

the Banner of Truth

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The Official Periodical
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A Sunday for Orphans
Ascension

For our young readers...

The Wisdom of Solomon
New Life



*"So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground...and the seed should spring and grow up,
he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself." MARK 4:26-28*



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Meditation

A Sight into the Opened Heavens

Rev. H.D. den Hollander, Fort Macleod, AB

“Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God” (Acts 7:56).

I see. What a blessed thing is sight! Pity is wrung from a heart of stone upon a glance at blank, rayless eyes. “Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.” Oh, what an inestimable gift of the omniscient and beneficent Creator is sight!

I see. What a solemn account must be given by every recipient of this precious capacity! What have our eyes *looked upon*? To which reflections of heaven’s great light has our heart directed the privilege of our gazings? Upon what objects of sensuality, carnality, and sin have our indwelling defilements cravingly sought their sweet delight despite the deepest darkness of their glimmerings? Innocent eyes, created to gaze upon the good and pure, have fallen into open floodgates for evil. How powerful that Spirit which regenerates the directing source of the ocular motor nerves, correcting the evil eye and powerfully inclining it once again to its proper end.

I see. What does Stephen see? He sees *the heavens opened*. Many stand round. It is seen by him alone. The heavens distinguish. They open to the oppressed. Faith *sees*! It sees alone—in its distress. It sees what none other see. It sees what is opened from above. It sees *heaven opened*. It looks through the veil that forbids the carnal eye.

I see. Through the veil Stephen sees *the Son of Man*. Oh, sacred sight! Holy gazing! Did your soul ever see Him? Did faith ever look upon Him? Did heaven ever distinguish and open to you that you may catch a fleeting glimpse upon the Son of Man, that your eye may behold Him? The wind bloweth where it listeth. The canopy returns. The heavens close. The light is darkened. A cloud receives Him out of your sight. But your soul says, *I saw*, and returns to Jerusalem with great joy. “Come, and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul.”

I see. And the circumstances...in which you saw...what were they? The Pharisees said, “Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore, your sin remaineth.” Friend, you say, *I see*. Does Jesus say, Ye are blind? Natural religion sheds rays sufficient for sight only under the cheerful shinings of our carnal sun. True religion, often walking in darkness and having no light, finds its rays appearing through the clouds, when trouble and persecution arise, shedding the most blessed and glorious light on the glory which shall be revealed in them, not worthy to be compared to the sufferings of this present time.

So with Stephen! Surrounded by enemies cut to the heart, gnashing on him with their teeth, he is filled with the Holy Ghost, and looking up steadfastly into heaven sees the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. Within himself and every familiar friend who would stand by him, he finds no power against the great company that comes against him. “I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. I cried unto Thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my Refuge and my Portion in the land of the living. Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.” *Behold! The heavens open! Behold, I see!* Glorious sight! The Son of Man standing on the right hand of God! *Behold, I see!* I see an exalted Surety, who was dead and is alive again, and is exalted to the right hand of God. I see Him in His majesty, I see Him in His power, I see Him in His grace. I see Him in His glorious victory. I see the enemy conquered, I see guilt vanquished, I see sin cast into a sea of everlasting forgetfulness. I see no more gulf. I see justice satisfied, I see open access to the high throne; I see a reconciled Judge, I see a loving Father. *Behold, I see!* I see Him, the Son of Man, standing ready to receive my soul to Himself. I see, and all fear flees away of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. “Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

I see. What a sacred privilege is this sight! Faith is seeing, and seeing is believing! Blessed faith! Much professed; little known! When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth? Faith knows that it sees. “One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.” Faith knows when it sees; hence, when it sees not. Once see and ever long to see again. Once see and know that seeing is a gift of God. I saw, but see not now. I saw and fear I shall not see when I need it most. Oh, what anxious inquiring, when the blessedness of long ago no more with gladness fills the dark night.

*I pondered o’er my grievous woes
And searching questioning arose:
Will God cast off, and never more
His favor to my soul restore?*

Shall I see when the silver cord is ready to be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern? O Lord, “Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth. For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together, saying, God hath forsaken

him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him. O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help.”

Trembling soul, “there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” Have you but once rejoiced with Stephen, at the *opening of the heavens* in all your tribulations, saying, *Behold, I see the Son of Man?* Have you tasted and seen in Him that the Lord is good? Have you tasted the blessedness of the man that trusteth in Him? That which you have heard, which you have seen with your eyes, which you have looked upon, and your hands have handled, of the Word of life, is your testimony that your fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Though upon your bed of languishing you see Him but through a glass, darkly, you shall presently see Him face to face. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. Faith shall then be exchanged for an eternal gazing upon the Son of Man in that city that shall have no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God does lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

*When I in righteousness at last
Thy glorious face shall see,
When all the weary night is past,
And I awake with Thee
To view the glories that abide,
Then, then I shall be satisfied. □*



Bible Study

The Names of the Mediator (17)

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

(Translated from the 2010 issues of De Saambinder)

Lion

*“Behold, the **Lion** of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed” (Revelation 5:5b).*

John was exiled to the isle of Patmos. In one of the visions, he saw a figure on the throne with a book in His right hand. This book was sealed with seven seals. It was the book of God’s decrees. The heart of all God’s decrees is the decree of election. In order for the decrees to be executed, the book had to be opened. The question was asked, “Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?” For this book can only be opened by One who is entitled and able to do so. Upon that question followed a fearful silence. There was no one who had the authority to open the book. John wept much, for God’s counsel regarding the salvation of sinners seemed to run aground here. Then one of the elders spoke, “Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah...hath prevailed.” He is qualified and able to take care of the progress of God’s counsel.

The Mediator is sometimes called “the Lamb.” That name refers to His humiliation. Were He not “the Lamb,” the Father could not give Him permission to take the book. The debt had to be paid first. Here He is called “the Lion.” Christ revealed Himself further to John in the state of His exaltation; to that is what this name refers. The annotator

of the Dutch Bible states, “Christ is so called from the blessing of Judah in the testament of Jacob, and that by reason of His royal and conquering power over the devil, world, sin, and death.” Jacob spoke on his deathbed, “Judah is a lion’s whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?” (Genesis 49:9). Christ is the great Son of Judah. A lion is a symbol of strength. The lion is the king of the animals. The great adversary of Christ, Satan, is also called a roaring lion. Let us not underestimate his power, but the Lion from the tribe of Judah has overcome Satan. The tense form indicates that the battle is behind us. The victory had already been won. He was qualified to open the book, for He had glorified God’s virtues. He was able to open the book, for the Lamb had the strength of a Lion. He had seven horns and seven eyes to execute God’s counsel.

One of the elders pointed the weeping John to this Lion. We may do the same today with weeping souls. Have you already experienced facing the same impossibility that John was facing here? Have you learned that salvation can only be obtained in this way? This chapter teaches us that for those who come to know the Lion from the tribe of Judah, only worship remains, both on earth and in heaven:

—July 8, 2010, Rev. A. Schot

Minister

*“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a **Minister** of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers” (Romans 15:8).*

Paul wrote in Romans 15 about the mutual relationships within the church. Those who have more knowledge, a stronger faith, and a better understanding of how a Christian should live are obliged to bear and help the weak.

The practice of this good coexistence can be found in the Old Testament (see Romans 15:4). This first part of the Bible is, therefore, written for instruction and comfort. The mirror of the old covenant is held up before the congregation of the New Testament so that they “be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (verses 5 and 6).

The one church member should not look down on the other. Each must *minister* to another. Does this also function among us? The apostle knew that church members are *human beings*. By nature, our own self takes center stage. Therefore, he went on to point to the great Minister.

We can find the examples of ministering in the histories of the Old Testament, but we find true ministering espe-

cially in the life of the Saviour. He is called *Minister of the circumcision* in verse 8. He ministered among people who were circumcised, the Jewish people. As a minister, He wanted to proclaim to them the way of salvation. He first wanted to minister only among them.

That is a miracle. He knew that the Jewish people would reject Him, yet He wanted to be a minister among them. Literally, it says in verse 8 that Christ would be a deacon, but in the deepest sense of the word, He ministered, first and foremost, not to men, but to God. Verse 8 continues with the words *for the truth of God*. His ministering showed that God is the God of truth. *That* is what this Minister showed not only to the Jewish people but also to the Gentiles (verse 9, etc.).

Christ made no distinction in His ministry. Jews and Gentiles were ministered to by Him and ministered out of Him. This is for instruction of people who dwell together in the church. It is also a consolation for unworthy sinners. Christ wants to minister among people who deserve nothing. This Minister does not look on the outward appearance. He has done His work in self-sacrificing love. He still does—for enemies.

—March 11, 2010, Rev. C. Neele

(To be continued)



A Word in Season

The Blessing of the Ecclesiastical Calendar

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

(Translated from the May 19, 2016 issue of *De Saambinder*)

The ecclesiastical calendar is nearing its end. “Ecclesiastical calendar” implies some adjustment of the—yet always subjective—choice of texts in the proclamation on the Lord’s Day by adhering wholeheartedly to the order of the redemptive acts: beginning with the weeks of Advent and ending with Pentecost and afterward paying attention to the Acts of the Apostles for a few Sabbath Days. If we are convinced that the way which the Surety went in the history of salvation (from the manger to the cross and from the grave to the throne) has everything to do with the order of salvation, in which the Holy Spirit leads and exercises, we will also gladly adhere to this ecclesiastical order. Thus, we see that the history of salvation, the order of salvation, and the ecclesiastical order are closely and harmoniously connected. The congregation will notice and appreciate this. After all, it promotes involvement in listening, and is this not what we want? Especially in a time of listening fatigue and reading laziness, this may well have our ministerial attention. A loose and incoherent choice of

texts, the subjective without line and context, certainly does not benefit our attention. Even more, the congregation receives no spiritual guidance from the Scriptures—hence, the blessing of “the ecclesiastical calendar” in keeping to certain rules from roughly December to June.

Here they are again:

- The four Sundays of Advent before Christmas: looking forward to the coming of the Saviour in the flesh and...in the heart. We move from the Old Testament to the New.
- After New Year systematically staying with the gospels for several weeks.
- The seven weeks of Passion preceding Good Friday. From the very beginning in the life of grace is the demand that weighs on the heart: “God will have His justice satisfied; and therefore, we must make this full satisfaction, either by ourselves or by another” (Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 12). Each one of God’s children knows this.

- Good Friday with its essence: “It is finished,” as the triumphal cry of the Surety.
- Easter: the voice from heaven, “Arise, for it is settled.”
- Considerations determined by this “Arise” of Easter: the prophecy and examples of the quickening in the Old and New Testaments, the appearances as proofs of the resurrection of the crucified One, the work of grace in the personal quickening, and finally, the indications to the event on the last day: the raising of all the dead to damnation or to salvation in body and soul.
- Orphan Sunday: looking forward to the coming of the Spirit on the basis of what has been promised and merited by the risen One.
- Pentecost: after the “It is finished” as the Son’s testimony on Good Friday; “It is finished” as the

Father’s testimony on Easter morning. Now “It is being perfected” as the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit.

- The practices of the apostles, characterized by the ascended Immanuel (Acts 1) and the poured-out Spirit (Acts 2). And no matter what comes *against* this, it will be without impediment (Acts 28:31, with annotation).

How sad that this time of the ecclesiastical year is almost over, for it turns out to be so useful and necessary for the preacher himself and for the congregations. Have you experienced this in the past six months? *What* exactly have you experienced? The way of the Surety in the history of salvation determines the way of the Church in the order of salvation. *How* was it with you? □

A Sunday for Orphans

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

(Translated from the May 9, 2024 issue of *De Saambinder*)

Between Easter and Ascension, there are forty days. From Ascension to Pentecost are only ten days. After all, Pentecost means “fiftieth.” Fifty is the total number of days between Easter and Pentecost. In the ten days between Ascension and Pentecost, there is only one day of rest which is usually called Orphan Sunday.

Regarding the expression “Orphan Sunday,” we must go to John 14, verse 18. There, among the Saviour’s elaborate parting words, we read, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” (*The annotation states: “That is, not helpless, or orphans.” The Dutch translation of the Bible text reads: “I will not leave you orphans.” —Ed.*) On this Thursday evening before Good Friday, the Master wanted to leave no moment unused to teach His disciples. This began at mealtime where the last Passover and the first Lord’s Supper were held. The parting words begin already in John 13, verse 31, and end with John 16, verse 33: “...In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” Next, they heard Him pray in John 17, after which they crossed the brook Cedron (John 18:1).

The promise, “I will not leave you comfortless,” was still spoken in the upper room. It was addressed to their moved hearts (John 14:1), to His followers who were afraid (verse 27). Yet a little while and they would leave the room and the city of Jerusalem (John 14:31). Then the Garden of Gethsemane awaited. The Master was greatly moved and filled with love for His Father and His own. Lovingly, therefore, He had just called them “little children” (John 13:33), for to these “foundlings” He had shown mercy.

How would such orphans receive a home again? They were so vulnerable. What is a (little) child without a father and mother? There is no home, and nowhere in this world can any good and support be expected. An orphan is alone in the world because father and mother are in the grave. An orphan painfully lacks parental love, care, and guidance. An orphan has no knowledge of an existing will.

I come again to you

The Lord Jesus looked around the circle. He watched them closely. He searched how moved and ignorant they were. There had been strife among them as to which of them should be accounted the greatest. They said to each other, “We cannot tell what He saith.” Later, they would sleep when He struggled and suffered. They would all faithlessly leave Him, and one of them would even deny Him. What was to become of these orphans? Without Him they were capable of anything, and nothing would come of them.

Now the faithful Saviour promised that He would wonderfully provide for their lack. He did so wisely and with discernment. The missing would not always be the same, but it could only be fulfilled in one way, for only His coming could perfect salvation. In distinct ways He would fulfill His promise for the orphans, given in the night, “I will come to you.” That is the abiding mystery of being saved by His one-sided grace revealed in this Christ. Again and again, there was the lack as of an orphan; again and again, they depended on His coming.

Until Sunday

How were they between this Thursday night and Sunday morning? Shyly they had hid behind closed doors. The orphans did nothing but weep. There was not even a thought of His Word of promise. They had lost Jesus and thus had lost everything. They were concerned with only One, "Give me Jesus else I die, for apart from Jesus there is no life." They were left with only death and a missing. They felt like an orphan on the earth. From the world they had nothing to expect and even less from religion—yet, marvelous how they were kept from despair and how they were sustained and maintained in a mysterious way.

How were they doing between the day of resurrection and Ascension Day? During that period they learned much through His coming. Summarized: "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you...then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures" (Luke 24:44&45). The orphans also then knew of a coming and going Jesus, who once again promised them the abiding Comforter. They knew this Comforter in His operations (John 14:17), but this Spirit of Immanuel would not only remain *with* them but would even dwell *in* them after Pentecost. He was coming again, richer than ever.

Until Pentecost

For the orphan church, there lies rich comfort in the ten days from Ascension to Pentecost. In a literal sense, this period would be the time of the orphan church. Let us properly discern, however, because on this sad Thursday evening it was so different; the missing was so different! Thus, the fulfillment was so different, also. They had seen

the Lord. They had received unforgettable instruction in understanding the Scriptures. They accompanied Him to the Mount of Olives and asked their questions along the way. The heavenly messenger pointed out His return on behalf of the Ascended One.

The orphans rejoiced (Luke 24:52), but at the same time they persevered in prayer and supplication (Acts 1:14). This seems to be a contradiction. They were richly gifted, yet they were missing ones. Persistently, they brought their distress and misery to the throne of grace. The ascended One could no longer restrain Himself. After all, He had promised, "I will come to you." Therefore, there is His intercession, "Father, take care that My children do not remain orphans. 'For in Thee the fatherless findeth mercy.'"

They knew joy and peace, yet there was a missing. This was evident in the tender life of prayer. Fervently and powerfully, they desired to receive the indwelling of the Spirit of Pentecost. Then the usefulness of His departing would be fully understood. They were by no means left un comforted and not cared for. The glory of Christ would be declared in its fullness in their heart, in following on to know Him as never before. According to His Godhead, majesty, and Spirit, He would then never depart from them anymore.

After having tasted something of the peace of Easter and of the joy with the Ascension, there was still begging. The missing had to be fulfilled—a homecoming with God, sealed by the Spirit. For there is so much in the will that is revealed only through the Spirit of Pentecost. Yes, the will, the Covenant of Grace, and atonement for missing orphans.

Every Sunday may be Orphan Sunday; would you not agree? ☐



From Our Inheritance

Ascension

Author unknown

(Taken from the May 1938 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool" (Psalm 110:1).

Last month we commemorated the resurrection of the Lord Jesus who, having finished the work which the Father had given Him to do, could not be held a prisoner by death since He had paid the debt of His people to the last farthing, thereby satisfying God's justice and fulfilling the Law. He had magnified the Law by subjecting Himself to it and keeping it, and this was part of His humiliation, for was He not the Lawgiver? By thus humbling Himself, He also assumed the curse pronounced by the Law, thereby removing it from all those given Him by the Father.

Where the first Adam had failed to keep the Law, and with that brought ruin upon all his posterity, there the second Adam, our glorious Lord and Saviour, had fulfilled it, thus making it honorable. For man having broken the Law is not only not sorry because of this; he also refuses to submit to God and would sin himself to death rather than acknowledge his guilt and be saved though God entreats him to turn unto him.

The prophet of old had foretold that Christ would not see corruption; therefore, He rose again on the third day. This was not all, for had He not been anointed to be King in the Holy Hill of Zion? Now, after His work upon earth

was finished, He would go back to the Father to sit at His right hand to apply, from there, those benefits to His poor, troubled people upon earth. He had told His disciples shortly before His sufferings that it was necessary for Him to go away so that He could send the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, to abide with them and to dwell in them. The Spirit would take the things of Christ and show them unto the disciples. Having now ascended on high, He has “received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them” (Psalm 68:18).

Consider, therefore, the condescending goodness of this great and glorious Jehovah to have such dealings with, and to spend so much labor of love upon, rebels as all men are. Whereas we deserve to be banished from His sight forever, to suffer His just wrath and indignation, He has opened a way of escape for the vilest of sinners. He causes His word to be preached unto us, full of grace and truth, pointing out the way that we may walk therein.

Alas, that man refuses to hearken to this voice. For what is the answer of man to all this? We will walk after the imagination of our own heart, our tongue is our own, and who is Lord over us. Thus, we cast the Lord behind our back and regard not His laws and precepts. Blessed are they, therefore, whom He chooses and causes to approach unto Him that they may dwell in His courts, who being convinced of their sins by the Holy Spirit, come to Him with weeping and supplication that His blood may cleanse them and His righteousness may cover them.

To that end He is exalted to be merciful and gracious to all such and apply His benefits to them, for He will in no wise cast out those that come to Him. He is the exalted King and Head of His Church to rule, guide, and direct them, to protect them against the onslaughts of the devil and all his willing instruments, to succor them in their troubles and sorrows, and to finally receive them unto Himself.

This is not all, however, for the Lord adds “until I make mine enemies thy footstool.” This will be the portion of all those that persist in their rebellion against this King of kings, and Lord of lords. According to God’s Word, the greater portion of Adam’s posterity will share in this. When we look about us in our own communities and consider the reports from all over the world, is it not apparent that man is in open rebellion against God? The nations of the world seem to have united against the Lord and His Anointed.

The Lord laughs at the shaking of all those spears. His Church is safe in the midst of all this, and when the last sheep has been added to the fold, then all those that know not God shall perish forever. Then they shall experience that although they did not reckon with Him, He did surely reckon with them, for they shall be made His footstool. O terrible lot and portion of such, to be trodden under foot by Him, whose precious blood is trodden under foot by them, for He shall break them with a rod of iron; he shall dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. “Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little...” (Psalm 2:10-12).

Surely, we have all reasons to fear when we consider the economic and political conditions of the world today. Must we not ask what will the end be? We have provoked God to anger; we refuse to submit to His yoke though it be easy and His burden light; therefore, we will have to submit to the iron yoke of those whom we look unto as our deliverers. Therefore, it behooves us to consider these things, to pause and ask ourselves how we stand over against this great King unto whom all power in earth and in heaven has been given. If He is not our Saviour, He will be our Judge, and then we shall also be with those who cry to the mountains to fall on us and to the hills to cover us. The gospel privileges which we have enjoyed shall testify against us; they shall help condemn us. Our lot shall be far worse than that of those who have never heard of Him. Those who have known the way but not walked therein shall be beaten with many stripes. May we yet seek the Lord while He may be found and call upon Him while He is near.

People of God, consider the benefit bestowed upon you—for what maketh you to differ? Did you seek God of your own free will? Surely not, for “I am found of them that sought me not.” The Apostle John says, “We love Him, because He first loved us.” Consider how much you owe Him—how your life should be devoted to His honor and glory, to shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, and to bear witness of Him who purchased you with His own blood and redeemed you from the wrath to come. ▢

The Sovereignty of God

Divine sovereignty is not the sovereignty of a tyrannical Despot but the exercised pleasure of One who is infinitely wise and good! Because God is infinitely wise, He cannot err, and because He is infinitely righteous, He will not do wrong. Here, then, is the preciousness of this truth. The mere fact itself that God’s will is irresistible and irreversible fills me with fear, but once I realize that God wills only that which is good, my heart is made to rejoice.

—Arthur Pink



Commentary

The Distinction Between the Offer of Grace and the Covenant Promises (4)

Rev. A. Moerkerken (1947-2024)

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

The 1931 Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Congregations in Holland [Gereformeerde Gemeente]

As summary, we can say that the best of our old theologians were assured that, in essence, only the elect were included in the Covenant of Grace, of which Christ is the Surety, Mediator, and Head, and that God extends the promises of the covenant to Christ and His spiritual seed. (In our last article we quoted the Scottish theologians because we are of the same persuasion and gladly appeal to them.)

The statements of our 1931 General Synod also are engrafted into this doctrine. It is as if we hear the “Marrow men” speak, when it is stated that “the Covenant of Grace falls under the domain of election to salvation. Therefore, the essence of the covenant can only concern the elect of God and never the natural seed.”

Or in the fourth statement: “as God has established the Covenant of Works with Adam, who, as head, represented all his posterity, so the Covenant of Grace is established with Christ as the representative Head of all His people, while it is (subjectively) established with all the elect, in time, when they are ingrafted into the covenant through regeneration and faith.”

Rev. G.H. Kersten’s opinion

So, all the covenant promises for God’s Church are yea and amen in Jesus Christ. In the previously mentioned book about the Covenant of Grace by the Erskines and Fisher, G.H. Kersten emphasizes in a very worthwhile to read preface, that it is the covenant promises which are sealed in baptism. Already in his catechism exposition, Rev. Kersten was clear as to what occurs when infants are baptized. In his explanation of Lord’s Day 26, he writes that “baptism is not merely an external mark of identification. This sacrament does not mean that there is a possibility for all people to be saved; but it is a sign and seal instituted by God, in which the Lord seals and subjectively grants to their salvation that of which His people objectively partake in Christ.”

In his explanation of Lord’s Day 27, we read that it is “not the grace which is already wrought in the soul but the grace which the elect objectively possess in Christ—and which God applies in His own time—that is sealed in baptism.” In this context, Rev Kersten also quotes Wilhelmus à Brakel,

who writes that it is not regeneration already wrought in the elect, but the right of the elect to future grace that is sealed in baptism.

The Baptism Form

Let us hold fast to this! We strip the Covenant of Grace of its power if we suppose that, in Holy Baptism, God the Father witnesses and seals to all baptized children that He doth make an eternal Covenant of Grace with them, and adopts them as His children and heirs. What then? Would the Son equally seal to all baptized children that He washes them in His blood from all their sins? Would the Holy Ghost assure everyone that He will sanctify them to be members of Christ? Would God then be a man, that He should lie? Would the entire fulfillment of these covenant promises (for that is what they are) then become dependent upon our “accepting by faith” and our “compliance to the covenant”? Would then the Lord’s promise to Isaac be the same for Ishmael, and to Jacob be the same for Esau? No. If we do not maintain that the Baptism Form speaks about the essence of the Church (and which form does not do this?), we strip baptism of its power. Which children are spoken of in the Baptism Form? Are they not the elect children? How could it be said of all children that in Christ they have the washing away of their sins? What do we understand by the words “till we shall finally be presented without spot or wrinkle among the assembly of the elect in life eternal”? Do these words not clearly indicate who are spoken of in this form?

Do not object to this, that with this explanation baptism loses all value for an unconverted one, otherwise this world would cease to exist. When Christ shall have completed His Church, He will return.

In the second place, bearing the mark of holy baptism brings with it certain privileges—the same as the privileges of circumcision in former times. What these are we can read in Romans 3:1-2, but we are not presently addressing these questions here. We are now dealing with the question of what is signified and sealed in holy baptism; and the answer to this question can be nothing else than “God’s covenant and His promises to His elect bride—the Church.” If it would be any different, I would personally not be able to read the Baptism Form (with a clear conscience) to the congregation. □

(To be continued)

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



Instructive Gleanings

Onesimus, a Runaway Slave (2)

Rev. P. Kleijer, Lethbridge, AB

“Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philemon 1:3).

Saluting his dear friend

In this verse we read Paul’s salutation to Philemon and to the church which is with him. This salutation, also called a benediction, is found in almost all of Paul’s epistles. This is not, in the first place, merely a wish for riches in temporal life, neither for health, but for the durable good of which we read in Proverbs 8:18, “Riches and honour are with Me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.” Dear reader, must we not all seek this? All the treasures we gather on earth must be left behind, but the heavenly durable riches are kept secure in heaven. People of God, if they were given into our hands, we would spoil them. Christ teaches us so clearly that we must seek these treasures, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

Grace

The word “grace” in our text does not refer to the *principle* of grace, which they had received in their effectual calling in the hour of regeneration. Surely, we all need this and no one of us can do without it! Where this grace is glorified, it is glorified freely and sovereignly. Where it is planted, it will never be taken away. The Apostle Peter testified of it, “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:5). In that sense, it is a perfect grace.

Here, however, Paul speaks of the *increase* in grace. It is grace in its different degrees, in its acts, and in its exercises. In this respect every grace is imperfect, and those who have received the most stand in need of more. Even the most advanced in grace have just a beginning. Paul says in Philippians 3:12, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” Peter also points to this when he says that we must grow in grace. Can we do this from ourselves? No, it needs to come from God. He only is able to make all grace to abound and has promised to give more. “For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Psalm 84:11). This is a comfort for a people who cannot reach the bar themselves. Grace must come from above. The Lord spoke comfortingly to Paul, “My grace is sufficient for thee” (2 Corinthians 12:9). Grace is undeserved but indispensable. Grace is given to the chief of sinners.

Peace

The text also speaks of peace. With “peace” is meant peace with God through Christ, as we read in Luke 24:36, “And as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.” By nature, we have no true peace. It is true what we read in Isaiah 57:21, “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” There can only be peace when the broken communion with God is restored. In these words we hear the blessing, “I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for He will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints: but let them not turn again to folly” (Psalm 85:8). We may believe that they, to whom Paul is writing this letter, are not strangers of this peace. This peace speaks of the following four things:

1. A peace in their own consciences. After having received grace and peace, sin so often comes in between and takes away all the peace there was. The conscience accuses them, and the God of peace must return.
2. A peace with one another. Dear reader, we must always strive for that. Confessing grace and living in enmity with our neighbor cannot go together.
3. All manner of prosperity inwardly and outwardly here on earth. We may never ask for a difficult way. However, if the Lord’s way leads through trials and affliction, He is also able to strengthen accordingly.
4. An eternal peace in heaven hereafter. There will be no strife anymore. There, all tears will be wiped from off their faces.

The Giver of grace and peace

From whom must we desire this grace and peace? In the first place we read, “from God the Father,” here spoken of as *our* Father. How can fallen man become children of the Father? Only by adoption, as we read in Ephesians 1:5, “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.” The question may come to us, why is it here spoken in this manner? It is for two reasons:

1. On the one hand, it is to engage in God’s children a fear and reverence for God the Father. Though they may come boldly to the throne of grace, the relationship with God is not a casual relationship.
2. On the other hand, the purpose is to encourage freedom and boldness at the throne of grace. We must expect to receive every blessing of grace from Him. There, at His throne, is where we must be.

In the second place we read of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why is “the Lord Jesus Christ” mentioned? He is the Person through whom, and for whose sake, all the blessings of grace and peace are communicated to His people. Outside of Christ, God is a consuming fire with whom we cannot dwell. In this text, we also clearly see that Christ is equal with the Father. He is very God, and is not Christ indeed the God of all grace?

Dear reader, in Christ there is such a fullness. Must we not desire grace and peace from Christ? From where does peace flow forth? Is it not from the Covenant of Redemption in eternity between the three Persons in the Trinity? Think of what we read in Isaiah 53:5b, “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.” Christ has made peace through the blood of His cross (Colossians 1:20), and He is the One who

gives it to His people. Grace is the undeserved favor of God and peace is the fruit of this received grace.

How is it with you, fellow traveler to a never-ending eternity? Do we know of this grace and peace given by God? Or have we given ourselves grace and peace? That will end in an eternal disappointment. Now it is still the time to

receive it. Beg the Lord if He will give it by free and sovereign grace.

There is a people for whom the words “grace and peace” are not strange. What a wonder it is if this benediction may

resound in our heart. We grew up hearing these words so often in the benediction of our church services; therefore, they are so familiar to us, but do we truly *hear* them? However, for a guilty sinner they will receive value. □

(To be continued)

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Among All Nations

What Did Calvin Say About Israel?

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

*(Taken from the book *What Our Fathers Said About Israel*, Chapter 2)*

It is impossible for anyone to summarize John Calvin’s view of the Jewish people in a few words. John Calvin (1509-1564) has written about Israel’s unbelief and hardening in a deeply touching way. The fact that the majority of the Jews had rejected the Saviour filled his heart with astonishment and dismay. Do we, too, know something of that inner grief when we think about their great apostasy?

Meditating on the deeply fallen Jewish people, Calvin was nonetheless given to cast a glance at God’s eternal Covenant of Grace. This strengthened him in the conviction that God’s election and covenant would infallibly be realized despite mankind’s fall in sin and that the Lord would be able to break through every kind of unbelief, including that of the Jews. This viewpoint was the very reason that Calvin could express himself about the Jewish people in a surprisingly positive way.

In his commentary on the words “to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16), Calvin notes that the apostle unites the Gentiles with the Jews in the fellowship of the gospel. Then Calvin goes on to say that this does not mean that the apostle deprives the Jews of their eminence and rank. Were they not the first to whom God’s promise

and calling immediately had come? For that reason, Paul continues to maintain “their prerogative” while adding the Gentiles “as sharers with them of the gospel, though in the second place.”

When Calvin pens his comments on the words “beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47), we read something similar. Since God “had peculiarly adopted the descendants of Abraham, they had to have preference over the rest of the world.” He calls this privilege “the right of the firstborn.” In accordance with Calvin, Paul observed this order everywhere with the greatest care, telling us that Christ “came and proclaimed peace to those who were near, and afterwards to strangers who were at a distance” (Ephesians 2:17, loosely translated).

In short, the Jews must be regarded as the firstborn. In biblical times, the firstborn received a double portion. Does this not require from us a double effort to reach out to them, yea, a multiplication of our prayers for the Jewish people in their deep distress? Should we not beseech the Lord to grant them repentance and faith in Christ so that they may share in the treasures of the everlasting covenant? □

(To be continued)



Reflections

Evening Twilight (17)

Rev. P. Blok (1920-2019)

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

A Lesson in Grace

“All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37).

God’s mercies with His elect are wondrous and hidden from the natural mind. They are far beyond one’s comprehension but not against it. The lack of the benefits of grace is painful but does not put them in possession. Seeing the matters, having a sight of them, teaches the soul that the way to them must still be experienced. General knowledge of the way of salvation may be heard and pointed out but does not make it their personal possession by conclusion. Jesus’ words are clear: “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.”

We were privileged to hear a lesson of grace from a child of the Lord. He was awakened by God in the night and received instruction from the Holy Spirit from Psalm 42. “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.”

With approval we were allowed to listen to it. Most of what can be listened to in our time lingers outside the vest. What is of the Holy Spirit enters into the heart and flows from the heart. David’s heart cry is one from a regenerated person. It shows God’s electing good pleasure and points to God’s eternal counsel. In the state of rectitude, this heart cry was not heard. There, perfectly created man, adorned with God’s image, shared in an active communion with his God and Creator.

David’s words testify of the wonder of God’s sovereignty. Attached to this is the glory of leading a Church—from the fallen generation, elected from eternity—unto salvation. Therein is declared the labor of the Son of God. Through Word and Spirit, they would share in the unity of true faith. The gathering work is a commission which came from God’s eternal counsel. Protected and maintained in the way of grace, it will lead to the sanctified communion of faith with the Triune God. David’s heart cry found its origin in God and was directed to God.

The place and time wherein this was heard points to the purification process in the life of God’s elect. Without the purification process, the gold will not be revealed. It is a purification process in which the dross and filth are revealed. It reveals the hypocrite and the life that comes so close to the new life. That, too, is the purifying work in the kingdom of God.

Satan in his full armor and man, who has fallen to him, seek to thwart the revelation of God’s kingdom. In David’s life, this did not begin at the Jordan but from his being anointed as king in Saul’s place. The fallen and rejected King Saul could not bow before the execution of God’s severe justice. A wave of schemes, snares, temptations, and attacks were devised in the palace. They could not thwart David’s anointment. God’s election and the fruits of election show the sovereignty of God. “And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom for His people Israel’s sake.”

After David’s anointment, the waves of anger and enmity did not diminish against the crowned king. On the contrary, bulls of Bashan had chosen him as their prey. Within and without the palace, Satan mobilized his murder brigades/squads. Ahithophel, with a studied religion of the mind and supposed exercises in grace, won a place at David’s table. Absalom lurked for kingship. By craft and deceit he won a place among the people. “So, Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.”

By the attacks on his kingship, David was driven from his palace and from his people. Thus, he came to the Jordan River as a hunted prey. “O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember Thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar. Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts: all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me.” There his heart’s cry was heard: “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.”

We listened to the lesson of an established child of the Lord. What did he learn in the nightly visit from heaven? The answer was clear. From the first to the last breath, the new life will be endangered. In following Zion’s anointed King, matters are learned. The waves of schemes, hatred, envy, slander, temptations, contempt, and violence will threaten the Church but not destroy it. They will see the exposure of Satan’s deception and Satan’s companions. The Sauls will be revealed though they may join the prophets. Ahithophel, too, will be unmasked, even though he hid behind a mask of self-conceit for years.

The true followers will experience that upon the cry of distress great miracles will happen. Zion’s King will triumph and return to the City of God. In Him the true people are more than conquerors. “He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in His sight.” “His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon Himself shall His crown flourish.”

*His saints shall live, and to the King
Rich gifts in tribute shall be paid;
His praises men shall ever sing,
For Him shall endless prayer be made.*

*Abundant fields for harvest white
Already wave in ev'ry land,
And Zion's citizens delight
And prosper in their King's command.*
—Psalter 199:1&2 □

(To be continued)



Questions & Answers

Questions from Our Readers

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

What is meant by the stillness of eternity?

This is a good question, but trying to formulate an answer is not as easy as it appears at first glance. Again, it is an expression that is often heard and used but difficult to explain. I believe the difficulty lies not in the word “eternity” which occurs more than three hundred times in the Old Testament and refers to an endless continuance both in the past as in the future. Psalm 90:2 says, “*Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.*” With God there is no succession of time as is the case with man. Man lives, thinks, and operates in terms of seconds, minutes, hours, years, etc. but with God there is an eternal present.

The question here, I believe, refers more to what is meant by the *stillness* of it. This word, though found many times in the Bible as well, is not used in connection with eternity. Hence, we can only wonder where the frequent usage of this combination originates and what it means.

Instead of leaving the matter unanswered because I could not find an answer, I would like to give three thoughts for a possible explanation:

1. Perhaps “stillness” refers to the absence of any created matter or being. Psalm 90:2 speaks of the time before the mountains were brought forth, or ever God hadst formed the earth and the world—the absence of the

noise that was created along with all created matter or beings—the waves of the sea, the lowing of the ox, the sound of the wind, the voice of man.

2. Perhaps stillness also refers here to the mystery of the Godhead in His decree because “stillness of eternity” is often mentioned in connection with God’s eternal counsel. That decree is sovereign, God-glorifying, and without respect of persons. There is no involvement of man, and again, as such it is silence.
3. Perhaps stillness refers to the all-wise character of God’s hidden decree, which is far above our human and finite comprehension, and it behooves us to be silent under it! I believe Job came to the realization of the incomprehensible majesty of God’s decree when God spoke to him and repeatedly asked him questions like: “Where wast thou when I?” “Hast thou entered?” “Hast thou commanded?” “Hast thou perceived?” etc. Then we read in Job 40:4 “*Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.*” □

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

God is a free agent to work by law or gospel, by smiles or frowns, by presenting hell or heaven to sinners’ souls. God thunders from Mount Sinai upon some souls and conquers them by thundering. God speaks to others in a still voice and by that conquers them. You that are brought to Christ by the law, do not judge and condemn them that are brought to Christ by the gospel, and you that are brought to Christ by the gospel, do not despise those that are brought to Christ by the law.

—Thomas Brooks, Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices



Current Events

In Myanmar Attacks Continue Even After Devastating Earthquake

A human rights organization has reported that the military junta is continuing airstrikes in Chin State Myanmar despite their ceasefire claims to facilitate and allow for aid transport in the wake of the massive earthquake on March 28. The organization reports six civilians, including an eight-month-old baby and a pastor were among those killed. “These attacks—launched in the immediate aftermath of a devastating earthquake—represent a cruel and calculated attempt by a desperate regime to reassert control by terrorizing an already devastated population,” said a press release. The Assembly of God church building was also destroyed in the strikes which are continuing despite more than 3,600 people dead from the earthquake and ongoing recovery efforts. Both the junta and the forces they are fighting have accused each other of continuing these military actions since the earthquake, despite various declared ceasefires.

—Persecution.org

In India Nine Christians from Prayer Groups Arrested

On February 23, police arrested nine Christians in two locations in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh for holding Sunday prayer meetings, which Hindu groups alleged were intended to convert Hindus. It is reported that some have since been released on bail. Five Christians, including a pastor, were arrested in one district where a case was registered following a complaint by the district coordinator of the Hindu nationalist organization. Four others, including a pastor, were arrested in another district. In each case the Christians had gathered for regular Sunday prayers in a home when a Hindu mob barged in and alleged that they were defaming the Hindu religion and its deities and offering inducements to convert people. Police seized Bibles and other religious materials as evidence of conversion activities. A church leader said the police action was based on “mere allegations from right-wing Hindu activists and without any evidence. It has now become very dangerous for Christians to hold prayer gatherings in their homes.” The arrested Christians were charged under a strict anti-conversion law that was amended last year to include harsher punishments including life imprisonment for religious conversion activities. The amended law allows anyone to file a complaint about alleged conversion without having to prove it. Over one hundred Christians are reportedly being held in different jails across Uttar Pradesh state. Christians make up less than 1% of the two hundred million people who live in the state.

—ChurchInChains.ie

In Egypt Christians Hide Their Faith

Egypt has an ongoing persecution of the largest Christian population in the Middle East. Egypt has a population of around 111 million people, of whom 90% are Sunni Muslim, and 10% (representing 11 million people) are Christian. Despite their large numbers and the Egyptian constitution officially granting “absolute” freedom of religion, Christians in Egypt face significant persecution from the Islamic majority. Christians face daily discrimination, harsh restrictions, and constant pressure to hide their faith. The southern region of the country is particularly difficult. Converts from Islam to Christianity can face even greater difficulties. In one such case a convert to Christianity was arrested for “joining a terrorist group with knowledge of its purposes” and “contempt of the Islamic religion.” What he had actually done was become involved with a Facebook group for Muslim converts to Christianity. He was moved

around Egypt’s notoriously harsh prison system and was often denied visits from his family and legal team. Thankfully, however, an international organization lobbied on his behalf, and he was released in January. He has since moved to another country. A lawyer for this organization said, “Yet, in the face of such hardship, the courage and resilience of Egypt’s Christian community are a powerful testament to the enduring hope of the gospel.”

—ChristianToday.com

In Iran Two Christian Brothers Punished

Christian converts who are brothers, ages fifty and fifty-six, were arrested at a Christmas gathering over three years ago. They have just now been sentenced to four years in prison, fined, and exiled from their home province for two years after their release. They were convicted under the amended Article 500 of the penal code, which criminalizes “deviant propaganda activities contrary to the holy religion of Islam.” On top of the prison sentences, the brothers were fined 150 million tomans each (around \$1,500), banned from membership of any groups for five years after their release, and told they must spend the first two of those years outside the bounds of their home province in Iran. The arrest had been carried out by plainclothes intelligence agents, who showed no warrant nor explained which security force they represented. Family members, not knowing which agency had been responsible for the arrest, had been threatened and mocked by the officials they had spoken to, as they anxiously sought information about the brothers. Two other Christians who were arrested alongside the brothers had the charges against them dropped. The reason their charges were dropped remains unclear, but Christian converts are routinely pressured to recant their faith or sign commitments to refrain from any further involvement in Christian activities.

—ArticleEighteen.com

In China a Pastor Sentenced to Five Years in Prison

On March 27, 2025, the pastor of Cornerstone Reformed Church in Bengbu, Anhui province in China, was sentenced to five years in prison. Three church co-workers (one the pastor’s sister) were sentenced to between two- and two-and-a-half years, but their prison sentences were suspended, while the pastor remains in prison. The arrest on April 11, 2023, was while the pastor was traveling on church business in another province. He was charged with “illegal business operations.” The three co-workers were also criminally detained on the same charge. In May 2023, this charge was changed to fraud, which is more serious and carries heavier penalties. Their legal cases were supposed to be heard in court in May 2024, September 2024, and November 2024, but the trial was repeatedly delayed and hearings failed to take place on any of those occasions. According to their lawyers, the Christians who remained in detention this whole time were in a weakened state of physical and mental health due to the lengthy separation from their families. In January 2025, the trial of the three co-workers was finally concluded and they were freed on bail after having been detained for twenty months. The pastor, however, remains in prison following his verdict. The church has expressed shock at the fraud charge. The church has publicly stated many times that those charged did not commit fraud, the church’s expenditures were transparent and publicly disclosed regularly, all expenditure was agreed upon by the congregation, and no one has claimed that they were defrauded.

—ChurchInChains.ie



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

Excerpts from *Life and Labor of Rev. G.H. Kersten*

Rev. C. Sonneveld, Poederoijen, the Netherlands

(Adapted from the September 2007 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

The man behind the unification of 1907

The Lord has granted that we are well beyond it now, but the year 2007 was one hundred years that the “Gereformeerde Gemeenten” in the Netherlands was established as a denomination. The Lord used Rev. Kersten as an instrument in His hand to bring church groups together who loved the same old truth.

Sent into the vineyard

Since his eleventh year Rev. Kersten knew that he was destined to labor in the vineyard. The Lord had called him with the words, “Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem...” (Isaiah 40:1-2). When preaching as an exhorter, he received a call from the church of Meliskerke. He moved to this village in the province of Zeeland where he was installed by his fatherly friend, Rev. Pieneman, on March 23, 1902.

Soon it became manifest that the young “teaching elder” had received special gifts to lead in church life. In God’s providence these gifts would be of great benefit in the years before “1907.” The Lord effectively used him to remove obstacles and build bridges between the Reformed Churches under the Cross and the churches of the late Rev. Ledeboer. The merger between these two church groups was perhaps the most blessed fruit of his labors, a fruit that may still be seen after one hundred years!

Laboring as a servant

In 1905, Gerrit Hendrik Kersten was ordained to the ministry. About a year later he had to say farewell to Meliskerke and move to the city of Rotterdam. In 1912, he departed Rotterdam to labor in Yerseke, again in the province of Zeeland. In 1926, he was once again led to Rotterdam to take up the shepherd’s staff in the congregation which he would serve until his passing away in 1948. During his ministry Rotterdam-Center grew to become the largest congregation within the denomination. In 1930, the

congregation numbered 3,100 professing and baptized members. The preaching of the Word bore rich fruit in many hearts as well, and is that not the most important thing, after all?

Trying to create order

After the unification of 1907, Rev. Kersten played a great role in organizing the life of the new denomination and the local churches in an orderly way. One way of strengthening the unity of the churches, the publication of *De Saambinder*, was of great significance. The first issue of this denominational magazine, set up by Rev. G.H. Kersten and Rev. W. Den Hengst as editors, appeared in November 1919. The name, reminiscent of the word “Bands” in Zechariah 11:7, was more than a name; it was both a desire and a program. Moreover, the periodical would also serve as a launching pad for another undertaking—the establishing of a theological school. (*Matthew Henry commentary on Zechariah 11:7: “bands, denoting the harmony which hitherto united them as the flock of God” —Ed.*)

Pleading for a theological school

On June 28, 1923, Rev. Kersten used *De Saambinder* to unfold his plan to collect thirty thousand guilders for the establishing of a school where theological students would be trained. This plan met with extraordinary resistance of those wary of a school for ministers. He needed no less than sixty-four articles and all his writing skills to convince his readers that, although the Lord is able to bestow special gifts, He commonly works in a mediate way. Appealing to the Scripture and the old Reformed divines, he argued that young men called by the Lord and endowed with gifts to teach others nevertheless need to be equipped for their future task by pursuing a theological training. With God’s help the tireless efforts of Rev. Kersten were not in vain. On January 13, 1927, the theological school was opened.

Traveling through North America

In 1936, Rev. Kersten made a journey to America. In 1939, he made a second trip to the United States. After a weeklong voyage, he arrived in New York where he was welcomed by Rev. J. Van Zweden and many others. It was the beginning of a thirty-three-day visit during which he would speak thirty-eight times in the congregations of North America. The vastness and beauty of this continent prompted him to exclaim: "The Lord is great in all his works; the riches of nature proclaim His greatness in an endless variety. When we are granted to perceive something of this, we sink away and are dissolved. God is great, and we do not understand it. Three years ago, I traveled to the West by train, but this time I have seen more of the great works of the Lord."

Looking back upon what he had found in church life in the U.S., Rev. Kersten spoke of the tremendous distances between the congregations, their isolated position, their love for the old truth, but also the danger that non-Reformed doctrines and non-Presbyterian practices seemed to impact some of the churches. He encouraged the few ministers, serving on this continent, in their arduous task and expressed his hope that here, too, a theological school would be started with God's help. Repeatedly, he emphasized the importance of conducting church services and catechism classes in the English language lest the youth would feel left out and turn their backs upon the church. Apparently, the minister from "the old country" had a sharp eye and a compassionate heart! The following words are a quote from the report Rev. Kersten wrote in Grand Rapids during his first trip to the United States of America in 1936:

"Many Dutchmen came to greet us, in particular people who originated from the province of Zeeland and the island of Flakkee. It was pleasant to see how many on the new continent have remained faithful to the old truth. Also, in America the Lord still has His Church and a people with whom we feel one. It seems as if we have already been in close contact with these people for many years."

Engaged in schools and politics

It seems that Rev. Kersten was never able to forget the days when he, as a school teacher, had instructed children in the truth of God's Word. Also, as a minister he evidenced that the young people were bound upon his heart. He loved to teach them in the catechism classes but was grieved that those same children heard something totally different at school throughout the week. He did not rest until sound Reformed

schools had been established all over the country. Whenever he had the opportunity, he tried to attend the meetings of boards and teachers. In addition to that, he encouraged young people to pursue educational studies and thus qualify for teaching positions in the newly established schools.

Another field of labor that had Rev. Kersten's special interest was politics. He believed that God's Word and Law should have the first and final say in every sphere of life, including that of government and society. He felt that the church should not be unconcerned about the affairs of this world or leave them to liberals, Roman Catholics, and Neo-Calvinists. Rather, Christians ought to let their voice be heard in the realm of politics. His initiatives in this respect led to the birth of a new political party under the name *Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij* (Reformed Political Party). Rev. Kersten can be called the founding father of this party, which gained entrance in the political arena and, after so many years, *STILL* occupies seats in the Dutch Parliament today.

Forgotten or to be remembered?

It is worthwhile to read what he wrote about God's hand in the two World Wars of the twentieth century. "Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it!" (Micah 6:9b). We also wish to refer you to his numerous publications, particularly his *Reformed Dogmatics*.

All the labors of God's servants need to be cleansed by the blood of Christ, yet, with humility and thankfulness we may acknowledge the Lord for the fact that the congregations in which we have received a place have been bound together and built up by Rev. Kersten and others, whether known or unknown.

On September 6, 1948, Rev. Gerrit Hendrik Kersten passed away and entered his Master's glory. May we, together with our children, tread in the footsteps of this herald of the King, and "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (Hebrews 13:7).

* * * * *

Dear Children,

Last month we finished the series *The Life of Rev. G.H. Kersten as Told to His Grandchildren*. In it we learned much about a man who was very important to both our denominations. The Lord graciously gives such men throughout history to support and maintain His Church.

Even though that series ended, we had a desire to provide a closing summary on Rev. Kersten's life. We found the preceding article which nicely does this. Rev. Sonneveld mentions in the introduction to this article that he relied on the book, *Rev. G.H. Kersten*,

Facets of His Life and Work, by Rev. M. Golverdingen to write this article. This book is recommended to our older readers.

In this book we read that Rev. Kersten served the Rotterdam congregation for the second time from 1926 until his death in 1948. In 1945 he was removed from his role in politics by others in power who did not like his scriptural views in the government. The Lord removed this responsibility from him as his health began to suffer. On September 6, 1948, Rev. Kersten passed away. There were many speakers at his funeral. They spoke of Rev. Kersten and his work, but they

especially spoke of what God had given the Netherlands Reformed denomination in this man.

One minister said this, "Today we may honestly say that he was a man of great stature...he was a man upon whom God had bestowed great gifts of both mind and heart, which he willingly utilized in the interest of God's kingdom. When I think of his preaching...we can say that the foundation was, 'Through Thee through Thee alone, because of Thy eternal good pleasure'" His preaching was both personal and spiritual, and it was above all the preaching of a rich Christ." —*Ed.*



Bible Stories for Little Ones

The Wisdom of Solomon

(Based on 1 Kings 3)

One night Solomon had a dream. We often have dreams, too. Sometimes our dreams are frightening. Sometimes they are sad. Sometimes they are silly. Most of the time we forget them right away.

In Bible times God sometimes spoke to people through dreams. Today He speaks to us through the Bible.

Solomon's dream was a very special one. In his dream God said, "Ask what I shall give you." That means, what would you like to have? Tell Me, and I will give it to you.

What would we choose? If we could have anything we wanted, what would that one thing be? Would it be a lot of money, lots of friends, new toys, or what? Would any of us ask for a new heart?

What did Solomon say? "O God," he prayed, "Thou hast showed such mercy to my father David because he walked in Thy ways and did Thy will. Now Thou hast made me, his son, to rule over all these people, but I am but a little child; I don't know anything about doing this great work. Please give me wisdom to lead these people. Help me to know what is right and what is wrong, so I can rule them as I should."

How humble Solomon was! He did not ask for wisdom so that he would look good but only so that he could do what was best for the people. God was very pleased to hear what Solomon asked for, and He said to Solomon, "Since you did not ask anything for yourself, but only for wisdom to judge the people, then I will give that wisdom to you. I will make you so wise that there never will be another king as wise as you. Besides, I will give you everything you did

not ask for; I will give you riches and make you very loved and honored. If you obey Me and keep My laws as your father did, I will give you a long life as well."

Then Solomon woke up, and, yes, it had been a dream, but it was real. God had truly spoken to him and had made him wise.

What do we mean when we say that Solomon was wise? Do we mean that he was smart, that he got good grades in school? Well, that may have been true, but we mean a lot more than that. We mean that God was with him in trouble and in the problems which he had to figure out, in the words he said, and in the plans he had to make. God opened his eyes so that he could see both the good and the bad—and then guided him to give the right answer.

Many people came to Solomon with problems. Here is an example of one very wise answer he gave.

One day two women came to his door. Both had babies in their arms, but there was a problem. One baby was alive; the other was dead.

One woman told King Solomon what had happened. "We both live in the same house," the woman said. "A few days ago, I had my baby, and then three days later this woman's baby was born. No one else lives with us; there are only the two of us. During the night, while she was sleeping, she rolled over onto her baby by mistake and killed it. I know what she did next; during the night she quietly brought the dead baby over by me and took mine away from my side. When I woke up in the morning to feed my baby, I saw right away that it was not mine. She had switched them!

I know it's not my baby boy, I know my baby's face, and I know this living baby is mine."

"Oh, no, you're wrong," argued the other mother. "Yours is the dead one. You are the one who rolled over it, not I."

"It is not!" cried the first mother. "The dead one is yours!"

So, they argued before King Solomon.

How would we solve the problem? We would probably listen to the mothers and try to tell which one sounded more honest, but Solomon had a better way to find out, a way which shows the wisdom given to him by God.

"Bring me a sword," said the king.

How was a sword going to solve the problem?

When the sword was brought to the king, he said, "Cut the living baby in half, and give half to the one mother and half to the other."

Suddenly, there came a loud cry from one of the mothers. "Oh, no!" she pleaded. "Oh, please, don't! Give her the living baby, but please do not kill it!"

The other mother said, "No, go ahead and kill it. Then neither of us can have it."

Then Solomon knew exactly who the right mother was! "Give the baby to her," he said, pointing to the mother who had cried out, "Do not kill it. She is the mother of that baby!"

Thus, the happy mother was given her baby. How much she loved him! She loved him so much that she would rather let another mother have him than have him killed. That is how Solomon knew the child was hers. The other mother didn't care what happened to that baby, for he was not her child.

Soon all Israel had heard of the wonderful wisdom of their new king, and they respected him, for they could see that God was with him.

There are several books in the Bible which were written by Solomon. You should read them. They are full of his wisdom, and they tell us many things that people still listen to today. One book is the Song of Solomon, in which he tells how Christ's love for His Church is like a man's love for his new bride. Probably the most famous of Solomon's books is the book of Proverbs. There you can read such wise sayings as, "A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother," and, "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger."

There is also the book of Ecclesiastes. How few of us read this book as we should! Here rich King Solomon lists all the fine things that he had: servants, beautiful houses, gardens, pools, cattle, and all sorts of treasures. Whatever he wanted, he could get!"

Then he looked at everything he had, and he had to say, "What good is it that I am rich?" The same thing happens to the rich man that happens to the poor; he has to die. When I die, no one will ever remember that I was rich.

Then, after thinking the whole thing over, he had to say that the best thing for man to do was to "fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

Do we ever think of these things? How many of us hear Solomon's voice speaking to us yet today, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth"?



Bible Quiz

New Life

Dear Boys and Girls,

Many, or maybe most, of us had a cold winter this past year. There were some very low temperatures, and for several months, there was ice and snow. The ice on the lakes and ponds was thick and solid, which was good for many days of skating, but the ice also spread over every path, driveway, step, and sidewalk. One had to navigate VERY carefully to not slip when feeding animals and chickens or simply

walking from the car to the house. As we reached the end of February, it began to seem as though the ice would never melt.

On the way to church one morning, we passed the usual high rock walls of the mountains and hills which line the highway. I noted that the rocks looked beautiful with their coats of glistening icicles, icicles which hung several feet long from every ledge and bump in the rocks. How cold everything looked!

After we exited the highway, we drove along a road lined with trees. Suddenly, I noticed something. Yes, the long, cold icicles on the hard, solid rocks spoke of winter temperatures, but what did I see? At the same time, the trees were budding! On each and every small twig, I could see the small reddish bumps. It showed a promise of coming spring, of warmth, life, and new green leaves.

Two opposites—cold and dead, warm and alive... Perhaps you can think of such opposites, too. Think of a cemetery...When people stand there, they are alive, but all around them, the dead have been buried. Think of the night. It is dark, but the day is light.

I saw that just the other day. I was at the counter in a store, and the cashier seemed to be having a bad day. Outdoors, after many cold days, the sun was melting the snow and ice, beaming down on the earth abundantly. I mentioned it to the cashier. "Go out for a minute if you have a chance; the sun will make you feel better!"

She nodded and a smile appeared as she held up her phone. "I'll show you the sun I saw this morning when I came in," she said. On her little screen was a beautiful picture. The sky was still mostly dark, scattered with thick gray clouds. Above the clouds was a perfect white crescent—the moon was still shining. Below the clouds were several streaks of bright, glowing orange—the sun was coming up. "That is amazing!" I agreed, and it was. On one photo were depicted both the night and the day—the darkness and the light. Two opposites.

What brings about these opposites? Well, it is a total change—a change from dark to light, from hard ice to melting water, from cold to a new warm season, from night to a new bright day...

This is what happens in a person's heart when the Lord begins to work there. The heart is dark, cold, and hard; in it is found a hatred to God, His law, and His will. In it is a desire to please only oneself. Then a radical change takes place. The heart is made soft and alive—it is completely new.

That person never used to feel any guilt or grief over his sins, and he never felt love to God, but now... hatred turns to love so that he is very sad that he has grieved the Lord with his sin and still does. He begins to love God and longs for the Lord to speak to him. The heart that is alive begins to cry for mercy and to pray in truth. Sometimes a small bud of hope appears...would God take notice of such a sinner?

The Bible tells us, "The dead are raised up" (Matthew 11:5). Those dead in sin are raised up when life from God visits their souls. They are raised up to faith, hope, and love. When the Lord shows them something of Jesus Christ, their heart leaps with joy.

God's people can feel these opposites again and again. They feel doubt and hope, and they experience depths and heights. Sometimes they are afraid their heart has become completely cold again, but the Lord will not leave them there, and He comes to stir up that heart and warm it again. When they feel so dead inside, He comes to raise up the life and feeling in their soul. It is there, but it is buried under sin. The smallest sigh or feeling after God is proof that the Lord is still using His power to put life into their heart.

Those who are granted that new life in their heart will long for more and more: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39).

Ask the Lord to grant you a new heart instead of a stony heart: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26).

* * * * *

Fill in the blanks. Then place these words into the code puzzle on the next page. Each number in the puzzle represents a letter.

1. "Unto the upright there ariseth _____ in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous" (Psalm 112).

2. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the _____ of death, upon them hath the light shined" (Isaiah 9).

3. "And I will bring the _____ by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them" (Isaiah 42).

4. "To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of _____" (Luke 1).

5. "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in _____" (John 12).

6. "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the _____, nor of darkness" (1 Thessalonians 5).

7. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar _____; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light:" (1 Peter 2).

8. "This then is the _____ which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1).

9. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new _____ will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36).

10. "No man can serve two _____: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6).

11. "I hate _____ thoughts: but Thy law do I love" (Psalm 119).

12. "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and _____ Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John 17).

13. "That whosoever believeth in Him should not _____, but have eternal life" (John 3).

14. "Then Simon Peter answered Him, _____, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6).

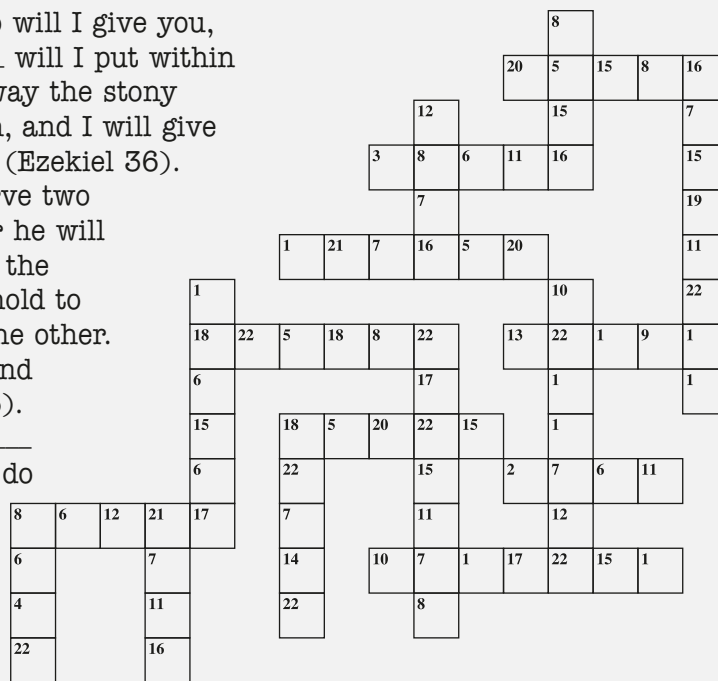
15. "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My _____" (John 10).

16. "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this _____ shall keep it unto life eternal" (John 12).

17. "As Thou hast given Him _____ over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him (John 17).

18. "And this is _____ eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John 17).

19. "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were _____, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13).



Write the Letter:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
S							L			N
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
G				D	T		K			

X	V
B	F
O	I
A	X
U	M
X	X
J	C
R	X
X	P
X	W
H	E

For the Older Children

20. In Romans 5:21, sin is to grace as death is to eternal _____.

21. In Romans 6:23, wages of sin is to death as the gift of God is to _____.

22. In Titus 3:7, justified by is to grace as made heirs is to _____.

For the Younger Children

Fill in the vowels.

23. ____nd th____s ____s th____ promise th____t
H____ hath promised us, even ____t____rn____l
l____f____. (1 John 2)

24. ____nd th____s ____s th____ record, th____t
God hath given to us ____t____rn____l l____f____,
and this life is in His S____n. (1 John 5)

25. Th____t ye may know that ye h____v____
____t____rn____l l____f____, and that ye may
b____l____v____ on the n____m____ ____f th____
S____n ____f G____d. (1 John 5)

26 L____ ____k____ng for the m____rcy of our L____rd
Jesus Christ ____nt____ ____t____rn____l
l____f____. (Jude 1)

Answers to April's "Fire" quiz:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Sticks | Acts 28:3 |
| 2. Bush | Exodus 3:2 |
| 3. Lamb | Genesis 22:7 |
| 4. Stones | 1 Kings 18:38 |
| 5. Water | Matthew 17:15 |
| 6. Voice | 1 Kings 19:12 |
| 7. Fierceness | Nahum 1:6 |
| 8. Fruit | Matthew 3:10 |
| 9. Wheat | Matthew 3:12 |
| 10. Burned | Matthew 13:40 |
| 11. Nature | James 3:6 |
| 12. Praise | 1 Peter 1:7 |
| 13. Work | 1 Corinthians 3:13 |
| 14. A fire round wall of about | (Zechariah 2:5) |
| 15. She shall be devoured with fire | (Zechariah 9:4) |
| 16. A brand plucked out of the fire | (Zechariah 3:2) |
| 17. Bullock, wood, stone, dust, water | |
| 18. That the Lord is God | |

Answers to previous quizzes were received in March from:

Esther Bakker
Britni Blom (2)
Tiffany Blom (2)
Aryanna Breeweg
Carly Brouwer
Thomas Brouwer
Maya Chase (2)
Oakley Chase (2)
Madeline DeKorne
Melanie DeKorne
Nathaniel DeKorne
Cody Driesen
Ethan Driesen
Jordan Driesse
Kallyn Driesse
Lindsey Driesse
Allison Ekema
Kaylynn Ekema

Bereket Engelsma (2)
Caden Fluit
Kate Hoogendoorn
Jarynne Knibbe
Rylan Knibbe (2)
Vera Knibbe (2)
Carissa Mans
Travis Mans
Abe Mol
Teddy Mol
Madeline Mol
Zachary Mol
Andrew Murphy
John Murphy
Carter Neels
Blake Pannekoek
Cassadee Pannekoek
Lauren Pannekoek

Andrew Remijn
Daniel Remijn
Lauren Remijn
Jacob Spaans
Tessa Spaans
Grace Timmermans (2)
Ava Van Maanen
Kaiven Van Middendorp (2)
Konner Van Middendorp (2)
Hanna Van Wyk
Joelle Vande Waerdt
Wyatt Vande Waerdt
Caleb Vogelaar
Matthew Vogelaar
Jayden Weeda
Anthony Wessels (3)
Boaz Wessels
Reuben Wessels

Welcome to our new members:
Lane Hoogendoorn, Vera Knibbe,
Rylan Knibbe, Madeline DeKorne

Love,
Aunt LenaBeth

Esther Bakker

Little sisters surely can get into trouble, can't they, Esther? She didn't scribble on your note to me, but you probably keep those markers away so she doesn't scribble on your homework and other things, right? I am sure she is a fun little sister to play with, too. What do you like to play with Debbie?

Please send your answers to the address shown below:

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

The Sword of the Spirit Is the Word of God

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

—William Gurnall, *Christian in Complete Armour*

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.**

■ 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.

News & Announcements

■ Ministerial Calls

Extended:

To Rev. H. Hofman of Grand Rapids–Beckwith, Michigan, by the congregation of Chilliwack, British Columbia.

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

Declined:

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

By Rev. P.C. Vlot of Krabbendijke, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Franklin Lakes, New Jersey.

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

■ Obituaries

DE KOK, Jordon Henry – Age 15, March 20, 2025; Picture Butte, Alberta; Parents – Henry & Chelsey; Siblings – Kylan, Adelynn, Cohen, Alayah, Ella; Grandparents – Martin & Wilma Oudshoorn, Henry & Janey; Great-grandmother – Jenny Bezooeyen; Great-grandfather – Harry Oudshoorn; predeceased by great-grandparents Ena Oudshoorn, John Bezooeyen, Huib & Jannie, John & Janet Klok. (Rev. E.C. Adams, Deuteronomy 4:29.)

DE KOK, Tanner Ryan – Age 14, March 21, 2025; Picture Butte, Alberta; Parents – Brian and Jacky; Siblings – Nicholas (Natalie van Hierden), Joshua (Arielle de Wilde), Fionna (Kyle Arnoldussen), Olivia, Emerie; Grandparents – Henry & Janey de Kok, Helen Klok; predeceased by grandfather Gerrit Klok. (Rev. E.C. Adams, Deuteronomy 4:29.)

LUGTHART, Emily (nee Vander Male) – Age 98, March 20, 2025; Jenison, Michigan; Husband – Jay; Children – Jay & Michelle, Ken & Shirley, Valerie & Raymond Kleyn, Joan & Timothy Westrate; 18 grandchildren, 41 great-grandchildren; predeceased by 3 brothers, 2 sisters, and their spouses. (Rev. H. Hofman, Hebrews 13:14.)

■ 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

■ NAGM Administrator Address Correction to the 2025 Denominational Directory

The address for Mr. Steve Van Brugge is incorrect on page 29 of the 2025 Denominational Directory. The correct address is:

39 Mill St. E., PO Box 249
Otterville, ON, N0J 1R0
Email: admin@nagm.ca

■ Eventide Home

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

50th Wedding Anniversary

The Lord willing,
on June 20, 2025, our dear parents,
grandparents, and great-grandparents,

David & Mary Bazen

hope to commemorate their
50th wedding anniversary.

*"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart;
and lean not unto thine own understanding.
In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and
He shall direct thy paths"* (Proverbs 3:5&6).

314 Fennessy St. S.W.
Grand Rapids, MI 49534

■ New Titles from Bible Truth Books

We wish to announce that the following titles have recently been reprinted and/or are once again available:

Cremation, Not for Christians—
Paperback, \$3.80.

Ears from Harvested Sheaves by J.C. Philpot—
Hardcover: \$19.75.

Commentary on Psalm 119 (Geneva Commentary Series) by C. Bridges—Hardcover, \$26.00.

Used Books: We continue to supply our customers with a selection of used books at greatly discounted prices. Please feel free to contact us for a copy of our current list of used books.

Used Book Donations are also very welcome. Bible Truth Books will provide pre-paid shipping labels for used book donations shipped from any location within the US. Those interested in being reimbursed for postage should contact us prior to shipping for specific mailing instructions.

Blue Book Sermons: Bible Truth Books, in cooperation with the NRC Book & Publishing Committee, has a considerable collection of new and donated Blue Book sermons available. Those who have partial sets are also welcome to send us a list of Blue Books they are missing; we will do our best to supply these as availability permits. All Blue Book sermons are provided free of charge; reimbursement for postage charges is appreciated, however.

In addition, donations of any Blue Book Sermons are very welcome, especially of Blue Books 1–300.

Please note that the prices above do not include postage.

Bible Truth Books
P.O. Box 1290
Grand Rapids, MI 49501-1290
Phone / Fax: 616-776-2593
BibleTruthBooks@igatweb.com
www.BibleTruthBooks.org

Eternity

A man's greatest care should be
for that place where he lives
longest; therefore, eternity should
be his scope.

—Thomas Watson

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

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!**

2025 NRCEA Conference

All those involved with Christian School education (all staff, board and consistory members, prospective teachers, etc.) are invited to attend the NRCEA Conference to be held July 30–August 1, the Lord willing, at the NRCS, Pompton Plains, NJ. More information is available at www.teachersconference2025.com or at www.nrcsnj.org. We look forward to seeing many of you.

■ 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 rteunissen@yahoo.com

NERIAH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CALGARY, ALBERTA, has a unique opportunity for a full-time teacher to join our small school. While all applications are welcome, we are in most need of a teacher for our students in middle and high school. We are seeking an organized individual who is willing to learn, a team player, and able to transition between grade levels during a school day. While a certified teacher is preferred, we welcome all applicants who are passionate about teaching. For more information, please contact the principal, Darlene Dekker, at darlene.dekker@neriahcs.ca or school board president, Mr. Daniel Visser, at 403-554-1097 or by email visser.daniel@outlook.com

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ROCK VALLEY/SIOUX CENTER, IOWA, is seeking to fill openings in grades 7-12: math, elementary, physical education, and secondary teaching. Some of these posi-

tions 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 resumé 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

From **THE BANNER OF TRUTH**
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Oak Ridge, NJ 07438

Once More We Come Before Our God

Once more we come before our God;
Once more His blessing ask;
O may not duty seem a load,
Nor worship prove a task.

Father, Thy quickening Spirit send
From heaven, in Jesus' name,
To make our waiting minds attend,
And put our souls in frame.

May we receive the word we hear,
Each in an honest heart;
Hoard up the precious treasure there,
And never with it part.

To seek Thee all our hearts dispose;
To each Thy blessings suit;
And let the seed Thy servant sows
Produce a copious fruit.

Bid the refreshing north wind wake;
Say to the south wind, Blow;
Let every plant the power partake,
And all the garden grow.

Revive the parched with heavenly showers;
The cold with warmth divine;
And as the benefit is ours,
Be all the glory Thine.

—Joseph Hart

the
Banner
of Truth

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