

# The Ambassador

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## This issue: Kept by the Power of God

### From the Pastor:

Psalm 121 closes with these words *“the Lord shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.”* This psalm addresses the wondrous power of God that keeps His beloved people in His grace. It draws us to those comforting words of the Lord Jesus who stated *“I give them eternal life and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of my hand. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of*

*my Father’s hand” [John 10].* Both of these texts affirm that last letter of the acronym “TULIP” – the Perseverance of the saints.

The “perseverance of the saints” is the teaching that all who are redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ and do in faith look unto Him alone for salvation are kept in faith for everlasting glory by the almighty power of God. This blessed doctrine has sometimes been called “eternal security” but such a phrase can be misleading. By “eternal security” many mean that a Christian can be certain of heaven because of their profession of faith; however the problem arises that our surety of heaven is not looking to what we have done, but to what God has promised in Christ. Further, as Jesus instructed with the Parable of the Four Soils, there can be false and worthless professions of faith that do not produce fruit.

Peter best expressed this teaching when he wrote *“blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith...” [1Peter 1:3-5].* Let’s unfold Peter’s words respecting perseverance. First, we are kept by

the power of God. Now, this is very important. Unlike those circles that believe salvation can be lost through sinful activity, Peter reminds us that it is God who perseveres for us, not we ourselves. He is doing the “keeping” of our souls. That “power of God” is His Almighty omnipotence to which absolutely nothing is able to challenge, spoil or frustrate.

Second, we are kept through faith. A significant debate is occurring in Reformed circles about the necessity of faithfulness in a Christian’s life. To be certain, our Lord does call us to obedience, to live lives worthy of our calling and to blameless living, but Scripture always enforces that such matters are to be an outflow of who we are, an expression of our love to God, but faithfulness is never a reason for God’s saving grace. Faith is the means by which we receive grace. As Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:8-9 *“by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it [faith] is a gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast.”* That faith, which as a gift from God enabled us to believe in the Lord Jesus as Saviour of our souls, is the same means through which God assures us of eternal glory.

Third, it is not so much that heaven is reserved for us, but that an inheritance is reserved for us in heaven. That inheritance is the

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From the Pastor: Kept by the Power of God	1-2
Today’s Culture: Are you Assured of Your Place in Heaven? What is Reformed?	2-3
Missions Corner	4-5
Growing in Grace and Knowledge: Perseverance of the Saints	6-8
On the Internet	9-10
Session News	10-11
Children’s Corner	11
Church Calendar and other information	12

glory to which all God's saving mercies are directing us to – transformation into the image of Christ Jesus where all corruption and defilement are completely removed from us and we live eternally in glorified bodies enjoying the blessed presence of God.

Fourth, the Father has 'begotten' us to this living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That assurance of eternal glory rests not in our conduct nor in our abilities, but completely in what the Father has done through the Son. By the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Father has not only given him life, but us also. God gives us new birth and he fathers us through the resurrection of His Son. And as the resurrection carried Christ not only out of the grave but also to His Father's throne, so we will share in that resurrection unto glory.

As the Westminster Confession of Faith declares, "this perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability [unchangeableness] of the decree of election flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father." This does not mean that our assurance is never shaken. Satan's temptations, corruption, sinful activity, neglecting the means of grace, grieving the Spirit of God can all deprive us of that full assurance, but God wants you to know that it depends on His faithfulness to keep you. As Paul wrote "*if we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself*" [2Timothy 2:13].

Ebenezer Erskine, a founding father of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, wrote of a time when he went to visit an

elderly lady who was on her deathbed. He wanted to shore up her assurance that she would soon be in glory. He asked her if she was confident that she would be with the Lord in glory. She replied, "O yes, Pastor, because you preached that if we believed in Christ we are in the Father's hands." He questioned her "But are you not afraid that you might slip through his fingers?" She replied, "How can I slip through His hands since He has made me one of the fingers?" It is that assurance God desires us all to have.

The full Godhead is at work to keep us, for not only the Father, but the Son also holds us fast in His hands, and the Holy Spirit is the guarantee that seals us for that inheritance. Nothing can snatch us away from His love.

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## Today's Culture: Are you Assured of your Place in Heaven?

“Are you assured of your place in heaven?” That is a very important question to both ask and answer. It is a great way to challenge many of the heretical religious groups and apostate churches such as the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and Roman Catholics, because their theology does not lend for any assurance of glory. They have no assurance of glory because they rest not in the "grace alone of Christ alone by faith alone" [to quote the Reformation cry of the 1500's]. They need to add to Christ human endeavour and a multitude of good works because, in their folly, they believe that some counterweight of good on their part must be set against their sinfulness. They have not believed that human goodness is nothing more than "filthy rags" before a holy God [Isaiah 64:6]. They have not believed that only the perfections of Christ are alone adequate to deal with man's sinfulness and that *being justified freely by His grace through the*

*redemption that is in Christ Jesus* does God then *justify the one who has faith in Jesus* [Romans 3:24-26].

It is easy to point out this folly of these heretical groups, but it is equally easy, and sad, to find the same lack of assurance in Christian settings. The issue of whether or not we can lose our salvation clouds the glory of Christ's redemption. The impact of "lack of assurance" shows itself in depression [which appears ever increasingly even in Reformed circles], dealing with covenant children, wayward members of the church, and particularly in our handling of the Gospel. Ultimately it affects our view of God and what kind of Saviour we have.

Can a true Christian lose his standing before God as a true child of God? Before answering this question, we need to consider from which viewpoint we are approaching it. From a human standpoint we might be quick to say yes, because we are looking at

the failure sin brings and the falling short of God's glory. We also measure the seriousness of sins and account the more immoral acts of violence [say, murder], or the frequency and repetition of certain sins worthy of greater judgment. So from a lowly human perspective, yes, there can come a point where too much is too much even for God.

But from God's perspective such a loss "never" occurs. He is not a God who is fickle with redemption. He does not adopt someone as His child only to throw out that child later on when sin is just too much. And why can we be confident and assured of this? Because Christ Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, became man to identify with humanity, was crucified as a sacrifice of the Father for those sinners whom He came to save, was raised from the dead overcoming death and bringing life to His people, and was ascended to the throne room of heaven where he now sits at the Father's right

hand *always living to make intercession for his people [Hebrews 7:25]*. In fact, this verse tells us that Christ's intercessory work is what makes Him *able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him*. That is the importance of this doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints. It looks to the ability and promise of our Father to persevere with us and in us so that we can reach that eternal and glorious place. And the Father perseveres with us because of His Son.

Space does not permit a full study of those texts that appear to imply a contrary view. However, there is a more insidious attack that occurs on this precious doctrine that arises within the church. When people are hounded about their sinfulness but never drawn to Him who is the sin bearer, a skewed view of God's salvation is had. When Christians do not find their only comfort in Christ but find greater joy in doing something good to appease their conscience, rather than confessing sin to Christ and finding His mercy the greatest joy to be had, that assurance is lost. When believers wallow in sin, fill up with remorse and account themselves too worthless to flee to Christ; when they do not heed that

passionate cry of our Lord *"come unto me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest"*, a false view of grace is acquired. When Christian parents do not teach their children that the greatest spiritual exercise they can give themselves over to is humble confession of their sins and seeking the mercy of God in Christ each and every day, such lose that concept of resting in Christ alone for salvation.

The opposite belief of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is a doctrine of self-keeping; it is a belief that, though God may have originally granted me salvation, it is through my ongoing endeavour, or lack thereof, that I have either maintained or lost that salvation. But such a notion is completely contrary to God's Word, for God has declared that nothing can snatch you from either His or Christ's hand [John 10:28-29]. Such a thought is opposed to God's power, which Peter reminds us is what keeps us [1Peter 1:5]. It stands against the work of Christ, making worthless His redemption by its dependence upon man's will and not God's love for us, for Paul wrote *"God demonstrated His love toward us, in that while we were*

*still sinners Christ died for us. 'Much more then' having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him"* [Romans 5:8-9]. Any trust in human endeavour is mostly an attack on God's grace – His unconditional favour which he chooses to bestow on unworthy sinners. It is *by grace you are saved through faith...not of works lest any man should boast* [Ephesians 2:8-9].

Assurance that God has not and will not give up on us is so very necessary to our spiritual well being. It is what separates biblical Christianity from hopeless religion. Our Father wants us, and makes it clearly known that we can have full assurance that *He will never leave us nor forsake us*. So for that Christian who is depressed, give them words that draw them to that merciful Saviour who desires to give them rest; for that wayward Christian, point them to Christ who is ever ready to cleanse them from their unrighteousness and forgive all their sins; for that faithful servant who lives blamelessly, show them how much more faithful is the One living in Heaven interceding for them.

## What is Reformed?

Have you ever been asked this question, particularly when someone asks you "What church do you go to?" and you respond "the Reformed Presbyterian Church"? Some mistakenly call the Reformed Faith "Calvinism", or the principles of "TULIP." These last few issues of [The Ambassador](#) have been examining the principles of biblical salvation, doctrines that pertain to the wondrous saving grace of our Lord, and these doctrines have often been used to define "Calvinism" or "Reformed Faith"; however the Reformed Faith encompasses much more than these doctrines. There are matters such as the Covenant, Church government, preaching, the authority of Scripture, Confession of Faith, the sacraments, and discipline, all which add to the definition of the Reformed Faith.

However, with the downturn in Christian circles regarding doctrine and the diminishing view of Scripture, I have found it both useful and advantageous to use the following five points to begin discussing what the Reformed Faith is all about.



1. WE BELIEVE IN THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE AS THE WORD OF GOD GIVEN TO US.
2. WE BELIEVE IN ONE TRUE AND LIVING GOD WHO EXISTS IN THREE PERSONS: THE FATHER, THE SON JESUS CHRIST, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.
3. WE BELIEVE THAT ALL MANKIND, THOUGH CREATED IN HOLY PERFECTION, THROUGH ADAM'S SIN HAS BECOME TOTALLY SINFUL BY NATURE IN THOUGHT, SPEECH AND ACTION, AND SO DESERVES GOD'S WRATH AND JUDGMENT.
4. WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST, THE ONLY SON OF GOD, BECAME A MAN IN ORDER TO BRING SALVATION TO SINNERS. THROUGH HIS HOLY AND PERFECT LIFE HE DIED AS THE ONLY TRUE SACRIFICE AND PUNISHMENT FOR OUR SINS.
5. WE BELIEVE THAT NOTHING MAN CAN DO WILL EVER REMOVE OUR GUILT AND JUDGMENT AND ONLY BY BELIEVING IN THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST DO WE FIND FAVOUR WITH GOD.

I have found that trying to present the Reformed Faith primarily as a type of Christianity that upholds "predestination" both confuses people and starts the conversation from the wrong place. Through these five points, discussion easily grows to other points and opens the door for dialogue and witness. Many Christians say, "We believe those things too" showing them that the Reformed Faith is biblical, and non-Christians have the gospel presented to them. This is an easy tool to commit to memory and gives you opportunity to answer the question "What is the Reformed faith?"



September 13, 2005

Dear friends,

We want to greet you all again from Surinam in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! We have safely arrived home again from being away on a three-month furlough. We have experienced a blessed but a very busy time, it was also a time of different emotions. First, we had the wedding of Wil and Linda, which was a blessed day; then Adrienne (our oldest daughter) gave birth to her fifth child; and we received a call that our mother passed away in the Netherlands, so that caused us to make a trip to Holland.

In total we gave 30 presentations about the Lord's work in Surinam, which were well received. It was good for Marja and myself to be with many different people while we were on "tour", and to receive so much love from them. Part of that love was expressed in putting the "fatted calf" on the table, which has caused us to gain considerably in weight, but we are on a diet and have lost already some consequences of eating these "fatted calves"! We want to express again our hearty thanks for all those who have made our furlough a blessing. On the other side we want to apologies to those who we had in mind to visit, but were not able to do so.

We left Surinam with the four of us, and we returned with the three of us; Gerry jr., who finished high school in Surinam, stayed behind in Canada. We certainly miss him, as he was a great help for us in doing many things around the house and at the missions where we work. But life continues also for Gerry, and we pray that all things may go well for him.

When we returned and came to the gate, Ozzy was a little beside himself, it was good to see him again. According to the neighbor people, during the night he often cried (something like a wolf howl), they thought he missed us. We found also a pile of mail waiting to be answered or to be thrown out, that takes time, but it went faster then we thought. And, it was a great encouragement to see that brother Ken had done a fine job to keep the work going, the Lord truly gave him wisdom and strength to do so. Let us not think that ministry depends upon a man, but on the blessings of our Lord, praised be His name!

It was good to be with the people again, Marja had bought something small for them and they liked it very much. Also when we went to see the folks at Esther Hof, it was a moving experience for Marja and me to see and hear how glad and thankful they were about our return to them. We have really missed one another! In the mean time, Marlinda has started school again, but at a different school; she attends the American Cooperative School, which is a very good Christian and accredited school. May the Lord remember her and bless her in her studies, and make her also a blessing for the school.

Last week Wednesday brother Ken and I went to visit the families at Klein and Groot Powakka, which almost turned out to be a wet experience. The father of one of the families in Groot Powakka has a field with watermelons, he wanted to show us how the Lord had blessed him on the field. In order to get to the field we had to go a short distance by boat through a creek. There was this dugout, maybe 12 feet long and very small. The man went first in the boat, he was going to paddle, I went in the middle and sat on my heels, then Ken stepped in the boat, the water was only half an inch from the top of the boat! We had to go only about 200 feet, but we all thought we would not make it dry to the other side. Not that I am scared of water, but you carry important items along when you travel such as passport, driving license, and other things, which you would not leave in the vehicle unattended. When we got to the other side of the creek, we made it clear that the man had to make two trips to bring us back. Anyways, this man is an Arawak Indian and is telling us that he wants to gain more knowledge about Scripture, which is a great sound in our ears. Pray for Orlando as his name is, that he may come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior, and that the Lord may call him (and others) for Gospel ministry.

Last Sunday, brother Ken went to pick up the people from Groot Powakka and came back with 22 people in the van, which is an eight-person van. He had 6 children standing straight up behind the backbench! Please pray for us as the work in Powakka is increasing, for wisdom but also for funds so that the "mission house" can be made livable for us or Ken and his family to live there for some days each week, which is very necessary. Ken and I visited also a mother and her children, they have been coming to church now for a year, I asked the

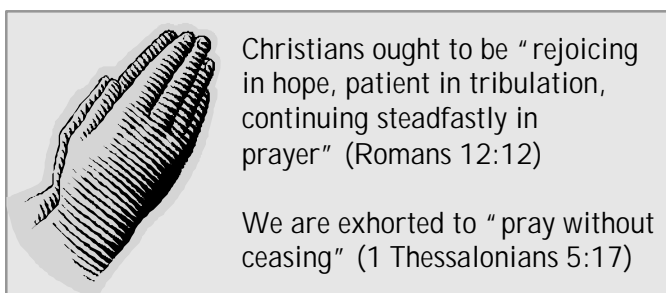
mother with whom it is difficult to communicate: "Ursula, you are coming to church now for about a year, what differences have you noticed in your life?" She told us: "It is very hard to speak about the changes in my own life, but I have noticed there is more peace and rest in my family." This sounds maybe simple, but it is a real blessing to hear this. Continue to pray for the people in Groot and Klein Powakka, for their eternal well being in Christ the Lord.

Last week Friday we received a call from our son in law, the husband of Christine, that they were blessed with the birth of another daughter, Angela Emma. Thankfully all things are well! Angela is our tenth grandchild.

Also pray for this country of Surinam, which is somewhat in turmoil, because of the increase in fuel prices. The diesel went up from SRD 1.40 to SRD 2.88 (over 100% increase)! The gas went up with 100%. The streetcars are not driving anymore because they do not get the increase in their fare approved by the government; people stay home and cannot get to work, which may mean also no income. And more difficulties will arise from such a huge increase in fuel prices.

Our family had received an invitation to a thanksgiving and prayer meeting for the new government, we went, and a number of ministers were present, there were also a number of pastors to pray for different functions within the government, and one preacher delivered the Word of God, it was good! The pastors were not afraid in their prayers to bring also the corruption of Surinam before the Lord, and each one has heard from the Word that without Christ nothing shall be blessed! O, may the Lord remember this country. It was also a real experience for Marlinda to wish personally the Lord's blessing to these government ministers and other people in high position. I want to leave you with this update, and hope to be back again two weeks from now. Keep on bringing the work of all mission fields before our God.

Sincerely in Christ the Lord,  
The Mynders in Surinam



Muslims around the World

### **Pray for Muslims around the world:**

**Shi'ite Muslims of Iraq.** This four-foot tall, bent-shouldered grandmother has power! This Shi'ite Muslim laboriously shuffled to the polling place at 9:15am in January to lead the way in voting in a new leader, and start a new era in Iraqi history. Elderly members of Iraq's Shi'ite community greatly influence public opinion. Many Shi'ites have little faith in politicians or the occupying American forces. Instead they look to past spiritual leaders, still living elderly men with white beards, many others of whom were killed by Saddam's intelligence agents. Vendors hawk posters of these clerics whose beliefs and views are widely respected. The most prominent Shi'ite cleric is the elderly, moderate, reclusive Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani. His clashes with the radical young cleric al-Sadr have divided the Shi'ite community and have been at the heart of both Shi'ite infighting and violence and attacks against occupation forces. Sixty percent of Iraq's 25 million people are Shi'ites, the persecuted majority under the former Sunni leader, Saddam Hussein. Now with Saddam's capture and a new Iraqi government elected and beginning to function, the Shi'ites sense that their historic moment of self-determination has arrived. After 14 centuries of brutal persecution, the Shi'ites now feel empowered. *Pray for the Lord to reveal Himself mightily to elderly Shi'ite leaders and work through them so that they will in turn lead the way in their communities to Jesus!*

# Growing in Grace and Knowledge:

## *Perseverance of the Saints*

by Robert Lewis Dabney

*Presbyterian minister and theologian during the mid to late 1800's in Virginia*

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*[This is an excerpt from a memorial address by Henry Woods 1936AD] "He was a matchless teacher. He possessed a clear, powerful intellect, which grasped the substance of the most profound philosophical themes and made them plain. He had had that close contact with men, that practical experience of affairs, which enabled him to present difficult subjects in their relation to the thoughts and needs of every-day life. He exemplified the difference between a learned bookworm, who knew his subject only from a theoretical viewpoint, and the profound master who presented it in relation to the actual experience of his hearers. Dr. Dabney had that rare gift of making systematic theology not a study of dry bones, but a living system, most interesting and instructive, because it was throbbing with reality and power. Dr. W. G. T. Shedd of Union Seminary, New York, in the old days, himself an acute and learned scholar, once said that in his judgment Dr. Dabney was the greatest living theologian."*

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Our Confession, in Chapter XVII., Sections i and ii., states this doctrine thus: "They whom God hath accepted in his beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved." "This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own their own will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; the abiding of the Spirit and of the seed of God within them; and the nature of the covenant of grace from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof."

I beg the reader to weigh these statements with candor and close attention. He will find that we do not ascribe this stability of grace in

the believer to any excellence in his own soul, even regenerate, as source and cause, but we ascribe it to the unchangeable purpose and efficacious grace of God dwelling and operating in them. All the angels, and Adam, received from their Creator holy natures; yet our first father and the fallen angels show that they could totally fall away into sin. No one in himself is absolutely incapable of sinning, except the unchangeable God. Converted men, who still have indwelling sin, must certainly be as capable of falling as Adam, who had none. We believe that the saints will certainly stand, because the God who chose them will certainly hold them up.

We do not believe that all professed believers and church members will certainly preserve and reach heaven. It is to be feared that many such, even plausible pretenders, 'have but a name to have while they are dead.' They fall fatally because they never had true grace to fall from.

We do not teach that any man is entitled to believe that he is justified, and therefore shall not come again in condemnation on the proposition 'once in grace always in grace,' although he be now living in intentional, willful sin. This falsehood of Satan we abhor. We say, the fact that this deluded man can live in willful sin is the strongest possible proof that he never was justified, and never had any grace to fall from. And, once for all, no intelligent believer can possibly abuse this doctrine into a pretext for carnal security. It promises to true believers perseverance in holiness. Who, except an idiot, could infer from that promise the privilege to be unholy?

Once more. We do not teach that genuine believers are secure from backsliding, but if they become unwatchful and prayerless,

they may fall for a time into temptations, sins, and loss of hope and comfort, which may cause them much misery and shame, and out of which a covenant-keeping God will recover them by sharp chastisements and deep contrition. Hence, so far as lawful self-interests can be a proper motive for Christian effort, this will operate on the Presbyterian under this doctrinal perseverance, more than on the Arminian with his doctrine of falling from grace. The former cannot say, "I need not be alarmed though I be backslidden; for if he is a true believer he has to be brought back by grievous and perhaps by terrible afflictions" he had better be alarm at these! But further, an enlightened self-love will alarm him more pungently than the Arminians' will. Here is an Arminian who finds himself backslidden. Does he feel a wholesome alarm, saying to himself, 'Ah, me, I was in the right road to heaven, but I have gotten out of it; I must get back in to it?' Well, the Presbyterian similarly backslidden is taught by his doctrine to say: "I thought I was in the right road to heaven, but now I see I was mistaken all the time, because God says, that if I had really been in that right road I could never have left it. Alas! Therefore, I must either perish or get back; not to that old deceitful road in which I was, but into a new one, essentially different, narrower and straighter." Which of the two men has the more pungent motive to strive?

As I have taken the definition of the doctrine from our Confession, I will take thence the heads of its Proofs:

1. The immutability of God's election proves it. How came this given sinner to be now truly converted? Because God had elected him to salvation. But God says, 'my purpose shall stand, and

I will do all my pleasure.' Since God is changeless and almighty, this purpose to save him must certainly succeed. But no man can be saved in his sins; therefore this man will certainly be made to persevere in grace.

2. The doctrine follows from the fact that God's election is sovereign and unconditional, not grounded in any foreseen merit in the sinner elected. God knew there was none in him to foresee. But God did foresee all the disobedience, unthankfulness, and provocation which that unworthy sinner was ever to perpetrate. Therefore, the future disclosure of this unthankfulness, disobedience, and provocation by this poor sinner, cannot become a motive with God to revoke his election of him. God knew all about it just as well when he first elected him, and yet, moved by his own motives of love, mercy, and wisdom, he did elect him, foreknowing all his possible meanness.

3. The same conclusion follows from God's covenant of redemption with his Son the Messiah. This was a compact made from eternity between the Father and the Son. In this the Son freely bound himself to die for the sins of the world and to fulfill his other offices as Mediator for the redemption of God's people. God covenanted on this condition to give his Son this redeemed people as his recompense. In this covenant of redemption Christ furnished and fulfilled the whole conditions; his redeemed people none. So, when Christ died, saying 'It is finished,' the compact was finally closed; there is no room, without unfaithfulness in the Father, for the final falling away of a single star out of our Savior's purchased crown; read John xvii. It is 'an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and is sure.' (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.)

4. We must infer the same blessed truth from Christ's love in dying for his people while sinners, from the supreme merits of his imputed righteousness, and the power of his

intercession: 'God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.' (Rom. v. 8-10.) 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' (Rom. viii. 32.) Of Christ, the Intercessor, it is said: 'Him the Father heareth always. But see John xvii. 20: 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.' If the all-prevailing High Priest prays for all believers, all of them will receive what he asks for. But what and how much does he for them? Some temporary, contingent and mutable grace, contingent on the changeable and fallible human will? See John xvii. 24: 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given Me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given Me.'

If any man is converted, it is because the Holy Ghost is come into him; if any sinner lives for a time the divine life, it is because the Holy Ghost is dwelling in him. But the Bible assures us that this Holy Ghost is the abiding seed of spiritual life, the earnest of heaven, and the seal of our redemption. Believers are 'born by the word of God, of a living and incorruptible seed, which abideth and liveth forever,' The Apostle Paul declares that they receive the earnest of the Spirit, and that his indwelling is 'the earnest of the purchased possession.' The same apostle says (Eph. iv. 30): 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' (See 1 Jn. 3.9).

An earnest, or earnest-money, is a smaller sum paid in cash when a contract is finally closed, as an unchangeable pledge that the future payments shall also be made in their due time. A seal is the final

imprint added by the contracting parties to their names to signify that the contract is closed and binding. Such is the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit in every genuine believer; a deathless principle of perseverance therein, God's advanced pledge of his purpose to give heaven also, God's seal affixed to his covenant of grace. This, then, is the blessed assurance of hope which the true believer is privileged to attain: not only that God is pledged conditionally to give me heaven, provided I continue to stick to my gospel duty in the exercise of my weak, changeable, fallible will.

A wretched consolation that to the believer who knows his own heart! But the full assurance of hope is this: Let the Holy Spirit once touch this dead heart of mine with his quickening light, so that I embrace Christ with a real penitent faith; then I have the blessed certainty that 'this God who hath begun the good work in me, will perfect it unto the day of Jesus Christ' (his judgment day), (See Phil. 1.6) that the same divine love will infallibly continue with me notwithstanding subsequent sins and provocations, will chastise, restore, and uphold me, and give me the final victory over sin and death. This is the hope inexpressible and full of glory, a thousand-fold better adapted to stimulate in me obedience, the prayer, the watchfulness, the striving, which are the means of my victory, than the chilling doubts of possible falling from grace. Again, the Scriptures are our best argument. I append a few texts among many: See Jer. xxxii. 40: 'And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me.' My Sheep never perish, and none shall pluck them out of my hand (Jn.10.27 ff). 2 Tim. ii. 19: 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord

knoweth them that are his.' Christ himself implies that it is not possible to deceive his elect. 1 Peter I. 5 : Believers ' are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' The same apostle thus explains the apostasy of final backsliders. 2 Peter ii. 22: 'The sow that was washed returns to her wallowing in the mire.' She is a sow still in her nature, though with the outer surface washed, but never changed into a lamb; for if she had been, she would never have chosen the mire.

The apostle (1 John ii. 19) explains final backslidings in the same way, and in words which simply close the debate: 'They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.'

My affirmative argument virtually refutes all objections. But there are two to which I will give a word. Arminians urge always an objection drawn from their false philosophy. They say that if God's grace in regeneration were efficient, certainly determining the convert's will away from sin to gospel duty, it would destroy his free agency. Then there would be no moral or deserving quality in his subsequent evangelical obedience to please God, any more than in the natural color of his hair, which he could not help. My answer is, that their philosophy is false. The presence and operation of a right principle in a man, certainly determining him to right feelings and actions, does not infringe his free-agency but rather is essential to all right free-agency. My proofs are, that if this spurious philosophy were true, the saints and elect angels in heaven could not have any free agency or praise-worthy character or conduct. For they are certain and forever determined to holiness. The man Jesus could not have had

any free agency or merit, for his human will was absolutely determined to holiness. God himself could not have had any freedom or praiseworthy holiness. He least of all! For his will is eternally, unchangeably, and necessarily determined to absolute holiness, If there is anything approaching blasphemy in this, take notice, it is not mine. I put this kind of philosophy from me with abhorrence.

It is objected, again, that the Bible is full of warnings to believers to watch against apostasy, like this in I Cor. x. 12: 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' The sophism is, that if believers cannot fall from grace all these warnings are absurd. I reply, they are reasonable, because believers could fall from grace if were left to their own natural powers. In this sense, they naturally might fall, and therefore watchfulness is reasonably urged upon them, because God's unchangeable purpose of grace towards them is effectuated in them, not as if they were stocks or stones, or dumb beasts, but rational free agents, to be guided and governed by the almighty Spirit through the means of rational motives. Therefore, when we see God plying believers with these rational motives not to back slide, it is not to be inferred that he secretly intends to let them backslide fatally, but rather just the contrary. I will close with a little parable: I watch a wise, intelligent, watchful, and loving mother, who is busy about her household work. There is a bright little girl playing about the room, the mother's darling. I hear her say, 'take care, baby dear, and don't go near that bright fire, for you might get burned.' Do I argue thus? Hear that woman's words! I infer from them that that woman's mind is made up to let that darling child burn itself to death unless its own watchfulness shall suffice to keep it away from the fire, the caution of an ignorant, impulsive, fickle little child. What a heartless mother! But

I do not infer thus, unless I am a heartless fool. I know that this mother knows the child is a rational creature, and that rational cautions are one species of means for keeping it at a safe distance from the fire; therefore she does right to address such cautions to the child; she would not speak thus if she thought it were a mere kitten or puppy dog, and would rely on nothing short of tying it by the neck to the table leg. But I also know that that watchful mother's mind is fully made up that the darling child shall not burn itself at this fire. If the little one's impulsiveness and short memory cause it to neglect the maternal cautions, I know that I shall see that good woman instantly drop her instruments of labor and draw back her child with physical force from that fire, and then most rationally renew her cautions to the child as a reasonable agent with more emphasis. And if the little one proves still heedless and willful, I shall see her again rescued by physical force, and at last I shall see the mother impressing her cautions on the child's mind more effectually, perhaps by passionate caresses, or perhaps by a good switching, both alike the expressions of faithful love.

This doctrine exalts God, his power, his sovereign, unbought love and mercy. They are entitled to be supremely exalted. This doctrine humbles man in the dust. He ought to be humbled; he is a guilty, lost sinner, the sole, yet the certain architect of his own ruin. Helpless, yet guilty of all that makes him helpless, he ought to take his place in the deepest contrition, and give all the glory of his redemption to God. This doctrine, while it lays man's pride low, gives him an anchor of hope, sure and steadfast, drawing him to heaven; for his hope is founded not in the weakness, folly, and fickleness of his human will, but in the eternal love, wisdom, and power of almighty God. 'O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord!' 'The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.' (Deut. xxxiii. 29, 27.)



## On the Internet:

Have you ever received "chain e-mail?" It is similar to chain letters very popular in the 1900's where a letter was sent to someone telling them that if they sent that same letter on to [say] ten friends, they would have 'good luck', but if they didn't...well you know. Some chain letters encouraged wealth distribution, that by sending a dollar [or with inflation \$5] to every person on a list, then substituting your name for a person in the list, that after a certain time, if everyone sent their money you would received thousands of dollars in the mail [yes, it is too good to be true]. It is a superstitious practice to be sure, but did you know that such chain letters had their origins in occult practices to secure blessings in perpetuating writings by having them reprinted and passed along to others. Christianity has also been caught up in this wave. Take for example the following popular chain letter [excerpted from [www.silcom.com/~barnowl/chain-letter/evolution.html](http://www.silcom.com/~barnowl/chain-letter/evolution.html) ]:

Our earliest example of the "Ancient Prayer" chain is a letter postmarked in Leeds, Maine on January 6, 1905.

*"Oh, Lord Jesus Christ, we implore Thee, O Eternal God, to have mercy upon mankind. Keep us from all sin and take us to be with Thee eternally. Amen*

*This prayer was [purportedly] sent by Bishop Lawrence, recommending it to be rewritten and sent to nine other persons. He who will not say it will be afflicted with some great misfortune. One person who failed to pay attention to it met with a dreadful accident. He who will rewrite it to nine other persons commencing on the day it is received - and sending only one each day will on or after the ninth day experience great joy.  
Please do not break the chain."*

This is the oldest luck chain letter in our collection. Here "*He who will not say it will be afflicted . . .*" seems to imply that recitation of the prayer is sufficient to avoid punishment for noncompliance. "Bishop Lawrence" was the Episcopalian Bishop of Massachusetts and a well-known author, at least among Protestants. He actively denied that he had anything to do with the chain letter (1926). Later in 1905 a similar letter was denounced in a Catholic publication from France (Bayonne). This version was more influenced by the [Letters from Heaven](#): a voice heard in Jerusalem during the holy Liturgy predicts terrible punishment for those who do not comply. Beginning around 1910 a persistent new version of Ancient Prayer appeared on U.S. postcards.

*"Oh Lord I implore thee to bless all mankind. Keep us from all evil and take us to dwell with thee eternally.*

*This prayer was sent to me. It is being sent all over the world. It was said in Jesus time that all who would write it and pass it on would be delivered from all calamities. Those who would not write it on would meet with some misfortune. Those who write it before nine days, **stating** the day received, to nine of their friends will on the ninth day receive some great joy. So do not break the chain.  
Received Oct. 6. Name unsigned."*

Well, today chain letters have evolved into "e-mail chain letters", but their intent is nonetheless superstitious, accusatory and arrogant. Take for example this recently received [and convoluted] "Christian e-mail chain letter" **note**, I did not include the whole e-mail as it was filled with some things I wished not to pass on to you; and I chose this one because it was the most recent and most offensive]:

Time for God?: It will be interesting to see how many of you send this back to me.... Read only if you have time for God. Let me tell you, make sure you read all the way to the bottom. I almost deleted this email but I was blessed when I got to the end.

Subject: READ ONLY IF YOU HAVE TIME FOR GOD: God, when I received this e-mail, I thought...I don't have time for this... And, this is really inappropriate during work. Then, I realized that this kind of thinking is... exactly what has caused a lot of the problems in our world today. We try to keep God in church on Sunday morning...maybe Sunday night...and the unlikely event of a midweek service. We do like to have Him around during sickness...and, of course, at funerals. However, we don't have time, or room, for Him during work or play...because... that's the part of our lives we think... we can, and should, handle on our own. May God forgive me for ever thinking that there is a time or place where HE is not to be FIRST in my life. We should always have time to remember all HE has done for us. If you aren't ashamed to do this, please follow the directions. Jesus said, "If you are ashamed of me, I will be ashamed of

you before my Father.." Not ashamed? Pass this on ONLY IF YOU MEAN IT!! Yes, I do Love God. HE is my source of existence and Savior. He keeps me functioning each and every day. Without Him, I will be nothing. But, with Christ, HE strengthens me. (Phil 4:13) This is the simplest test. If You Love God... and are not ashamed of all the marvelous things HE has done for you... Send this to ten people and the person who sent it to you! I don't think I know 10 people who would admit they love Jesus. Do you love Him?

THE POEM: I knelt to pray but not for long, I had too much to do. I had to hurry and get to work, For bills would soon be due. So I knelt and said a hurried prayer, And jumped up off my knees. My Christian duty was now done; My soul could rest at ease. All day long I had no time To spread a word of cheer. No time to speak of Christ to friends, They'd laugh at me I'd fear. No time, no time, too much to do - That was my constant cry. No time to give to souls in need, But at last the time, the time to die. I went before the Lord, I came, I stood with downcast eyes. For in his hands God held a book; It was the book of life. God looked into his book and said, "Your name I cannot find. I once was going to write it down, But never found the time" Now do you have the time to pass it on? Make sure that you scroll through to the end.

Easy vs. Hard: Why is it so hard to tell the truth but yet so easy to tell a lie? Why are we so sleepy in church but right when the sermon is over we suddenly wake up? Why is it so hard to talk about God but yet so easy to talk about nasty stuff? Why is it so boring to look at a Christian magazine, but yet so easy to look at a nasty one? Why is it so easy to delete a Godly e-mail, but yet we forward all of the nasty ones? Why are the churches getting smaller but yet the bars and dance clubs are getting larger? Do you give up? Think about it. Are you going to forward this, or delete it? Just remember - God is watching you.

Prayer Wheel: Let's see the devil stop this one! Here's what the wheel is all about. When you receive this, say a prayer for the person that sent it to you. That's all you have to do. There is nothing attached. This is so powerful. Do not stop the wheel, please. Of all the free gifts we may receive, prayer is the very best one. There are no costs, but wonderful rewards. GOD BLESS! May God keep you and bless you.

Notes: Isn't it funny how simple it is for people to trash God and then wonder why the world's going to hell. Isn't it funny how someone can say "I believe in God" but still follow Satan (who, by the way, also "believes" in God). Isn't it funny how you can send a thousand jokes through e-mail and they spread like wildfire, but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing? Isn't it funny how when you go to forward this message, you will not send it to many on your address list because you're not sure what they believe, or what they will think of you for sending it to them. Isn't it funny how I can be more worried about what other people think of me than what God thinks of me. I pray, for everyone who sends this to their entire address book, they will be blessed by God in a way special for them. And send it back to the person who sent it, to let them know that indeed it was sent out to many more.

What is wrong with such a letter? The sender strongly implies:

- ⇒ that you do not love God unless you do what this letter says [which we call manipulation];
- ⇒ that God will bless you if you forward this letter [which is superstitious deception];
- ⇒ that your Christianity is worthless if you delete this letter [which is Pharisaical conscience binding];
- ⇒ and that you are involved in sending out nasty chain e-mail [which is casting stones without warrant].

I shudder to think that even some Christians might believe they are evangelizing with such an e-mail.

Scripture is clear that what we pass along is to reflect truth in sincerity and love. *Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearer [Ephesians 4:29].* The words " your keyboard" could be aptly substituted for "your mouth." Granted there are some wonderful and warming Christian anecdotes that have been passed along to me, which I have also passed along, but when you receive something like the above, delete it, and challenge the sender to read and meditate on Colossians 3:12-16.

## Session News:

The Provisional Session of Covenanters Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church met Saturday, September 3, 2005, at 7:30 p.m. by means of telephone conference call. This was the postponed August Session Meeting due to a death in Rev. Carter's extended family at the time our regular August meeting was to be held. The Moderator read from Nehemiah 2: 10-20 and opened with prayer.

*Presbytery Delegate for Fall 2005:* Gary Plewes accepted the nomination to be the ruling elder delegate to the 2005 Fall Presbytery in Sydney Mines, Nova Scotia.

## Minutes of Provisional Session, September 3, 2005

*10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service for Rev. John van Eyk:* September 24, 2005 is Rev. Van Eyk's 10th Anniversary of faithful ministry at Riverside A. R. P. Church, Cambridge, Ontario. The Clerk was instructed to write a letter of greeting to him regarding this happy occasion.

*Board of Director's Minutes:* In November 2005 the BOD will combine the short-term investment of \$6,000 with the current balance in the building fund (YTD November 2005) into one and re-invested for a one (1) year period.

*Maritime ARP Meeting:* held in Truro, Nova Scotia on Tuesday,

August 30, 2005 for the chief purpose of prayer and discussion for future mission development plans for this region. The next meeting will be held in 2006 on the Labour Day Monday.

*Catechism Club:* will commence for ages 5-10 years old in October 2005.

*Monthly Youth Club:* will commence for ages 11-up at the Gerrits' on Friday, September 23, 2005. The main teaching focus will be on the Westminster Shorter Catechism.

*Presbytery Support:* We will be making a request for financial support from Presbytery at the January meeting for 2006. We are looking at an amount of \$15,000.

*Congregational Report:* Andrew Gerrits and Jesse Hogeterp have successfully recited their Children's Catechism. A NKJV Bible was presented to each of them on August 29, 2005 by the Pastor. Training: Hearts and Training Minds was presented to

Mr. Chris Carter on occasion of his graduation from High School and commencement of University. A report from the Pastor was received on visits with several member families and friends of Covenanters. The Pastor is going to explore avenues of ministry opportunity at Acadia University.

*Correspondence:* A letter was received from the Synod to enlist any financial support we may want to contribute for our sister churches that have been affected by Hurricane Katrina in the Mississippi/Alabama area of the Southern States. *Next Meeting Date:* Friday, September 16, 2005 at 1:30 p.m. in Moncton, New Brunswick.

*Adjournment of Meeting:* The meeting closed in prayer by all elders.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan W. Jones, Clerk of Provisional Session

## Children's Corner:

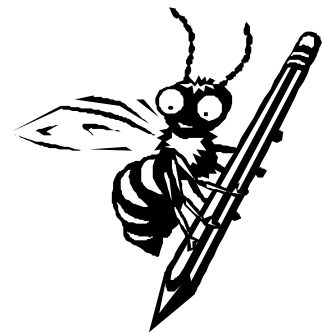
### Miracles of Jesus (III) THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

You can read this story in the Bible. Find it in **John 11:1-46**.

Use the following words to fill in the blanks in the sentences.

died	two	lovest	Lazarus	Lazarus	Martha
Mary	three	Bethany	sad	four	Lazarus
forth	walking	miracle	resurrection	life	wept

1. In the town of \_\_\_\_\_, Jesus had \_\_\_\_\_ very good friends.
2. Their names were \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. One day, \_\_\_\_\_ died and his sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Him whom thou \_\_\_\_\_ is sick."
4. Jesus did not come right away. He stayed another \_\_\_\_\_ days.
5. In the meantime, Lazarus \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Everyone was \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Finally Jesus came, and they all went to the grave. Lazarus had been in the grave for \_\_\_\_\_ days.
8. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ because he was sad.
9. Jesus said, " \_\_\_\_\_, come \_\_\_\_\_."
10. Lazarus came \_\_\_\_\_ alive from the grave.
11. Jesus did a \_\_\_\_\_ by raising a man from the dead.
12. Jesus told the people "I am the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_."





# Church Calendar:



## UPCOMING EVENTS:

October 20-November 17 - Children's Catechism Club

Oct.21 and Nov.18 - Youth (ages 11 and up) meeting at the home of Albert & Annette Gerrits.

Wednesday Evenings Bible Study - "Answers in Genesis" by Ken Ham; meeting in October at Henry & Joyce Hogeterp's; meeting in November at Mr. & Mrs. Halbersma's

October 15 - Monthly Session meeting at 7:30pm.

October 30 - Monthly afternoon Psalm service, offering for Canadian Church Development Trust fund.

November 26 - Monthly Session meeting at 7:30pm

November 27 - Monthly afternoon Psalm service, offering: Covenanters Building Fund.

### Children's Catechism Club

Thursdays, October 20 - November 18, 4:00 - 5:00  
At Pastor Carter's home (1001 Minas Crescent, New Minas)

Theme: *Five Important Men of the Old Testament*

## Sunday Services

**9:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.**



Services are held at the Kentville Lions Club on River Street, off Aberdeen Street in Kentville.

All are welcome ! Nursery available.

## Birthdays

October 3	Kaitlyn Hogeterp
October 4	Brenda Nyenhuis
October 24	Lucy Killacky
November 3	Anna Stefani
November 10	Isaiah Hogeterp
November 14	Annette Gerrits
November 14	Sebastian Nash
November 17	Seth Hogeterp
November 17	Thomas Hogeterp
November 19	Sarah Nyenhuis

## Fellowship Schedule

October 2	Annette Gerrits
October 9	Anna Halbersma
October 16	Joyce Hogeterp
October 23	Marion Hogeterp
October 30	Avril Killacky
November 6	Brenda Nyenhuis
November 13	Anna Stefani
November 20	Joanne Carter
November 27	Annette Gerrits

## Nursery Schedule

October 2	Brenda / Joyce
October 9	Annette / Marion
October 16	Joanne / Avril
October 23	Anna S. / Brenda
October 30	Annette / Joyce
November 6	
November 13	
November 20	
November 27	

## Church Setup Schedule

October	Nyenhuis family
November	Killacky family
December	Hogeterp family

## More information...

### ELDERS / PROVISIONAL SESSION

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Alan Jones, 50 Rural Estates, Moncton, NB E1G 4W2 (506) 859-1404

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If you have any comments regarding this publication or if you would like to contribute an article, a poem or hymn, children's activity, or announcement, please contact one of the editors.

### WEB SITES

[www.arpnovascotia.com/covenanters](http://www.arpnovascotia.com/covenanters)

[www.arsynod.org](http://www.arsynod.org)