The Lord often uses examples, like little pictures, to teach us and show us something of God's greatness. We can only ever learn a little of this because God is SO great. When the wind blows, or the sun shines, or a forest fire cannot be stopped, do you see the power of God?

Then think of what that power means...It can save, and it can destroy. One day, we all have to come before God's judgment seat. Then He will know if we have ever received that powerful work of God in our heart, or if we were careless and unconcerned. Were you never afraid of the fire of God's wrath, and have you never needed that fire of the Holy Spirit to work in, renew, and cleanse your heart? Ask the Lord to begin a work in your heart before it is too late!

* * * * *

Use the word for each picture below to fill in the blanks.



1. "And when Paul had gathered a bundle of _____, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand." (Acts 28)

2. "And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the _____ burned with fire, and the _____ was not consumed." (Exodus 3)

3. "And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the _____ for a burnt offering?" (Genesis 22)

4. "Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the _____, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench." (1 Kings 18)

5. "Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the _____." (Matthew 17)

Unscramble.

6. "And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small _____ (civeo)."

7. "Who can stand before His indignation? and who can abide in the _____ (ensferceis) of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him."

8. "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good _____ (turif) is hewn down, and cast into the fire."

9. "Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His _____ (htawe) into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

10. "As therefore the tares are gathered and _____ (eunbrd) in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world."

11. "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of _____ (erntua); and it is set on fire of hell."

12. "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto _____ (eipras) and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ"

13. "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's _____ (wkro) of what sort it is."

For the Older Children

A wall of fire round about

A brand plucked out of the fire

And she shall be devoured with fire

Complete the verses with the phrases above. Each verse is found in Zechariah. Place the chapter and text number behind each verse.

14. "For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her _____" (____:____)

15. "Behold, the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea; _____." (____:____)

16. "And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this _____?" (____:____)

For the Younger Children

"Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let Him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken [...] Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, He is the God; the LORD, He is the God."

17. What things did the fire that came down consume? _____

18. When this happened, what did it show the people? _____

19. Complete the picture below by drawing the bullock and fire on the altar.



Answers to March's "Guard" quiz:

1. Suffered Acts 28:16
2. King Jeremiah 52:26
3. City Jeremiah 39:9
4. Jerusalem Nehemiah 4:22
5. Three 2 Samuel 23:23
6. Back 1 Kings 14:28
7. Smote 2 Kings 10:25
8. Corner 2 Kings 11:11
9. Thirty 1 Chronicles 11:25
10. Again 2 Chronicles 12:11
11. Eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet, mind
12. Joseph, Potiphar
13. Genesis 3:6
14. Psalm 141:3
15. Proverbs 17:4
16. James 4:8
17. Titus 2:5
18. 1 Kings 8:61

Answers to previous quizzes were received in February from:

Aryanna Breeweg (2)
 Carly Brouwer
 Thomas Brouwer
 Maya Chase (4)
 Oakley Chase (4)
 Jan DeKorne
 Joel DeKorne
 Lynnette DeKorne
 Melanie DeKorne
 Eva den Bok
 Hudson den Bok
 Jordan Driesse
 Kailyn Driesse
 Lindsey Driesse
 Allison Ekema
 Kaylynn Ekema
 Samantha Grisnich
 Kate Hoogendoorn
 Jarynne Knibbe
 Elizabeth Kooyman
 Krysten Kooyman

Abe Mol
 Teddy Mol
 Andrew Murphy
 John Murphy
 Blake Pannekoek
 Cassadee Pannekoek
 Lauren Pannekoek
 Lynee Ruissen
 Lydia Ruissen
 Collin Rus
 Kaela Rus (2)
 Lakia Rus
 Brogan Spaans
 Tessa Spaans
 Caleb Van Koeveringe (2)
 Lucas Van Koeveringe (2)
 Patrick Van Koeveringe (2)
 Kaiven Van Middendorp
 Konner Van Middendorp (2)
 Kiela Van Ravenswaay
 Winston Van Ravenswaay

Eli Vande Waerdt
 Joelle Vande Waerdt
 Sophia Vande Waerdt
 Wyatt Vande Waerdt
 Levi Vander Waal (2)
 Helen Verhoef
 Shara Verhoef
 Caleb Vogelaar
 Matthew Vogelaar
 Keegan Weeda
 Jayden Weeda
 Whitney Ymker

Welcome to our new members:
 Levi VanderWaal, Lynee & Lydia Ruissen
 Love,
 Aunt LenaBeth

Levi VanderWaal

Thank you for your note, Levi. I look forward to receiving your answers each month. You did a good job! Do you like school? What is your favorite part of the school day? Did you get a lot of snow this winter in Chilliwack? There is a little prayer in one of the psalms/psalters about snow: "Wash me whiter than the snow." That is a good prayer to pray, isn't it?



Please send your answers to the address shown below:

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

Our Life Is Uncertain

What is your life? "It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14b). God wisely left us in the dark concerning future events, and even concerning the duration of life itself. We know not what shall be on the morrow; we may know what we intend to do and to be, but a thousand things may happen to prevent us. We are not sure of life itself, since it is but as a vapor, something in appearance, but nothing solid nor certain, easily scattered and gone. We can fix the hour and minute of the sun's rising and setting tomorrow, but we cannot fix the certain time of a vapor being scattered; such is our life: it appears but for a little time, and then vanisheth away; it vanisheth as to this world, but there is a life that will continue in the other world; and, since this life is so uncertain, it concerns us all to prepare and lay up in store for that to come.

—Matthew Henry

News & Announcements

■ Ministerial Calls

Extended:

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

To Rev. H.A. van Zetten of Nieuw-Beijerland, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Sioux Center, Iowa.

To Rev. P.C. Vlot of Krabbendijke, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Franklin Lakes, New Jersey.

To Rev. J.J. Witvoet of Rock Valley, Iowa, by the congregations of Sunnyside, Washington, and Waupun, Wisconsin.

Declined:

By Rev. P.D. den Haan of Rijssen-West, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Nobleford, Alberta.

■ Obituaries

CRUM, Hendrika – Age 98, February 26, 2025; Grand Rapids, Michigan; survived by many nieces and nephews; predeceased by brothers and sisters. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Mark 5:25-27.)

MAY, Gerda (nee Arnoldussen) – Age 71, February 1, 2025; Lethbridge Alberta; Husband – Wayne (deceased); Daughter – Chérie; Siblings – Clarence & Johanna Arnoldussen, Jannette & John Moens, Sanderina Kooyman, Willy & John Guliker, Tilly & Henry Van Sluys, John & Rita Arnoldussen, Mary Anne & Dick Westeringh, Hank & Stella Arnoldussen; In-laws – Crystal Biron, Dale & Carol, Paul & Rhonda; predeceased by parents John & Willemina Arnoldussen, infant sister Willemina, sister-in-law Sam, and brothers-in-law Maurice Biron and Jake Kooyman. (Rev. P. Kleijer, Job 30:23.)

SPAANS, Leonard – Age 89, February 1, 2025; Orange City, Iowa; Wife – Elizabeth (nee Fluit, deceased); Children – Herbert & Lavonne, Deborah & Rallyn Van Ginkel, Kevin & Ann, Linda & Les Roemen, Daryl & Jeanette, Sharla Van Beek; 25 grandchildren, 38 great-grandchildren; Sisters-in-law – Pauline, Joanne, Kathy, Elizabeth “Betty,” Rosalie, Betty, Beverly Fluit, Bernice Wiekamp; predeceased by 1 sister, and 11 brothers. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Psalm 34:11&12.)

■ Classis East Youth Conference June 27-28, 2025

The Classis East Youth Conference will be hosted by Franklin Lakes & Clifton, New Jersey, on June 27-28, 2025. All young people ages 16 & older are invited. Please register at www.timothygroupnrc.org (password: June2025). The deadline to sign up is June 7.

■ 2025 Grand Rapids Young Adult Conference August 14-16, 2025

A three-day/two-night trip to northern Michigan is being organized by a committee under the oversight of the Grand Rapids Beckwith consistory. Rev. H. Hofman hopes to provide meaningful topics and discussions. For additional information and to register for the trip, text 616-729-9655 or email fncjoshuagroup@gmail.com

■ The Banner of Truth in Audio Format

Monthly copies of the articles appearing in *The Banner of Truth* are available on MP3s and CDs for those who have reading difficulties such as poor vision. These MP3s are produced by a committee in Norwich, with the support of the Norwich consistory, who make the MP3s available to your consistory. Consistories distribute the MP3s and CDs which are provided at no cost. You may contact Mrs. Tillie Lamain at 616-242-0291 or blamain@netscape.net to arrange for a free subscription or to discontinue receiving *The Banner of Truth* on CD.

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

■ New Titles from Bible Truth Books

Witnesses of the King by Mrs. A. Vogelaar—Volume 11 in Mrs. Vogelaar's Church History series is now available. This volume tells of eleven different missionaries during the 1800's. Hardcover, 124 pages, \$15.75.

The Scots Worthies by John Howie—A collection of seventy-two short biographies of God's people in Scotland during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The list of subjects includes James Durham, John Knox, Samuel Rutherford, Andrew Gray, Hugh Binning and scores of Covenanters, many of whom suffered persecutions and martyrdom at the hands of the enemies of God and His people. A hardcover reprint of the 1870 edition, 672 pages, \$24.50.

The Spiritual Pilgrim by Rev. A. Vergunst (1926-1981)—A collection of fifty-five meditations on Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* taken from weekly lessons given while serving as minister of Veen, the Netherlands. First published in 1986. Hardcover, 417 pages, \$31.50.

A Wanderer Comes Home by L. Vogelaar—The life story of Pleuntje Veer (1908-2001). Pleuntje grew up with little or no religion, but the instruction she received at a girls' society became a blessing for her. A way of wandering followed until she settled in Enkhuizen, the Netherlands, in 1934 where she lived for sixty-seven years. The leadings of the Lord throughout her life and conversation are clearly traced out in this hardcover book, 183 pages, \$19.50.

The Characters in the Holy War by A. Whyte—A collection of twenty-eight writings on the characters and metaphors in Bunyan's *Holy War*. Paperback, 301 pages, \$8.75.

The Works of Jonathan Edwards (2 volume set)—Hardcover, 969 pages, \$67.00.

The Works of John Knox (6 volume set)—Hardcover, \$133.75.

Please note that the prices above do not include postage.

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www.BibleTruthBooks.org

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

EBEN-EZER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, is inviting applications to fill a full-time secondary teacher/administrator role. 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. *(Although this position has been filled on an interim basis, we are still in need of a permanent candidate.)* The school administrator will strive to direct the school according to the Word of God, the Three Forms of Unity, the Constitution of the Netherlands Reformed Christian School, the policies of the NRC School Board, and the regulations of the New Jersey Department of Education. The primary duty of the administrator is to maintain productive relations with the school board, students, faculty and staff, parents and community.

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

2025 NRCEA Conference

The Netherlands Reformed Christian School (Pompton Plains, NJ) is inviting all those involved with Christian School education (all staff, board and consistory members, prospective teachers, etc.) to attend the NRCEA Conference scheduled to be held at our school campus for July 30–August 1, D.V. In addition to opportunities for conversation, connection, and mutual encouragement among office bearers, administrators, staff, and board members of the NRCEA, the three-day conference will offer topics and workshops on a variety of educational and doctrinal topics. We invite those interested in participating or attending to visit the conference website www.teachersconference2025.com or click the link www.nrcsnj.org. Any questions can be addressed to jsinke@nrcsnj.org. Please plan to join us and enjoy this unique opportunity to interact with fellow Christian school educators.

■ Teachers/Assistants

CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, COAL-HURST, ALBERTA, invites applications for elementary or secondary teaching positions for the coming school year. High school English Language Arts & Literature and elementary generalist teachers are particularly needed, but all inquiries are welcome. Applicants must be members of the NRC or a closely-related denomination, and must be eligible for Alberta certification. 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 elementary and middle school teaching positions. 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

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 visit www.nrcsia.com or contact the principal, Mr. Daniel Breuer, at 712-476-2821 or dan.breuer@nrcsia.org

OBADIAH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, GIROUX, MANITOBA, has an extremely urgent need of teachers for our 2025-2026 school year. We have seventeen students and teach multigrade classrooms. We invite those who are versatile and dedicated to teaching to inquire about our elementary and middle school positions. Certification is an asset but is not required. For any questions regarding this position,

please call Jonathan Barten at 204-408-4006, or Brad Barten at 204-905-4755, or email Ocschoolboard@gmail.com

PROVIDENCE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN invites qualified candidates to apply for elementary and middle school positions that may be open. For more information regarding possible openings or for application forms, please contact the administrator, Mr. Tom Kwekel, at tkwekel@pcskzoo.com or call 616-644-2661.

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, NORWICH, ONTARIO, invites applications to fill several teaching vacancies, and a part-time Student Counselor position for the 2025-26 school year. High school needs include Art, Business, Math, and Science and Woodshop. For more information about elementary and middle school 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 invite inquiries about our locally developed teaching training program which provides a blend of paid teaching, mentorship, and training, making it a great opportunity for those new to the profession or those seeking to transition into teaching. Cover letters and resúms should be submitted to hr@rcsnorwich.com. Applications will be reviewed. Applicants selected for interviews will be contacted by the school board.

TIMOTHY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CHILLIWACK, BRITISH COLUMBIA, is looking for teachers who are excited about teaching and have a particular love for the hearts of young people. We have a need at all grade levels but would encourage secondary and intermediate grade-level applicants. If you are such a teacher, please apply to join our team. Applicants need to be certifiable to teach in British Columbia. For information and/or an application form, please do not hesitate to contact either the principal, Mr. Doug Stam, at 604-794-7114 or dstam@timothychristian.ca, or the school board president, Mr. Ken den Bok, kendenbok@timothychristian.ca

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!**

Ye Lambs of Christ's Fold

Ye lambs of Christ's fold, ye weaklings in faith,
Who long to lay hold on life by His death;
Who fain would believe Him, and in your best room
Would gladly receive Him, but fear to presume;

Remember one thing, O may it sink deep;
Our Shepherd and King cares much for His sheep;
To trust Him endeavor; the work is His own;
He makes the believer, and gives him his crown.

Those feeble desires, those wishes so weak,
'Tis Jesus inspires, and bids you still seek;
His Spirit will cherish the life He first gave;
You never shall perish if Jesus can save.

Proud lions, that boast when lusty and young,
Soon find, to their cost, self-confidence wrong;
Tormented with hunger, they feel their strength vain;
For famine is stronger, and gnaws them with pain.

But lambs are preserved, though helpless in kind;
When lions are starved, they nourishment find;
Their Shepherd upholds them, when faint, in His arms;
And feeds them, and folds them, and guards them from harms.

Though sometimes we see the case is not thus;
Bad shepherds will flee, yet what's that to us?
The Shepherd that chose us must surely be good,
Who rather than lose us would shed His heart's blood.

Blest soul that can say, "Christ only I seek."
Wait for Him alway; be constant though weak;
The Lord whom thou seekest will not tarry long;
And to Him the weakest is dear as the strong.

—Joseph Hart