

the **Banner** *of Truth*

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The Love of Christ
Righteousness

For our young readers...

The Brook Cherith
White



"And He changeth the times and the seasons..." DANIEL 2:21a



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

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

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

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

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

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Meditation

The Piercing of Christ's Side

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

“But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water”
(John 19:34).

How little did the Roman soldier realize what he really did as his spear pierced the side of the Lord Jesus. He was restrained from breaking Christ's legs as took place with the malefactors and was moved instead to thrust his lance between His ribs. In so doing, he was the instrument in the Lord's hand to reveal what would appear so wondrous to the Apostle John—perhaps not so wondrous in the moment for John, but very evidently it became so by the time he penned this gospel and his general letters much later in his life. It must be remarked that for one, John saw and wished to impress upon his readers the truth and unbroken unity of God's Word. *“For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken. And again another Scripture saith, They shall look on Him whom they pierced.”* The foundation for spiritual instruction always has been and will always remain God's Word. By regeneration and faith, we must believe that God's Word is true and will come to be fulfilled, but it also must become a personal matter for us. The wonder must be applied. This all centers around the Lamb of God who is the fulfiller of God's Word and the applier of His own benefits. Therefore, John's observance also served toward this deeper purpose. *“And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.”* God's servants must always aim at this in their preaching for their hearers, namely, God's glory and their salvation.

God had opened the side of the first Adam. From his rib, out of his own life, he received his wife. With what glory and immeasurable love did the Lord God crown this giving, not to mention that in so doing it was a doubling unto Adam a manifestation of the image of God in which he was created (Genesis 1:27, 1 Corinthians 11:7). Afterwards, how deep did Adam fall, and in him as their covenant head, the whole human race would be plunged into a three-fold death. Having lost God's image, Adam became guilty before a holy God and His law. He became stained from head to foot with the pollution of original and actual sin and begat children under the curse (Galatians 3:10).

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12).

Now, what did John see? *“But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.”*

The side of the second Adam must now be opened in His death in order to receive, or perhaps better, to retrieve, His deeply sunken “wife,” the Church. Jesus Christ alone, the sinless Lamb of God, became the Mediator of the covenant and by His death absorbed the eternal wrath of God and the curse due to His Church. However, were the water and blood that John beheld only medical proof that Christ had really died? Certainly, this does not have to be disregarded, but it is infinitely more!

John saw the wonder in the all-sufficiency of this sacrifice. John beheld with an eye of faith a mystery uncovered in the blood and water that issued forth. The light of the day dawned that Zechariah had spoken of years before. *“In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness”* (Zechariah 13:1).

In his letter, John writes, *“This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood”* (1 John 5:6a).

In the Old Testament purification from sin was typified by water and blood. There stood a laver full of water in the court of the temple before the altar “to wash withal.” The life of the creature, man and beast, was in the blood (Leviticus 17:11,14). Therefore, Paul writes, *“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission”* (Hebrews 9:22).

The water of grace and regeneration is so necessary. Here John beheld the Source. The water of the Spirit which proceedeth from the Son as well as the Father cannot be missed (John 3:5). The water of sanctification flows from the open side of Christ.

Yet, more is necessary: *“And forthwith came there out blood and water.”* It is not that of bullocks and rams: *“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins”* (Hebrews 10:4). Now it is that of the true Mediator, the Surety, the Bridegroom, the great High Priest over the house of God. It was the blood of the Son of God. This blood is of inestimable value and becomes so to the Church of God. One drop was sufficient in value to purchase a multitude that no man can number. One drop contains the power to cleanse from all sin. It is justifying blood and glorifying blood. Out of Christ's open side the lost image of God is revealed and restored. It is blood that makes enemies into friends, rebels into willing and loving servants, seals the adoption of children and brings them to the Father. In His blood is THE Life!

Friends, what a wonder if we may see what John saw—not in the moment of it taking place, that is not necessary,

but by the eye of faith. By nature, we are worse than the soldier. We may sin ignorantly, but how much is committed against God deliberately? How we pierce the Lord through with our countless sins. Has this dreadful reality been shown to us? We reject, despise, and continuously rebel against a good-doing God. How a people mourn when the graphic reality and the heinousness of sin is revealed to them in the piercing of Christ! Desiring the throne, they have sent Christ to the cross. *“...And they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn”* (Zechariah 12:10b).

Is that you reader? Oh, behold, *“...and forthwith came there out blood and water.”* Here, the riddle is made known; out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong

came forth sweetness. By such a way the bitter waters of Marah are made sweet, and the cut-off rod of Aaron begins to swell with a bud. People of the Lord, in His life He bled for you, in His death He gave it all for you. One drop applied gives eternal comfort.

His blood remains! What safety is in His precious blood! John could look back and not only never forget what he saw but also look forward to those who must be saved. Not a bone of that body, His Church, shall be broken. Oh, that room may be made in our hearts this season for that cleansing blood and water—that we may learn to flee to that open

Fountain because: *“Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen”* (Revelation 1:7). □

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is committed against God deliberately?
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our countless sins! Has this dreadful
reality been shown to us? We reject,
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a good-doing God.*



Bible Study

The Prophet Zephaniah (2)

Rev. C. Van Dam (1893-1976)

(Translated from the February 4 through November 4, 1965 issues of *De Saambinder*)

Judah was the head of those who remained after the fall of the ten tribes; therefore, judgment would come upon Judah and the capital city of Jerusalem. This was for various reasons but especially because of the sins against the first table of the moral law.

First of all, the worship of Baal, despite Josiah's reformation, was probably still practiced in secret. Baal was the idol of the Sidonians, who had already been worshipped in the time of the judges of Israel, and was later introduced into the land of Ephraim by Jezebel, who even elevated the worship of Baal to the status of state religion. However, God would exterminate them in Judah and Jerusalem with the Chemarims, subordinate servants, and the more prominent priests of Baal. Also, the double-minded, who halted between two opinions, who at one time professed the true God, and at another time participated in idolatry, would be judged. Those who bowed down on the roofs of their houses to the sun and the stars as their idols would also be struck by God's destructive judgment, as would the apostates who had first promised to cooperate with the reformation but then turned away from the Lord. According to Zephaniah, a severe judgment would come upon

all these deviants. The Lord did not want to strike before clearly pointing out the causes of His terrible wrath so that He could free Himself from them all.

Nothing would excuse the unrepentant sinners even though Jehovah had dwelled in Jerusalem for centuries, as it were. He would stretch out His hand against them, in spite of the fact that there were a few godly people among them who feared the Lord. The Lord mentioned the sins by name, precisely for the godly's sake, so that they would know that the Lord was not coming with His judgments because of them. God is jealous for His honor, and even if one had not practiced gross idolatry, there are so many sins that are very closely related to idolatry. God cannot tolerate double-mindedness; God something and the world something is very evil in His sight. To solemnly promise the Lord to obey Him—for that is the meaning of swearing by the Lord—and then a little later to swear by Malcham, also called Molech or Moloch, the idol of the children of Ammon, was an abomination in the sight of the Lord.

Therefore, Zephaniah exhorted repentance and the abolition of those abominations on behalf of Jehovah, who had accepted him as His preacher of penitence and qualified

him. That was necessary because the people would treat Zephaniah very badly if he dared to make such predictions. After all, the preachers of God's righteousness could expect nothing else from the corrupt seed of Abraham. Zephaniah spoke boldly: "Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, He hath bid His guests" (Zephaniah 1:7). Hold thy peace, do not murmur against the Lord, but confess that He is righteous in sending judgments. Hold thy peace, you adversaries, for soon you will see the fulfillment of His threats with your own eyes. Hold thy peace, for the Lord speaks, and He "is not a man that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent."

The day of the Lord, the day of God's vengeance, is at hand, even though you postpone the day of your death in your blindness and wickedness. The day of the Lord, a day of fear and horror for the wicked, is at hand. Then God will silence all His enemies forever; they will be struck dumb with fright and astonishment. All excuses and evasions to escape judgment will be found to be lies and deceit; there will be no excuse left, for the Lord has prepared a sacrifice. Now you sacrifice to idols without fear, but the Lord has prepared another sacrifice, a sacrifice of righteousness, to restore and uphold His honor. You yourselves and your people will be the sacrifice; people will be slaughtered like lambs before the altar. "The slain of the LORD shall be many," we read in Isaiah 66:16. The Lord has bid His guests, that is, the Chaldeans will celebrate when they have taken Jerusalem, just as you celebrate with your sacrifices to the idols. Even the royal family will pay for their pride and vanity, as will the princes, as we read in Zephaniah 1:8:

(To be continued)

"And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel." From the death of Josiah, the Israelites fell from one misery into another, as the prophetess Huldah had said. 2 Chronicles 34:24ff: "Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah."

The Lord would not do this during Josiah's lifetime but after his death, for he was gathered to his grave in peace. Even though Josiah's successors were of the lineage and house of David, and even though they had had a converted father, it would not avail them on the day of God's fierce anger. Their lives would testify against them all the more because they sinned against light and against better judgment. Did not the king's children have to die at Riblah in the presence of their father Zedekiah?

The Lord's sword of vengeance would strike terribly as a reward and punishment for the abominable idolatry that was practiced again after Josiah's death. The Lord would visit all those who were clothed with strange apparel, out of contempt for the simple clothing of their own country. They preferred the clothing of other nations and introduced these new fashions. Fine linen and silk were not enough, even though they had been given to them by God. They wanted to go abroad to obtain what was expensive and came from afar. They did the same as thousands do in our day. It was never beautiful and expensive enough for their boundless pride, and the lower classes followed the higher classes in their pride.



A Word in Season

The Love of Christ

Rev. G.J.N. Moens, Goes, the Netherlands

(Translated from the February 23, 2023 issue of *De Saambinder*)

"Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Galatians 1:4).

In these Passion weeks, we are again pointed to Christ's unspeakable love to the glory of His Father and to His black bridal Church. It was the desire of the Apostle Paul, and with him of the Church of all ages, to glory in this eternal, incomprehensible love of Christ. He exhorted the Galatians to seek the ground of their salvation not in their own works but in Christ and His righteousness only.

"Who gave Himself." He gave Himself for those given Him of the Father in the stillness of the never begun eternity. Then He said, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." In the fullness of the time, He gave Himself in His deep humiliation. He came to suffer and to die. He gave Himself willingly to empty the cup, which the Father had put in His hand, to the last drop. Thus, He spoke to the multitude that came to Him with swords and staves at the Garden of Gethsemane, "If therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way"

Christ wanted to give Himself into the hands of His enemies for a guilty and poor people, who could not even watch with Him one hour. When they all fled away, He let Himself be bound, mocked, and scourged. Oh, He loves His Church so unspeakably much with an all-giving love. That is why He wanted to humble Himself to the death of the cross. He was willing to bear the curse, the reproach, and the punishment, in order to do in perfect obedience what was required by God in order to redeem His Church from eternal destruction and to restore it to the favor and communion of God. That eternal miracle: “That whereas you should otherwise have suffered eternal death, I have given My body to the death of the cross and shed My blood for you.”

Separation made

That is also why the apostle said, “For our sins.” We have forsaken God. Our sins make a separation between the Lord and us and make us worthy of eternal death. Our sins, no, no general atonement is meant with that. It is true, the blood of Christ is of infinite value.

It is so all-sufficient, even if it were for the sins of the whole world. There is no limit in this blessed Fountain of Blood, but it pleases the Lord to glorify it in the hearts of the elect. God’s free grace is an indignation, an offense to a child of Adam who has rights in self.

In the work of God’s grace, man with all his worthiness is totally set outside. Then it becomes a miracle for a people who are so black, so filthy, so unclean, who can never cleanse themselves, that in Christ there is a fountain opened against sin and against uncleanness. “For our sins.” That preaches to us that no matter who we are, how filthy, how guilty, how wicked, in Christ there is escape from the coming wrath of God. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sins.

Issues of the day

“That He might deliver us from this present evil world,” Paul then wrote. This is the world which is but for a moment. The present world, where what is news today is already superseded by other events tomorrow—a world where everything seems to be determined by the issues of the day. It is an evil world, where, under the Lord’s permission, Satan tries everything to lead man to destruction, and it finds such a connection in our evil hearts.

That is why we read of “delivering.” For by nature, we are all so stuck to this present, evil world; so stuck, that a divine, irresistible drawing is necessary to draw us out of it! Yet, would anything be too hard for the Lord? How miserably Saul of Tarsus was stuck in his religion, and how hopelessly stuck the Galatians were in their idolatry, until it was the hour of God’s good pleasure, and the Lord began to draw with cords of lovingkindness. Then they came with supplication and weeping. God’s seeking love for sinners breaks the heart.

The discovery of the Spirit teaches that we will never be able to cleanse ourselves from our sins. How great it is if in commencement something may be seen of Him who gave Himself. If a poor sinner may see and experience something of the love of Christ, he will say with Peter, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”

This will be understood more and more in the life of grace. Also, Christ’s love becomes more and more a source of marveling and humbling—what it has cost Him

to cleanse His bride from sin and make her dwell with Him forever.

Eternal good pleasure

Why is it, Lord, that Thou lookest after such a one? Well, because it is “according to the will of God and our Father,” because of His eternal good pleasure—eternal, incomprehensible love! In Christ’s inexpressible self-surrendering, the Lord is glorified and the sinner freely saved.

Reader(s), has this Saviour, the precious Lord Jesus Christ, already received value for your soul? Or do the things of here below still have the highest place in your heart? Then ask if the Lord Himself will open your eyes to the fact that your sins are leading to eternal destruction. It will be so distressing if we have despised this love and will have to hate and curse God forever. In Him is everything for the chief of sinners.

People of the Lord, in all struggles, has He not taken the highest place in your heart? Then you also know how His love has kindled a wonderful reciprocating love in your heart. Do not seek rest until you may know on the basis of justice: our—yes, also my—God and Father for Jesus’ sake. “O LORD, Thou art my God; I will exalt Thee, I will praise Thy name; for Thou hast done wonderful things.” □

Christ wanted to give Himself into the hands of His enemies for a guilty and poor people, who could not even watch with Him one hour. When they all fled away, He let Himself be bound, mocked, and scourged. Oh, He loves His Church so unspeakably much with an all-giving love.

It is the great support and solace of the saints in all the distresses that befall them here that there is a wise Spirit sitting in all the wheels of motion, governing the most eccentric creatures and their most pernicious designs to blessed and happy issues.

—John Flavel (1627-1691)

Curatorium Announcement

The Curatorium is scheduled to hold its next annual meeting, the Lord willing, at the Beckwith Avenue church in Grand Rapids on Wednesday, June 3, 2026. Rev. A.H. Verhoef hopes to lead us in a prayer service the prior evening at 7:30 P.M.

At this meeting, Student W.A. de Wilde is to be examined after his first year of studies. Student G.F. Rozeboom, after his second year of studies, also will speak a trial sermon with the hope of being sent out to begin speaking an edifying word in the midst of our congregations. We hope and pray that the Lord may grant our instructors and students much of His Spirit to lead into His truth for the welfare of our denomination.

At the same time, the opportunity will be opened at this meeting for men to present themselves with an attest from their consistory, to be considered for entrance into our Netherlands Reformed Theological School with the hope of being admitted to the holy ministry, whether in the established congregations or on the mission field.

In the gospel of John we read, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through Him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light" (John 1:6-8). No man can bear witness of that which he has not experienced himself. That Light must first be revealed to John, in order that he might see it. Then he must recognize it as the Light. That is only possible by knowing what darkness is, that it may be distinguished from it. This must be in the first place true of every man that preaches God's Word. Alas, what confusion has come into the Christian churches in general in the world, for the lack of ability to distinguish between light and darkness itself, by the very men who attempt to witness it to others! May the Lord ever spare us from this as a denomination! When the birth of Christ was revealed to the Shepherds on the fields of Bethlehem, it was in the night, not only naturally, but also spiritually. What a great contrast when suddenly light shone from heaven! Do you know what this is, my friends, for the Light of grace to suddenly be revealed in your soul darkened by sin?

Still, it is not sufficient for the ministry to know experientially of the revelation of that Light in your darkness. We read that John the Baptist was "sent from God...for a witness...to bear witness of that Light." Now surely every man to whom that Light is revealed, will desire to witness of that Light. We read of the

Shepherds that "when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all they that heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds" (Luke 2:17-18). This is not a strange thing in the life of those who have been truly enlightened by the Lord in their darkness, also not in the life of women and sometimes even of children. What a blessed benefit may then be received by our loved ones and all those who surround us by such a testimony! May the Lord grant more of this in our dark days!

We read more, however, of John the Baptist, for he was "sent from God...for a witness...to bear witness of that Light." We can ourselves have witnessed that Light, and not be *sent to bear witness* of that Light, that is, in an official manner in the Church of God. When John began to bear witness, he was approached by the priests and Levites, who asked him, "Who art thou?" These were sent by the Pharisees. The church rightly asked him about his authority. Did not Christ Himself admonish the Church of Thyatira for "suffering that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach"? Indeed, every minister truly sent by the Lord will know what it means to have his authority questioned, not merely by men, but by Satan himself! How often, in the multitude of trials experienced in the midst of this work, do they not have to go back to the Lord to say, "Lord, didst Thou not send me?"

Thus, these two things are most necessary to know, a *personal witnessing* of the Light of grace in the midst of the darkness of sin, and a *sending* to bear witness of that Light. These two things are what every applicant to our theological school is asked to explain to us. Are there men upon whom such matters are laid by the Lord in the days in which we live with our seed, upon whom the weight of the welfare of souls is bound? Let such a man unburden his soul honestly and openly before his consistory, that they may make their judgment of the matter. Who can tell if the Lord would be pleased to add more men to the sacred work! Vacant congregations should seek help from their moderator. If freedom to grant an attest is received, the clerk of the Curatorium should be notified. The applicant should also forward his own request to the clerk for a hearing at the upcoming meeting, the Lord willing. Please submit all information as soon as it is available.

On behalf of the Curatorium,
Rev. J. den Hoed, *President*
Rev. J.J. Witvoet, *Clerk* (clerk@nrtschool.com)



From Our Inheritance

He Was Seen! (1)

Rev. A. Moerkerken (1947-2024)

(Translated from the March 28, 2013 issue of *De Saambinder*)

A few more days and it will be Easter again. There is something unspeakably sad in the way the world celebrates this greatest of the Christian redemptive acts. It has become an egg-gathering feast. Wonderfully dressed-up Easter bunnies tumble around us in malls. Then you notice once again, very painfully, how far we have grown away from the roots of what was once called a baptized and Christian nation.

We hopefully do not need to explain to the readers of our periodical what the Church of the Lord commemorates on Easter Sunday. Christ is raised, or arose. In the New Testament it is said either way. When we say He is raised, all the emphasis is on the work of God the Father. He accepted the ransom price paid by His Son and raised Him from the state of death. If we say that Christ arose, the light falls on His own act: He had power to lay down His life and had power to take it again (John 10:18).

Now a question: how do we actually know that Christ arose from the dead? After all, no one was present there, that early Sunday morning in the garden, near the hill Golgotha. Perhaps someone will say: We know because He appeared. Did not Luke say so aptly that He showed Himself alive to His apostles “by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days” (Acts 1:3)? That is true, but...what if He had not appeared? To no one? Then His disciples would *still* have had to believe that He was risen. Why? Because He had foretold it over and over again. “For as Jonas was three days...” What if He had not foretold that He would rise? Then they would *still* have had to believe it. Why? Because the Scriptures—we would say the Old Testament—spoke of it. Did not the prophet Isaiah say, “He shall prolong His days”? To those Scriptures Christ came back again and again after His resurrection. “Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.”

Ah, true! This is how it should have been, but God’s Word teaches us that the disciples were so awfully dull. Have you ever been glad to see this described so honestly? That can only be of comfort for slow learners. To come to the aid of His disciples’ dullness, Christ appeared during the forty days between His resurrection and His ascension by many infallible signs!

About those appearances we want to write something in this article. You should not expect meditations on all those appearances here; that is not possible in a short article. We only want to list the appearances for our readers and make a few explanatory remarks.

First to Mary Magdalene...

We are not quite sure about the number of times the Lord appeared. Many interpreters of Scripture think ten times. We agree with them. What *is* certain is to whom He appeared first. This is clearly stated in Mark 16:9—to Mary Magdalene. We do not know much about her. She was from the Galilean town of Magdala. She had been a person who had been possessed with devils. Christ had cast seven devils out of her! Since that time, she had followed the Lord and ministered unto Him of her substance along with Johanna and Susanna and many others (Luke 8:3). She stood at the cross when He died (John 19:25). She was also present at His burial. Together with the other women, she went to the sepulchre in the early Easter morning. When she saw that the stone had been rolled away, she went back to Jerusalem. There she sought out Peter (!) and John—a moving demonstration of her love. She could not be above the apostles who had been offended because of the Lord, not even above him who had denied Him. At length, the evangelist John described to us how Christ had revealed Himself to her; he is the only one who did so in such detail. That one word of the Saviour to her: “Mary” will have remained unforgettable. She had turned and said to Him, “Rabboni,” Master. One great disappointment did await her that morning. When she reported to the mourning and weeping disciples that she had seen the Lord—they did not believe it (Mark 16:11). Yet, that could not take away her unspeakable joy!

Then to the women

We will not now list all the names of the women who had made their way to the sepulchre. Salome was among them, Mary, the mother of James, a certain Johanna, and others. It is not always easy to determine the identity of these women. For example, the reader should open the Bible at John 19:25. Were three, four, or five women standing there at the cross?¹

It is noteworthy, however, that these women saw the angels in the open sepulchre. Peter and John had not seen those angels! Does this contain a heavenly reprimand that they, as apostles, should have known better? What is *also* striking is that the women were not forbidden to hold the Lord Jesus by His feet when He had revealed Himself to them. Mary Magdalene was not allowed to do so...

¹In the Dutch Bible, there is a comma placed after Mary, the wife of Cleophas.

And hath appeared to Simon...

We will have to take the appearance to Simon Peter for the third appearance of Christ. After all, when the travelers to Emmaus returned to Jerusalem in the evening, they were greeted by the assembled disciples with the words, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon!" Scripture puts a veil over Christ's encounter with the disciple who had denied Him. That veil was not there when Peter would later be restored into his office at the Sea of Tiberias; six others were present (John 21). What took place in Simon Peter's personal encounter with his risen Master, no one will ever know but those two. On the other hand, every stray sheep sought by the Lord will understand something of it....

Two who went into the country

This is how Mark speaks of it: "After that He appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country." Some expositors have thought that this is not about the travelers to Emmaus because the Bible says that the Lord Jesus was revealed "in another form." In the case of the two men who walked to Emmaus, they argue, there was no such thing. Indeed, their eyes were "holden, that they should not know Him" (Luke 24:16). We do not share that view! This is indeed about Cleopas and his friend, walking the eleven-kilometer road from Jerusalem to Emmaus that Sunday afternoon. Annotation 13² to Mark 16 solves the problem (another form —*Ed.*): "Which He truly

²Annotations mentioned refer to aligning text from *Authorized Version Annotated (including Dutch Annotations)* found on the website <https://bijbel-statenvertaling.com>

had not, but which He seemed to them to have, forasmuch as their eyes were held, that they knew Him not (cf. Luke 24:16)."

Shut doors in the evening...

At the fifth appearance of Christ, it was evening, the evening of the first day of the week. By the way, have you ever noticed that most of the appearances of the risen Mediator took place on the first day of the week? This fact will not impress Sabbatists (and sadly there are more and more of them in Christian circles), but we find in it an implicit indication that the resurrection of Christ made the first day of the week the "Lord's Day."

Two persons were noticeably absent during this fifth appearance, Judas and Thomas, but for very different reasons! We read that the appearance occurred "when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled." This teaches us at least two things: the disciples feared the Jews and they did not expect the Lord. Yet He came. How? Did He get through the wood of closed doors? That explanation is completely unnecessary and also undesirable. He opened the doors by His divine power. Then He stood in the midst! We must take notice that we can always tell whether the Lord is present when the congregation gathers. When He is present, He is always in the center, also in the preaching. In a marvelous way Christ broke the unbelief of His disciples by opening their understanding so that they understood the Scriptures (Luke 24:45).

Next time we hope to continue with the other appearances. □

(To be continued)



From Other Publications

A Lively Hope

Rev. W. MacLean (1907-1985)

(Taken from the February 1998 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

"According to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope" (1 Peter 1:3b).

(Rev. A. Vergunst (1926-1981) wrote this of the following article: "Because of the seriousness of the matter, it is so worthy to be read today. What rich lessons it contains! May it provide us together with material for close examination of our hope." —Ed.)

It is true of those who have a good hope through grace, that they have died to the false hope which they once entertained. We have either a good hope or a false hope.

If we have not been begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, then our hope is false. It is a hope which will perish.

The Apostle Paul tells us there was a time in his life that he was a godly young man in his own estimation. He fully believed he was in possession of a hope which gave him a right to the heavenly inheritance. In the mercy of God, he died to that hope. He came to see it to be false and unfounded. It was based on the training and privileges he had as an orthodox Jew, which included the sacraments of the Old Testament church, circumcision, and the Passover. Besides the thorough grounding he had in the law and the

prophets at the feet of Gamaliel and the zeal with which he did God service, he bore a character which was outwardly blameless and above reproach.

If any could lay claim to credentials for heaven on the ground of church privileges and good works, it was Saul of Tarsus. However, a day came in his experience when he was brought to see that these were altogether irrelevant as a ground of salvation and that he was guilty of going about to establish his own righteousness, not submitting to the righteousness of God. He confessed, "But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (Romans 7:9b). The commandment which gave a deathblow to his mistaken hopes was the tenth commandment: "I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Romans 7:7b). The Holy Spirit opened up to his understanding and conscience the spirituality of God's law, that it requires perfect obedience in heart, walk, and conversation. Such perfect obedience can come only from a nature that is holy, sinless, and undefiled.

Adam, as he came forth from the hand of God in a state of innocence, had such a nature. He was therefore able to come up to the righteousness of the law and to give the law that perfect righteousness which it required. However, since the fall, man has a nature which is sinful, defiled, and depraved. On account of the sinfulness of our nature and the sinfulness

of our actions, we are under the curse and condemnation of God's holy law. As it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Galatians 3:10b).

The ruin of man's nature by the Fall, and his total inability to be saved by any obedience of his own to the law, is experimentally opened up in the understanding of all who have a good hope through grace. They are taught to know that by the works of the law no flesh can be justified in God's sight (Romans 3:20). That is an unerasable conviction which the Holy Spirit stamps on their hearts. Not only did those who had this good hope die to all hope of obtaining salvation, or of being justified in God's sight by any works of righteousness of their own, but they also died to all ability on their part of believing in Christ.

People may profess to believe in, and even defend and contend for, the doctrine of the total depravity of man's nature, and hold to the doctrine of justification by faith, and yet have only a natural faith, or as divines term it, an historical faith. It is the faith of decisionism, the soul-deluding technique of popular evangelists who lead their converts to believe that their decision for Christ is the fruit

of the faith which is the gift of God. We can believe in the Fall of man, the divinity of Christ, His virgin birth, atoning death, His physical resurrection, ascension, and glorification, and, as we have already mentioned, the doctrine of justification by faith, and yet have only an historical or intellectual faith.

The intellect of man apart from regenerating grace can attain to such a faith and to a sound and profound acquaintance with the cardinal doctrines of Christianity. Persons brought up in orthodox circles unquestionably hold to such doctrines. There are many, too, who undergo an intellectual conversion from Arminianism to Calvinism. They come to hold and to uphold the doctrines of free and sovereign grace. Alas! They unwarrantably conclude that because their creed is sound, their hope is good.

All who have been convinced of their sinnership before God, whether they were orthodox or unorthodox, were convinced of their inability to believe in Christ. The Holy

Spirit convinces all whom He savingly teaches, of the sin of unbelief, and that their inability is their sin and proof of their guilt. They are brought in guilty before God, the Judge of all, in their consciences and are brought to see and to believe that God would be just in their eternal condemnation.

Only those who have been convinced of their total inability believe experimentally, and therefore savingly, in the

Only those who have been convinced of their total inability believe experimentally, and therefore savingly, in the doctrine of the total depravity of man's nature, for no sooner has the sinner died to his own ability and realized that in himself he is helpless and hopeless, than his mind is enlightened in the knowledge of Christ so that he sees Christ by faith and receives and rests upon Him alone as He is freely offered in the gospel.

doctrine of the total depravity of man's nature, for no sooner has the sinner died to his own ability and realized that in himself he is helpless and hopeless, than his mind is enlightened in the knowledge of Christ so that he sees Christ by faith and receives and rests upon Him alone as He is freely offered in the gospel. All who are regenerated are dead to the law. No sinner who has passed from death unto life looks to the law for life.

Dr. Owen said, "It is one thing to be in a state of grace, it is another to know that this is the case.... There are many believers who all their days never come to an abiding sense of peace with God, but are filled with troubles and exercised with fears and perplexities, so that they go sorrowing and heavy all their days." Persons with an intellectual or historical faith are not tried as to their faith or as to their hope. They are buoyed up with the delusion of an unquestioned assurance. The savor of spiritual death is in their writings, no matter how sound, and in their exercises, no matter how scriptural. They are strangers to the poverty of spirit of the living in Jerusalem (Matthew 5). Those who have a good hope through grace are said to be an afflicted and poor people whose trust is in the name of the Lord. □



Instructive Gleanings

Righteousness (1)

Rev. P. Kleijer, Lethbridge, AB

“The LORD is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works” (Psalm 145:17).

Righteousness is a word which is found in the Bible approximately 306 times. The first time we read of it is in Genesis 15:6: “And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness.” Abram had received a visit from the LORD. The LORD made known unto him what He would be for him, “I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” Abram could not see it. He said, “I will die without children and will not receive the promise which was given me.” Then the LORD took him outside, let him look towards heaven, and asked, “Can you count the stars?” Again, the promise was given, “So shall thy seed be.” Then we read, “And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness.” This word is often repeated throughout God’s Word. The last time we read of it is in Revelation 19:11: “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war.” John saw in a new vision the coming of Christ, to redeem His church, and to destroy utterly the antichrist and all the enemies of the Church. He will do this in righteousness.

The Hebrew word “sedaqa” comes from the verb “sadaq,” which means to be or to make right. This points especially to being righteous in a moral sense. It also means to cleanse, to clear oneself, to be just or to do right, to turn to righteous(ness). The original word means to be straight; it stands for a norm. Originally, it did not have a significant meaning, but over time it developed into meaning an ethical, moral standard, which is the will of God as we see in the text written above this article. “The LORD is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works” (Psalm 145:17).

It is also used as a descriptive characteristic of God’s righteousness as we read in Deuteronomy 32:4: “He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He.” It means God is just and righteous, the standard being His own will and nature as the supreme Being. We also see this in the illustration of a potter and the clay.

The word righteousness is also seen in the work of justification. This is clear when David pleaded for forgiveness, “Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness” (Psalm 51:14). David begged the Lord for salvation. He himself was not able to satisfy God’s justice, but God could save him because of Christ’s righteousness. What David needed in his justification was the substitutive sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we browse through God’s Word, we will see that the word righteousness has many meanings. I will mention a few:

1. To trust in the Lord like Abram: “And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6).
2. To deal honestly and uprightly in all our dealings: “Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour” (Leviticus 19:15).
3. Being upright to one another: David testified, “Therefore the LORD hath recompensed me according to my righteousness; according to my cleanness in His eye sight” (2 Samuel 22:25).
4. The Lord is righteous in all His doings: David said, “I will praise the LORD according to His righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high” (Psalm 7:17).
5. Christ bears the name: “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jeremiah 23:6b).
6. When the fear of the Lord is planted in one’s heart, he is called righteous before the Lord as we read of Zacharias and Elisabeth: “And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (Luke 1:6). This does not mean that they were sinless.
7. Finally, the imputed righteousness of Christ: “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” (Romans 3:25).

Dear reader, in these points we see different meanings of the word righteousness: doing right, being right, a name of God and Christ, and also the imputed righteousness of Christ. The context determines what the meaning of the word is.

If the Lord enable it, I hope to write more of this in the future and will go into specific phrases like, “The Crown of Righteousness,” etc. Always remember, in your own righteousness, you cannot stand before God, but when Christ’s righteousness is imputed to you, God sees you as righteous in Christ. This is what we all need. A head knowledge of this is not enough; Christ’s righteousness must also be applied. May we have no rest until we are sheltered in Christ. □

(To be continued)



For Young and Old

“If Thou Wilt, Thou Canst Make Me Clean” (3)

(The following is a chapter adapted from *The Bible History Told to Our Children, Volume 2* by John Vreugdenhil)

Matthew 8:2-4, Mark 1:40-45, Luke 5:12-16

Boys and girls, in last month's article we saw the leper travel to where Jesus was, hoping to be cured. Uncertain as to how he could come near to Jesus, he hardly dared to approach, but faith in the almighty power of God was placed in the heart of this leper. Then he decides; he has nothing to lose. If Jesus should refuse, well, then he will return to his gloomy abode and wait for death. On the other hand...if the Lord Jesus refuses not, if he would be cured, oh, wouldn't that be glorious? How similar this is spiritually to a lost, seeking sinner.

Resolutely he walks toward the Prophet. The listeners who see him, move to the side. They are filled with horror and make room for him. They do not want to come in contact with this unclean one, for then they, too, are unclean. Perhaps they say evil, threatening words to this impudent man for daring to appear in their midst, but he does not listen to them; he isn't frightened away thereby. His purpose is not the people but it is centered upon Jesus. His eye is fixed intently upon Him from whom he expects deliverance. He has come right in front of Jesus.

Behold! He falls upon his knees with his face to the ground and prays, “Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.” Do you hear that? He says, “Lord!” This miracle performing Prophet can heal him; He is able to do it, but will He do it? ... There he lies before the great Physician and waits...his heart pounds with anxious suspense. Will Jesus listen to him—to such an unclean one? Oh, he is not even supposed to come here. Will Jesus let him lie here and shrink backward in terror with eyes full of abhorrence? ... No! The King of kings stoops and touches him. Now won't this make Jesus unclean? No, boys and girls. Every other person would become unclean by touching this leper but not Jesus. The Lord Jesus had no sin. Therefore, He could not become polluted by the consequence of sin.

He, the pure One, the clean One, touches the unclean and remains clean. Yet, something else happens. Jesus speaks with a voice full of compassion, “I will, be thou clean!” At the same instant, this terrible, incurable sickness leaves the leper. He feels it in his body. It is as if new blood flows through his veins. He is cured, cured completely. He stands up. What transpires in the heart of this man? Profound respect for this Prophet, who does not send him away, fills the soul of this man because Jesus is not only able but also willing to deliver him. “Do not tell anyone what happened,” says the Saviour, “but go and show thyself to the priest. Let him pronounce you clean and offer the offering which Moses commanded.”

Now that he is cured, the Lord Jesus immediately sends him away. This man is very happy. He does go away, but he cannot be silent about it. Wherever he goes, he tells what a great miracle has been performed upon him. He, the leper, the incurable one, has been cured by Jesus' word of authority.

Do you know what can be compared to leprosy? SIN! We, too, are leprous, every one of us, without exception! No doubt you are thinking, that is not true...yet, it is true! We do not have common leprosy, but we are leprous through SIN. Leprosy is incurable; sin is incurable, too. No person in the world, no matter how mighty, how rich, or how educated he may be, can deliver himself or us from sin. God only can do that. The leper had to die from this disease, so also every one of us must die because of sin. God had said, “For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die!”—and that takes place. Leprosy destroys the entire body. However, sin also destroys every person. Sin ruins both soul and body.

A leper would be expelled from the city or village in which he lived. Adam and Eve were driven out of the beautiful Paradise because of sin. The leper was separated from everyone and everything dear to him. We are separated from God by sin. No one, no one can deliver us from sin. Only the Lord Jesus, the Saviour, can break the bands of sin for us. As the leper had to be cleansed from his terrible disease, so we, too, must be cleansed from sin shall it be well for eternity. Leprosy made a person unclean, thereby causing him to be loathsome in the eyes of every person. Sin makes us unclean, thereby causing us to be loathsome in the eyes of God.

Only the blood of the Lord Jesus cleanseth from every sin. The leper of whom we have told you in this chapter did not come to Jesus with these words, “You must cleanse me! I have a right to it!” No, he came as one who was “unclean,” as one who had no claim upon anything. Neither are you to pray to the Lord Jesus saying that He must save you, that you have a right to it. No, you, too, must come as one who is unclean, as children who have no claim upon anything. This leper asked for grace, for mercy. Let us also ask for mercy. The Lord was under no obligation to the leper. Neither is the Lord under obligation to us for anything. Righteously He could let us go lost. Do you see, boys and girls, how leprosy is an image of sin? You are able to understand this a little now, aren't you? May our prayer be as the leper's prayer was, “Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.” □

(This installment marks the end of this series.)



Among All Nations

What Did Wilhelmus à Brakel Say About Israel?

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

(Taken from the book *What Our Fathers Said About Israel*, Chapter 12)

It was an unforgettable moment at the deathbed of his father in Makkum, a town in the province of Friesland (the Netherlands). Wilhelmus à Brakel (1635-1711) was still young—just thirty-four-years old—when his God-fearing father Theodore passed away in February 1669. Wilhelmus listened as his father read the conclusion of Isaiah. Subsequently, Theodore began to speak with his son about “the conversion of the Jews and their restoration, and also about a more glorious state of the church of Jesus Christ on earth.” Despite this, it was not his father’s faith that caused Wilhelmus à Brakel to write with so much expectation about the conversion of the Jews in his book *The Christian’s Reasonable Service*. It was his own deep conviction, based on many passages in the Bible. With tender compassion the minister from Rotterdam wrote about the condition of the Jewish nation. Jerusalem had been destroyed, an event that was followed by a long way of suffering for the Jews. They were scattered among the nations and subjected to scorn and contempt. Why? à Brakel points to the fact that the Jews have rejected the Lord Jesus. According to the minister, God has poured out His wrath upon an unthankful and malicious people that is so prone to forget God.

Nonetheless, God has not broken His covenant with Israel. The sins and stubbornness of this nation do not annul God’s promises. Indeed, this would be impossible since God’s covenant has been anchored and made firm in God Himself. He remains faithful.

How does it appear that God is true to His covenant? à Brakel’s reply to this question is that God, throughout the ages, has converted Jews. The greater part persisted in unbelief, but again and again there were those who believed in Jesus as the promised Messiah. This number will greatly increase when the Lord turns again in favor to the Jewish nation. à Brakel writes about this in an elaborate discussion of Romans 11. Herein we sense his Bible-based expectation, as well as his heartfelt desire that the Lord will bestow mercy upon the Jewish people. When the time of Israel’s

national conversion has arrived, they will not only recognize but also accept Christ. The fruit of this will be a wondrous love, joy, and holiness in the faith.

In addition, there will be another fruit. “Unconverted people shall be converted in great multitudes whereas those who have already been converted shall become partakers of a wonderful growth in the degree of grace they possess.” In rapture the minister exclaims, “Oh, what a glorious time that shall be! Who will then live?” In other words, how privileged are those who shall live to see those days!

The question may be asked, however, whether Romans 11 refers to the Jewish people in all its concreteness. Could it perhaps be that Paul means the Christian church when he uses the expression “Israel”? à Brakel thrusts this suggestion aside in no uncertain terms. Such an opinion, briefly spoken, is nothing but a subterfuge. It dodges the issue.

The voice of à Brakel has been noticed in our congregations. Two ministers with a cordial love for the Jewish people have published the chapter from *The Christian’s Reasonable Service* relating to the conversion of the Jews in a separate booklet. Rev. G.A. Zijderveld was the first to do so in 1967, after which Rev. C.J. Meeuse followed suit in 2006.

Just like à Brakel their hope was—and is—that the subject of the conversion of the Jews might bear fruit in the church. Which fruits? Let us listen to à Brakel himself. He writes about a strengthening of God’s children in their faith in the immutability of God’s promises. Another fruit would be humility in respect of the Jewish people, compassion for their miserable condition, and prayer for their conversion. The last fruit mentioned by à Brakel is not less important: “By way of a holy life show that you are walking in the footsteps of their father Abraham. The life of many so-called Christians offends them and keeps them from exercising faith in Christ.” That is a warning, also for us! □

(To be continued)

Conversion of the Jews

There is a day coming when there shall be a national conversion of the Jews or Israelites. The now blinded and rejected Jews shall at length be converted into the faith of Christ and join themselves to the Christian Church. Have you any love to, or concern for, the Church, for the work of reformation, the reformation of our country, the reformation of our world? Have you any longing desire for the revival of that work now at a stand, for a flourishing state of the Church that is now under a decay? Then pray for the conversion of the Jews.

—Thomas Boston (1676-1732)



Questions from Our Readers

Is Any Sick Among You?

Rev. B. Labee, Veenendaal, the Netherlands

(Translated from the September 4, 2025 issue of *De Saambinder*)

As an office bearer, I often hear about surgeries after the fact; congregational members do not ask for intercession or want to remain completely anonymous. Seriously ill people are sometimes unreachable because their families say they are “too sick.” How should I deal with this?

Intercession requested

It can be difficult when people are missed when the congregation gathers and it is unclear what is happening. Sometimes, in a large congregation, it is only noticed when someone has been absent for several weeks or even months. Upon inquiry, there may be all kinds of reasons—including the experience of the above-mentioned office bearer: someone has undergone (minor or major) surgery, but, for various reasons did not want to be mentioned in the intercessory prayer.

The late Rev. L. Terlouw (1954-2017) wrote some noteworthy things about this in his book *Wie komt er vandaag? Gedachten over ziekenbezoek (Who is Coming Today? Thoughts on Visiting the Sick)* (De Banier, 2010). He wrote that “from a biblical perspective, it is the responsibility of the sick person to inform the consistory of his or her circumstances.” The Apostle James admonishes, “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him” (James 5:14a). James admonishes the readers of his letter to call the elders of the church when they are sick. A phone call to the minister or to one of the elders about a hospital admission, about treatment in the hospital, or about an illness that confines someone to his or her home is therefore not something that can be taken lightly—not for the church member, nor for the office bearer who receives the message.... A church member should inform the consistory himself. In doing so, the church member is obeying the apostolic admonition.

Of course, the first step for a sick person is to go to the inner room himself. After that, the Lord wants us to share our needs, through the consistory, with the entire congrega-

tion. Not to organize a prayer–healing service but to implore the Lord for His presence and blessing “in the homes” and “from the pulpit.” As office bearers, we may always refer to the apostolic admonition. Church members do themselves a disservice if, for whatever reason, they are sick or undergoing treatments and do not notify their consistory or ask not to be mentioned, or mentioned by name, in prayer.

No entrance

Actually, this also contains the answer to the second question. As office bearers, we cannot intrude into the sickroom, but we can point to God’s Word. In doing so, we can also think of the metaphor in 1 Corinthians 12 about the body and all the members that are necessary.

An office bearer may cautiously ask to visit a seriously ill person (briefly), most of all to read a few verses from God’s Word and to pray with (or for) the seriously ill person. In addition to this, showing compassion and praying for the immediate family at the bedside of a loved one is a blessing. The Lord can use it for souls on the way to eternity. When the seriously ill Naaman once undertook the long journey (on the advice of a slave girl) to the prophet of the Lord, he received **healing for his body**, but we also believe that it was an **eternal blessing by free grace**.

Reader, do you expect answers, yes, miracles, when we follow in the way of God’s Word? Many times, the Lord has shown that He is a hearer of prayer. □

Note to our readers:

Rev. Hofman was visiting Bolivia at the time of preparing this issue. He preached a Sunday for the Tarija congregation. —Ed.

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

Joy in Afflictions

To know that nothing hurts the godly is a matter of comfort, but to be assured that all things which fall out shall co-operate for their good, that their crosses shall be turned into blessings, that showers of affliction water the withering root of their grace and make it flourish more—this may fill their hearts with joy till they run over.

—Thomas Watson (1620-1686)



Reflections

Exhortation at the Lord's Supper

John Knox (1505-1572)

(Taken from "The Form of Prayers," 1556)

"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (1 Corinthians 11:28).

Dearly Beloved in the Lord,

Forasmuch as we be now assembled to celebrate the Holy Communion of our Saviour Christ, let us now consider these words of St. Paul, how he exhorts all persons diligently to try and examine themselves before they presume to eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For as the benefit is great, if with a truly penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy sacrament, for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood, then we dwell in Christ and Christ in us, we be one with Christ and Christ with us. So is the danger great if we receive the same unworthily, for then we be guilty of the body and blood of Christ our Saviour, we eat and drink our own damnation, not considering the Lord's body. We kindle God's wrath against us and provoke Him to plague us with divers diseases and sundry kinds of death.

Therefore, if any of you be a blasphemer of God, an hinderer or slanderer of His Word, an adulterer, or be in malice or envy, or in any other grievous crime, bewail your sins, and come not to this holy table. Lest, after the taking of this holy sacrament, the devil enter into you as he entered into Judas, and fill you full of all iniquities, and bring you to destruction both of body and soul.

Judge therefore yourselves, brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord. Repent truly for your sins past, and have a lively and steadfast faith in Christ our Saviour, seeking your salvation only in the merits of His death and passion. From henceforth refuse and forget all malice and debate with full purpose to live in brotherly amity and godly conversation all the days of your life.

Though we feel in ourselves much frailty and wretchedness, as that we have not our faith perfect and constant as we ought, being many times ready to distrust God's goodness through our corrupt nature, and also that we are not so thoroughly given to serve God, neither have so fervent a zeal to set forth His glory as our duty requires,

feeling still such rebellion in ourselves that we have need daily to fight against the lusts of our flesh; yet, nevertheless, seeing that our Lord has dealt thus mercifully with us, that He has printed the gospel in our hearts, so that we are preserved from falling into desperation and unbelief; and seeing also that He has endued us with a will and desire to renounce and withstand our own affections, with a longing for His righteousness and the keeping of His commandments, we may be now right well assured that those defaults and manifold imperfections in us shall be no hindrance at all against us to cause Him not to accept and impute us as worthy to come to His spiritual table. For the end of our coming thither is not to make protestation that we are upright and just in ourselves, but, contrariwise, we come to seek our life and perfection in Jesus Christ, acknowledging in the meantime that we of ourselves be the children of wrath and damnation.

Let us consider, then, that this sacrament is a singular medicine for all poor, sick creatures, a comfortable help to weak souls, and that the Lord requires no other worthiness on our part but that we unfeignedly acknowledge our naughtiness and imperfection. To the end that we may be worthy partakers of His merits and most comfortable benefits (which is the true eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood), let us not suffer our minds to wander about the consideration of these earthly and corruptible things (which we see present to our eyes, and feel with our hands), to seek Christ bodily present in them, as if He were enclosed in the bread and wine, or as if these elements were turned and changed into the substance of His flesh and blood. For the only way to dispose our souls to receive nourishment, relief and quickening of His substance, is to lift up our minds by faith above all things worldly and sensible, and thereby to enter into heaven, that we may find and receive Christ, where He dwells undoubtedly as very God and very man in the incomprehensible glory of His Father, to whom be all praise, honour, and glory, now and ever. Amen.

No doubt a man may be saved, like the penitent thief, without having received the Lord's Supper. It is not a matter of absolute and indispensable necessity like repentance, faith, and conversion. Yet it is impossible to say that any professing Christian is in a safe, healthy, or satisfactory condition of soul, who habitually refuses to obey Christ and attend the Lord's Table.

—J.C. Ryle (1816-1900)



Current Events

U.S. Forces Fighting Terrorists in Nigeria

Nigeria's fight against terrorism received fresh diplomatic backing on Monday as the United World Congress of Diplomats (UN-WCD) applauded the growing military cooperation between Nigeria and the United States. The diplomats described the joint operations as strategic, disciplined, and increasingly effective against terror networks. A report said the Nigeria-US security partnership has significantly strengthened counter-terrorism operations across major flashpoints, while adhering strictly to international rules of engagement. Despite the scale and intensity of recent joint operations, no civilian casualties have been recorded, a development described as evidence of professionalism, accountability, and operational discipline by both forces. "We commend the United States military and the Nigerian Ministry of Defense for the successes recorded so far. The collaboration has weakened terrorist structures and improved operational coordination," the Secretary-General of UN-WCD said. Regarding this, a U.S. Congressman has commended Nigeria's cooperation with his country in the fight against terrorism. Speaking during an interview, he said the U.S. will ensure that the persecution of Christians by ISIS and affiliated groups is brought to an end.

—*Guardian.ng*

Body of Last Hostage from Gaza is Recovered

Israel confirmed that the remains of a Staff Sergeant, the last Israeli hostage held in Gaza, have been recovered and returned home after 842 days. This man confronted Hamas terrorists on October 7, 2023, before he was killed and abducted to Gaza. He was twenty-four at the time of his death; his remains would be returned to his family for burial. The IDF expressed condolences to the family and said all hostages from October 7 have now been returned from Gaza to Israel. In comments regarding this, Israel's President said, "After many difficult years, for the first time since 2014, there are no Israeli citizens held hostage in Gaza... An entire nation prayed and waited for this moment." Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said the recovery of this man's remains was a key condition for Israel's agreement to a limited reopening of the Rafah Crossing for pedestrian passage. Under the twenty-point peace plan, the return of all hostages was the final condition for advancing to the next phase of the peace agreement, which the White House said is focused on "lasting peace, stability, reconstruction, and prosperity in the region." Senior U.S. officials met with Israeli officials to move forward with implementation planning for phase two of the Gaza peace plan.

—*FoxNews.com*

Nationwide Protests in Iran

Iranian Christians have asked Christians around the world to pray for their country after the violent crackdown on widespread mass protests left many thousands dead. The exact number of casualties is not known and may never be known due to the Iranian regime's continuing communications blackout. The Internet has been shut down since

January 8, which has greatly restricted the flow of information from the country. The leader of Iran has admitted that "several thousand" had been killed, but it has been reported that a network of Iranian doctors in the country had compiled figures estimating that at least 16,500 to 18,000 people had been killed and 330,000 injured. Contacts confirm that the whole country is in a state of mourning and that people are traumatized by horrific stories of brutal massacres. It is known that several Christians have been killed while they participated in the nationwide protests. One report was of a Christian convert who was shot from behind while attempting to recover the body of a close friend killed during a demonstration in Isfahan province, on January 9. He was shot in the thigh by security forces and died after being prevented from entering the local hospital by government agents stationed in front of its doors. He died as a result of severe bleeding. He leaves behind his wife, and three daughters. Prayer is requested:

- For comfort for the thousands of families who have lost loved ones, and for those who have been arrested or injured;
- For all Iranians who are distressed and living with a sense of hopelessness;
- For wisdom and courage for Iranian church leaders as they lead in difficult circumstances;
- For continued faithfulness to God's mission and kingdom work.

—*ChurchInChains.ie*

Persecution in Russian-occupied Ukraine

Russian authorities have continued to raid religious worship services in parts of eastern Ukraine, warning congregations that unregistered churches could face repeated disruption unless they comply with Russian law. On January 25, Russian police and military authorities carried out coordinated raids on Sunday worship services run by two Council of Churches Baptist congregations in the occupied Luhansk region of Ukraine. Some of the officers were equipped with automatic firearms, according to church leaders. One pastor was taken to a police station and questioned about the church's refusal to register under Russian law. These raids are part of a broader pattern of enforcement actions against religious communities in Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine. Between July and December 2025, there were at least seven raids. Russian occupying authorities insist that all religious communities must register under Russian law. Religious leaders are also required to hold Russian citizenship. Communities that refuse—or that retain links to Ukrainian religious structures—are treated as operating illegally. Russian courts have repeatedly upheld fines against pastors on this basis. The UN Human Rights Council Secretary-General stated: "Religious groups in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine should enjoy access to their places of worship and be able to gather freely for prayer and other religious practices." Rights groups say this is a campaign for the replacement of current religious leaders with figures deemed loyal to Moscow.

—*ChristianToday.com*

Christian, if you dwell in the open tent of licentiousness, the wicked will not walk backward, like modest Shem and Japheth, to cover your shame but they will walk forward, like cursed Ham, to publish it. Thus, they make use of your weakness as a plea for their wickedness. Men are merciless in their censures of Christians. They have no sympathy for their infirmity, while God weighs them in more equal scales and says, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." While a saint is a dove in the eyes of God, he is only a raven in the estimation of sinners.

—*William Secker (1620-1681)*



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

A Boy from Stavenisse (10)

C. Visser-Sluis

(Reprinted with permission from the book, *Leen Potappel, A Boy from Stavenisse*)

Mother

“Hush, walk softly, Mother is very sick.” Father looks at the sisters and puts a finger to his lips. Then he sees Leen standing in the door opening. “Leen, Mother has suddenly become much worse. You must go to the doctor at once. Tell him he has to come along with you. Mother has vomited a lot of blood.” The sisters are sitting at the kitchen table with white faces and fearful eyes. Father and son give each other a brief, silent look.

Leen reads the grief in his father’s eyes and understands how serious it is. Mother is very ill. As fast as a twelve-year-old boy can, he runs through the village to the doctor’s house, but Leen already meets the doctor at the beginning of the street.

Worriedly, the doctor looks into his perspiring face. “Your mother?”

Leen nods quickly.

“I already thought so. I was just planning to come for a quick look. I am going with you.”

They walk to the dike together. The doctor goes to Father and Mother’s bedroom. Leen tiptoes after him. Does he hear his father crying? His big, strong father? Has Mother already...? He stands frozen to the spot in the hallway. His heart beats with heavy throbs. Mother! It can’t be. Mother’s sins... were her sins forgiven? Does she now have to appear before God, before the Judge?

When Leen sees the doctor standing before him, his eyelids flutter wildly. The doctor puts his hands on Leen’s shoulders and says something to him. Leen cannot understand him. The sound of the rushing ocean resounds in his ears. He doesn’t hear what the doctor is saying. Now his head is beginning to feel strangely dizzy, too, and everything looks askew. “You have to sit down a minute and drink some water,” commands the doctor.

A neighbor lady comes in with a glass of water. The doctor pushes Leen down on a chair. Leen notices

that his hand is trembling strangely. He can barely hold the glass still.

Slowly the buzzing in his head subsides, and the fog in his eyes goes away.

Leen looks around. Across from him at the kitchen table, Sien is sitting with red, teary eyes and catches his glance. She has her arms wrapped around little Cornelis. On her other side, Johanna is sobbing loudly. Her blond, curly head is pushed tightly against her sister’s shoulder.

He can no longer look at them. He wildly pushes his chair backward. He has to go away, out of the house. He needs to be alone. He stumbles into the attic and pours out his heart before the Lord, but praying doesn’t help because Leen doesn’t agree with the Lord. The Lord has allowed his mother to die. It is possible that she didn’t have a new heart!

Many people come to look at Mother. Mother is lying still in her coffin with folded hands. Leen has to keep looking at her deathly still face. Does she have to be buried soon? Her soul is no longer in her body. He learned that in catechism. Her soul goes to the place it belongs. Is that with the Lord?

The days pass quickly. Mother is buried in Stavenisse, and who is to care for the family now? Sien is only nine; she is too young.

One day Grandmother enters the kitchen. She has put on her work apron and looks at Father. “My boy, now that your father isn’t here and I have nobody to care for at home anymore, I thought I would come here to let everything continue as usual. What do you think about it?”

The children look at Father intensely. All four of them love Grandma very much, but does Father want this? Father thinks that his mother is too strict in her religion. The oldest two children have both noticed this.

Father bows his head and thinks about it. He is much too sad to think about the children. Father

loved Mother very much. She was still so young. Father shakes his head. "Ah, Mother, I do not know if I may ask this of you. You are not all that young anymore."

"You are not asking me, I am coming myself. I want to help you. I want to be here for you and the children. Would you rather have a stranger in the house?"

Her voice is kind. Father has to decide what he wants.

He looks at her and takes her hand. "Promise me that you will honestly tell me if it becomes too much for you. Maybe we can hire a maid." He looks a bit worried. Father doesn't earn all that much money.

She waves her hand. "Don't be silly. Sien, you can help me a little after school, can't you?"

The girl blushes. "I helped Mother with everything lately."

"Yes, that you did. I was often proud of you," says Father.

Suddenly they are all quiet. While everyone was thinking about Mother, Leen slips out of the kitchen.

In the attic, he again pours out his heart before the Lord. Leen cannot let his mother go. He asks the

Lord why she has died and why he doesn't know if she had a new heart...!

When Leen is struggling and praying, the Lord gives Leen an answer. The Lord saw that Leen couldn't turn the matter over to the Lord. Then the Lord asks Leen: "Am I not the Creator? Did I not create her? May I then not do with her as I please?"

Leen sits up in fright. Suddenly, he understands. The Lord is the Creator. He made everything, even his mother. Leen shouldn't even want to interfere with the Lord's doings, because then it shows that he doesn't trust Him. It shows that Leen wants to know more than the Lord.

Leen is ashamed. He again falls on his knees. "Lord," he prays, "Thou art right. Thou art just and this means that Thou cannot make mistakes. What Thou doest is good. It is good that Thou hast taken Mother away. Help me to believe this time and again. Do not let me doubt Thee."

Finally, he can completely let Mother go. The Lord takes the great sorrow from his shoulders. How glorious it is to know, to believe, that the Lord is good.

(To be continued)



Bible Stories for Little Ones

The Brook Cherith

(Based on 1 Kings 17)

Ahab became king after Omri's death. He was more wicked than any of the kings who had reigned before him in Israel. His wife's name was Jezebel, and she was the daughter of the king of the Zidonians, a people who served and worshipped Baal. She encouraged her husband in his sins and idolatries; they both worshipped Baal and also taught their people to worship him.

Were all the Israelites idolaters? Were there none to teach them about God and His Word? Were there no holy prophets in Israel? Indeed, there were still a few faithful servants of God. One day a prophet of the Lord came to see the king. He was one who boldly preached the truth to the people of Israel. This prophet was Elijah. The Bible tells us many wonderful and beautiful stories about him.

God had told Elijah to go to King Ahab and say that He would send no rain or dew upon the land of Israel for a long time. Israel had forgotten their kind, merciful God, the God who had led them out of Egypt

many years before and who continued to provide them with many blessings. They did not thank Him for these blessings, and they did not ask Him for the food they needed. They worshipped Baal, not God; therefore, God punished His ungrateful people by taking away their blessings.

This was a sad time for Israel. No rain fell to water the ground, so the grass dried up. Then there was no food for the poor animals and no corn or fruit for the people to eat. A famine is a dreadful thing. The Lord wanted to teach them that He was the giver of all their blessings and that He could also take these blessings from them. However, even then, most of the people did not turn unto the Lord in their trouble but continued to serve and worship Baal.

Where was Elijah during the famine? God was taking care of him. He told him where to go and how he should be fed. There was a little brook of water near Jordan, named Cherith, and God told Elijah to go and hide himself there. Why did he have to hide

himself? It was because Elijah had enemies who were seeking to kill him. Ahab and Jezebel hated him because of the message which he had brought them from the Lord. He had told them the truth and had spoken to them about their sins and warned them of God's anger. It was right of Elijah to tell them all this, but wicked people love their sins and do not like to be reproved for them. Ahab and Jezebel hated all God's holy prophets, and they looked for them to put them to death, but Elijah was safely kept by God at the brook Cherith.

What did he eat there? There was no corn or fruit, yet he had plenty to eat every day. Who gave him his daily food? God sent it to him in a very wonderful way. It was not brought by a friend, nor by a prophet, nor by a servant, nor by an angel. God sent it to him every day by means of ravens. He had commanded these ravens to feed Elijah. Every morning the ravens came; the one carried flesh in its beak; another carried bread. The ravens did not eat the food themselves. They brought it to Elijah, and then they flew away. Every evening the ravens came again and brought more bread and flesh to Elijah. When he was thirsty, he drank the water of the brook. Each day he was given enough to eat for that day. Each day he saw the goodness of the Lord for him, for he knew

that others were suffering because of the famine. He was all alone there, totally dependent upon his God for all his needs. However, each morning and each evening he had again to wait for the coming of the ravens with his food. Each day he saw that God was faithful to His promise.

When the birds brought his daily food, Elijah ate it and was thankful. He lived in complete dependence upon God, and Elijah could lie down in peace and comfort, even though he was alone. How pleasant it is to be content like Elijah and to trust God for all things as he did! It is a great blessing if we may learn to know the God of Elijah as our helper in all our needs, for it is true that the God of Elijah yet lives.

What made the ravens so kind to Elijah? It was God who made them so. He has power over the actions and instincts of the animals. He can make them do as He pleases. He could make Balaam's ass speak; He could make the lion which killed the disobedient prophet stand quietly without touching the dead body, and now He could make the wild ravens to be kind and friendly to Elijah. How powerful God is and how kind He is to those who serve Him! Let us look and pray to this good and wonder-doing God at all times; for He can give us everything we really need for time and for eternity.



Bible Quiz

White

Dear Boys and Girls,

Have you ever wanted to go out into freshly fallen snow just to see how white it is before something comes to ruin its brightness? When snow first falls, it is so beautifully white that when the sun shines, everything glitters. Nothing seems quite as white as freshly fallen snow. It covers everything — dark tree limbs, cold gray rocks, drab roofs and black roads, with the purest white.

However, what happens? A plow truck comes by, and a little while later, a salt truck follows. This makes your parents happy because now the road will be clear to drive on again, but...it does something to the clean, white snow. Snow piles and snowbanks form, but...they are heaps of dirty, filthy snow... Cars and other vehicles travel up and down the road,

scattering the muddy slush left and right. The snow has turned brown and gray, even black in places. The dirty snow is littered with rocks and sand and mud, and not much can be seen of the clean freshness of before.

How dirty the salt, plows, and cars have made the once beautiful scene on the roads. Perhaps we have to walk far into the fields or woods to find the white snow once again. The dirty piles by the road remind us of something. David prayed that his heart might be washed so that it would be whiter than snow. Why? Because he knew that his heart was very much like the dirty piles we see along the roads—his heart was dirty and black with sin, and there was no way in which he could clean it up himself.

Does it ever happen to you that people stop your mother at the store or the park and exclaim, "Oh, your children are beautiful! What lovely, adorable children you have!" Maybe it means that you and your brothers and sisters have all been behaving properly and walking along obediently with your mom. Maybe it means that you all have the same bright blue eyes or curly dark hair. However, no one can see the inside of you, where we all have a soul. Is that soul beautiful, too? No, we can't say that. Our heart was already sinful, born "dead in trespasses and sins," when we were a baby, and when we become older, it only becomes dirtier and blacker with sin.

Do you sometimes snap or shout at your sister? Do you forget to listen in church? Do you grumble when you have to help your mom? Do you sometimes tell a lie and make up a false story so you won't be in trouble? Do you let your mind wander and think about other things when you pray before you get into bed? Do you disobey your teacher? Do you say, do, and think naughty things? How very black our hearts are!

David knew this, and that is why he prayed, "*Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*" It made him so miserable to know that he had sinned and grieved the Lord. He knew he was guilty, and he knew he could not cleanse the sin out of his heart himself. How easily the sin had come there, and how black those sins were. Was there nothing that could take the sin away and let him feel the Lord's nearness again? David knew only the Lord could cleanse his heart, and that is why he prayed.

You have a heart that is full of sin, too, and the Lord cannot ignore those sins. The Lord must punish sin because He is just, and the punishment for sin is everlasting darkness. We deserve punishment. One small sin is enough to cast us into hell.

Is that why the men on the day of Pentecost cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" and Saul of Tarsus exclaimed, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" and the jailor asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They could not save themselves, and the Lord taught them that only the blood of Jesus could save them and wash them whiter than snow.

Our hearts are black; our hearts are evil. Snow is pure; snow is clean. What a difference there is between the blackness of sin and the whiteness of snow. How very white the snow is! There is a way to be saved and cleansed from sin. Ask the Lord often, "*Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin*" (Psalm 51:2). He only is able to forgive and say, "*Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow*" (Isaiah 1:18b).

* * * * *

1. In 2 Samuel 23 and 1 Chronicles 11, what animal did Benaiah kill on a snowy day? _____

2. In Proverbs 25, what is a faithful messenger compared to? _____

3. In Proverbs 31, why is a virtuous woman's family not cold in the snow? _____

4. In Matthew 28, what was white as snow? _____

5. In Mark 9, what was white as snow? _____

Fill in the blank. After completing #'s 6-19, find your answers in the word search.

6. "Which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is _____:" (Job 6)

7. "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so _____;" (Job 9).

8. "Drought and heat consume the snow _____: so doth the grave those which have sinned" (Job 24).

9. "For He saith to the snow, Be thou on the _____; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of His strength" (Job 37).

10. "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the _____," (Job 38).

11. "When the Almighty scattered _____ in it, it was white as snow in Salmon" (Psalm 68).

12. "He giveth snow like wool: He scattereth the hoarfrost like _____" (Psalm 147).

13. "Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; _____ wind fulfilling His word:" (Psalm 148).

14. "As snow in summer, and as rain in _____, so honour is not seemly for a fool" (Proverbs 26).

15. "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from _____, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:" (Isaiah 55).

16. "Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon which cometh from the rock of the field? or shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be _____?" (Jeremiah 18).

17. "Her Nazarites were _____ than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire:" (Lamentations 4).

18. "I beheld till the _____ were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire" (Daniel 7).

19. "His head and His hairs were white like _____, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire;" (Revelation 1)

E T L S R A N E K A S R O F S
 K Y O E H A R V E S T S R H E
 T E O N N R C H L R C N D E S
 A A S H E S A T S S E A H A L
 O T Y R S H I D P U R E R H U
 T E M F R T S H O V N L L S N
 E W R H E A V E N N J C H L H
 U O O S T E A R T H H A I L O
 M O T R A H J K I N G S N A V
 S L S A W H A T H R O N E S R

For the Older Children

Two verses in the Bible speak of the washing away of sin as becoming white as snow. They can be found in Psalms and Isaiah. Fill in the missing words.

20. "Purge me with _____, and I shall be _____: wash me, and I _____ be _____ than _____."

21. "Come now, and let us _____ together, said the LORD: though your _____ be as _____, they shall be as _____ as _____; though they be _____ like _____, they shall be as _____."

For the Younger Children

The disease of leprosy made a person's skin white, the color of snow. The following verses speak of this terrible sickness and its results.

22. In Exodus 4, what were the two signs the Lord gave Moses so that people would believe he had been sent?

Which verse speaks of the sign of leprosy? _____
 Did Moses stay leprous? _____

23. In Numbers 12:10, who became leprous?

 Why? _____
 Was she healed? _____

24. In 2 Kings 5:27, who became leprous?

 Why? _____
 Was he healed? _____

* * * * *

Answers to February's "Judging" quiz:

1. Tongue Psalm 109:2
2. According Psalm 35:24
3. Lying Psalm 120:2
4. Even Luke 12:57
5. Before 1 Corinthians 4:5
6. Evil James 4:11
7. Appearance John 7:24
8. Rejoice Psalm 35:24
9. Even Ephesians 4:15
10. Righteousness Leviticus 19:15
11. Talebearer
12. Luke 6:37—"Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven."
13. 1 Corinthians 11:31&32—"For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."
14. Leviticus 19:16—"Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people."

Answers to previous quizzes were received in January from:

- | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Clint Van Harten | Zachary Mol | Kenna Van Veldhuizen |
| Anna Boluyt | Andrew Murphy | Brett Van Velthuisen |
| Gary Boluyt | John Murphy | Hanna Van Wyk |
| Carly Brouwer | Blake Pannekoek | Eli Vande Waerdt |
| Thomas Brouwer | Cassadee Pannekoek | Joelle Vande Waerdt |
| Elsie de Leeuw | Lauren Pannekoek | Wyatt Vande Waerdt |
| Lynnette DeKorne | Lewis Rivers | Levi Vander Waal (2) |
| Melanie DeKorne | Lilyana Rivers | Sara Vander Waal (2) |
| Ethan Driesse | Brogan Spaans | Shara Verhoef (2) |
| Alyssa Driesse | Jake Spaans (2) | Gerdina Versteeg (2) |
| Kailyn Driesse | Tessa Spaans | Tena Versteeg |
| Lindsey Driesse | Brandon Ten Hove | Caleb Vogelaar |
| Allison Ekema (2) | Hannah-Jo Ten Hove | Matthew Vogelaar |
| Kaylynn Ekema (2) | Brendan Van De Kamp | Jayden Weeda |
| Samantha Grinich | Ava Van Manen | Keegan Weeda |
| Cheyenne Groeneweg | Alana van Manen | Nathan Wesdyk |
| Kate Hoogendoorn (2) | Evan Van Manen | Samuel Westrate |
| Abe Mol | Kiela Van Ravenswaay | |
| Teddy Mol | Winston Van Ravenswaay | |
| Madeline Mol | | |



Please send your answers to the address shown below:

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

News & Announcements

■ Ministerial Calls

Extended:

To Rev. G.P. van Nieuw Amerongen, of Nijkerk, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Nobleford, Alberta.

Accepted:

By Rev. G.P. van Nieuw Amerongen, of Nijkerk, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Nobleford, Alberta.

Declined:

By Rev. W. Harinck, of Utrecht the Netherlands, to the congregation of Chilliwack, British Columbia.

■ Obituaries

GULIKER, Helena – Age 90, December 12, 2025; Chilliwack, British Columbia; Husband – Evert Dave (deceased); Children – Anita, Helen & Frank Vroegop, Ed & Lori, Diana & Chris Visscher; 14 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren; Sister – Janna Menger. (Elder J. Maljaars, Isaiah 12:1-6.)

HOOGENDOORN, Gilbert C. – Age 88, January 10, 2026; Rock Valley, Iowa (formerly George, Iowa); Wife – Loraine (nee Van Beek); Children – LaRae & William Fluit, Gywen & Connie, Elwyn & Wanda; 13 grandchildren, 37 great-grandchildren, 3 great-great-grandchildren; Sisters – Coba Van Tilburg, Marge Mantel; Sisters-in-law – Mary, Betty, Ada, and numerous Van Beek in-laws; predeceased by infant brother Marion and 3 brothers Joel, Arvin, and Marion. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Ecclesiastes 7:2.)

HOOK, Wayne B. – Age 81, January 16, 2026; Pequannock, New Jersey; Wife – Wilhelmina (nee Willekes); Children – Robin & Cornelius Van Wingerden, Ronald, Sharon & Craig Tanis, Warren & Debbie; 13 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren; Siblings – Joyce DeRuiter, Ralph & Marion, Donald & Debbie, Allen & Marnie; predeceased by brother Russell and brother-in-law Don DeRuiter. (Rev. A.H. Verhoef, Psalm 1:6.)

NEELS, Neeltje (“Nellie”) – Age 94, February 2, 2026; Picture Butte, Alberta; Husband – Gerard (deceased); Children – John & Bettie, Henry & Tona, Gerald & Maria, Anne & Stephan Vanden Brink, Carolin & Bert Van Hierden, Paul & Treena, Ed & Lida; 47 grandchildren, 89 great-grandchildren, 2 great-great-grandchildren; predeceased by 3 sisters, 7 brothers, numerous in-laws, and 2 great-grandchildren Gabriel Poole and Micah Neels. (Rev. P. Kleijer, Psalm 6:5.)

VAN LAGEN, Hendrikus (“Harry”) – Age 64, January 16, 2026; Norwich, Ontario; Wife – Riena (nee Koudys); Children – Angela & Ron Wagenaar, Darlene & Jason Stubbe, Andrew and Evelina, Ryan and Jennica; 15 grandchildren; Parents – Dorothy & Arend (deceased); Parents-in-law – Carl & Audrey Koudys; numerous brothers, sisters, brothers-and sisters-in-law; predeceased by infant brother-in-law and sister-in-law Katherine Van Ginkel. (Rev. E. Hakvoort, Job 7:1a.)

■ Eagle Bay Young Adult Retreat May 21-23, 2026

The Bethel Young Adult Group of Chilliwack, BC, is planning a young adults’ retreat (18+) for May 21-23, 2026, DV. Join us to learn more about God’s Word, connect with others, and explore the beauty of Shuswap Lake. Find more details and register at bethelyoungadults.my.canva.site by April 30. If you have any questions, please contact us at bnrc.youthgroup@gmail.com

■ New Titles from Bible Truth Books

God Made Them All by M. Korevaar—For the youngest of children (ages 1-2), a “board book” has been published about the seven days of Creation. Respectfully illustrated. 22 pages, \$11.75.

Old Bas by G. Vogelaar-vanMourik—The true story of a poor, yet unspeakably rich gardener whose trust in the Lord was not put to shame. Published by GBS in the Netherlands. For children ages 8+. Hardcover, 44 pages, \$13.50.

The Confessions of St. Augustine—Although two children’s books exist about the life of Augustine, his autobiography has been absent from our shelves for many years. The majority of Augustine’s Confessions are written in the form of a prayer, and therefore we are glad to again find an edition that uses the Lord’s name in a respectful manner. It is remarkable how the writings of Augustine were used by the Lord not only in the heart of Martin Luther but also in the heart of the lesser-known Gottschalk as he contended for the truths of predestination during the tenth century. Augustine’s Confessions not only tell his life’s story, but also clearly speak of the Lord’s dealings with his soul. Hardcover, 256 pages, \$23.75.

Olga Gives Away the Secret by P. de Zeeuw—A story from old Russia, in which the warning of a young girl is applied to the heart of a criminal. For ages twelve+. Hardcover, 50 pages. \$8.25.

His Grace and Glory Tell by the Asaph Choir of Norwich, Ontario—The Asaph Choir’s 2025 recording is a double-CD consisting of thirty-three psalter recordings. \$15.75. (Also available as a thumb drive for the same price.)

The prices shown 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

50th Wedding Anniversary

The Lord willing, on March 13, 2026, our dear parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents,

Harry & Lorraine Vanee
(nee Mol)

hope to commemorate their
50th wedding anniversary.

*“LORD, make me to know mine end,
and the measure of my days,
what it is”* (Psalm 39:4a).

P.O. 518, Fort Macleod, Alberta, T0L 0Z0

60th Wedding Anniversary

The Lord willing, on March 18, 2026, our dear parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents,

Case & Jannie Butyn

hope to commemorate their
60th wedding anniversary.

*“He that dwelleth in the secret place
of the most High shall abide under the
shadow of the Almighty”* (Psalm 91:1).

P.O. Box 995, Norwich, Ontario, N0J 1P0

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.**

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 nrce_office@nrce.nj.org

Teachers/Assistants

CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, COAL-HURST, ALBERTA, invites applications for elementary or secondary teachers to begin in January or August 2026. 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, has an opening for a full- or part-time teacher or coordinator to monitor, oversee, and assist the students with their homeschool curriculums. We have a range of students from grades K-7. For more questions regarding this position, please contact Andrew Van Stelle at 920-452-1967 or email amtrees@excel.net

EMMANUEL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, LYNDEN, WASHINGTON, is accepting applications for the 2026-2027 school year. We welcome applicants at the elementary, middle, or high school level. To apply or request more information, please contact the administrator, Ms. Beth Bleeker, at 616-826-7663 or email bbleeker@nrce.lynden.org or the school board president, Mr. Jerry DeBruin, at 360-224-0901 or email jdebruin3797@gmail.com

MOUNT CHEAM CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CHILLIWACK, BRITISH COLUMBIA, anticipates an URGENT NEED for the next school years with multiple openings for teachers in elementary and secondary grades. Applicants must hold or be eligible for BC certification and subscribe to the faith identity of the MCCS Society and the Reformed Congregations in North America. Inquiries should be addressed to the principal, Mr. Jan Neels, at jneels@mccs.ca. Please send your application, along with supporting documentation, to Mr. Jan Neels and to the board secretary, Mr. Jacob Kerkhoff, at jkerkhoff@mccs.ca. See also www.mccs.ca

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, CORSICA, SOUTH DAKOTA, is seeking applicants to fill a full-time teaching position for the elementary grades. The applicant should be highly self-motivated, versatile, and one who loves the old truths and paths. NRC membership is required. A teaching certificate is appreciated but not required. For more information on this position, please contact the school board president, Mr. Cornie Blom, at 605-680-0557. Applications should be sent to Cornie Blom, 37885 275th St., Corsica, South Dakota 57328, or emailed to clerk Brad Spaans at kjspaans05@gmail.com

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ROCK VALLEY/SIOUX CENTER, IOWA, is seeking to fill teaching positions in elementary, 7-12 math, and other secondary subjects. These positions are part-time or full-time and can be combined depending on qualifications and experience. For further information, please visit www.nrceia.com or contact the principal, Mr. Daniel Breuer, at dan.breuer@nrceia.org or call 712-476-2821.

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 for a grade 7 teacher and a high school teacher. Strengths in math and science are an asset for the high school position, though we are flexible. For information about elementary opportunities, contact Mr. Andrew Korevaar at elementaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com or at 519-495-6629. For information about secondary opportunities, contact Mr. Gerrit Ten Hove at secondaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com or at 519-536-3689.

We also invite inquiries about our locally developed teacher-training program which offers a blend of paid teaching, mentorship, and training. This program is a strong opportunity for those new to the profession or for individuals seeking to transition into teaching. Cover letters and resumé should be submitted to hr@rcsnorwich.com. Applications will be reviewed, and applicants selected for interviews will be contacted by the school board.

TIMOTHY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CHILLIWACK, BRITISH COLUMBIA, is in need of a middle/high school teacher. We are looking for teachers who are excited about teaching and are dedicated to nurturing the hearts of young people. We have a definite need in middle/high school for the upcoming school year 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 Mr. Doug Stam, principal, at dstam@timothychristian.ca, or Mr. Kevin Romeyn, school board president, at kevinromeyn@timothychristian.ca

Thinking About Teaching?

Visit advertising.nrcea.education for an up-to-date listing of job openings in NRCEA schools. To access the job bank on NRCEA SharePoint, please use the following:

Name: advertising@nrcea.education
Password: **Schooljobs!**

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

My Leanness, My Leanness!

Jesus, to Thee I make my moan;
My doleful tale I tell to Thee;
For Thou canst help, and Thou alone,
A lifeless lump of sin like me.

Fain would I find increase of faith;
Fain would I see fresh graces bloom;
But ah! my heart's a barren heath,
Blasted with cold, and black with gloom.

True, Thou hast kindly given me light;
I know what Christians ought to be;
But did the blind receive their sight
Nothing but dismal things to see?

Though winter waste the earth awhile,
Spring soon revives the verdant meads;
The ripening fields in summer smile,
And autumn with rich crops succeeds;

But I from month to month complain;
I feel no warmth; no fruits I see;
I look for life, but dead remain:
'Tis winter all the year with me.

Yet sin's rank weeds within me live;
Barrenness is not all I bear;
I do not so for nothing grieve:
Alas! There's worse than nothing there.

Still on Thy promise I'll rely,
From whom alone my fruit is found,
Until the Spirit from on high
Enrich the dry and barren ground.

—*Joseph Hart*

the
Banner
of Truth

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