BEACON LIGHTS

Psalm 8

O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet; All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The foul of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

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KNOCK KNOCK

by Peter Faber

L U I S P A L A U

"Christ is standing and knocking at your door. Let Him in tonight," said Luis Palau to a group of 5,000 gathered at the Old Kent Park on September 15, 1994. Old Kent Park is home to a local minor baseball team called, appropriately, the WhiteCaps. For the people living in the Grand Rapids area, Palau's visit has been known for some time. Everywhere you looked in the Grand Rapids area were signs and bumper stickers proclaiming the name of one man, Luis Palau..

Luis Palau, staged as the next Billy Graham, runs a busy circuit of preaching around the globe. Luis Palau was born in Argentina, although his parents were from Europe, and today lives in Portland, Oregon. No one will deny that Palau gets around, since over the past years he has had in his audience over 11 million people scattered across 6 nations.

The crusade on this particular night lasted approximately two hours. The 1,000 member choir first sang several numbers and a personal testimony by John Kreigel followed. John explained how he ruined his life and then was later converted in jail while serving time for drug dealing. After this testimony, Kevin Smith sang with his band, DC TALK, which made me cringe. If I was offended with this singer, I can only imagine how offended

God was with this man using His name. After the "special number" and a collection, Palau was introduced. The theme or question of his speech was, "Does God have any grandchildren?" Palau talked about many things Christians do in their lives which are good, but which do not necessarily make them Christians. Examples of this would be tithing and church attendance. Christians must do these things but you do not conclude you are a Christian because you do them. Palau went on to talk about how God has no grandchildren but only has children. You are not saved because you know people that are saved, but you are saved only if you believe. The next hour of his speech was story hour, not Bible hour. We heard stories about Willy, Harry, Bob a Scotchman, and even a Dutchman. Most of these stories were of people pretending that they were Christians although they really were unconverted. These characters then were somehow touched and converted. Not surprisingly, most of these people were converted at a crusade meeting. A good example of this would be Willie, A Catholic Bishop. Willie was a Bishop for forty years, had two theology degrees, and then at a crusade came forward to accept Christ. Palau said, "Who would have thought? Who would have thought that Willie of all people wasn't converted?" Palau was surprised, I wasn't.

Some other stories Palau told were about people converted after they found out they had AIDS or after another tragedy happened in their life. He emphasized that it was much easier to come to God at a meeting like this than coming when you have a disease or are in prison.

Palau concluded his speech with an alter call inviting all those that would like to accept Christ to come forward. When the people came forward, the organizers had counselors ready to meet with the people and to pray with them. The crusade was organized and backed by 550 churches in the area. I am sure they will be happy with the outcome of the crusade because the baseball field was full of people who came forward to accept Christ this Thursday night. *The Grand Rapids Press* reported, "Saturday alone an afternoon Kid's Crusade at Old Kent Park drew a stadium record 11,400 people, with kids spilling onto the grass that overlooked the stadium. Saturday night that record was shattered, as 12,875 screaming teens packed the park and bounced, danced and swayed to Christian rockers Audio Adrenaline. 'There will be headbanging in heaven,' screamed lead singer Mark Stuart."

Now this crusade was intended to bring in new converts but never in his speech did Palau explain who Christ is or what He did. Apparently Palau believes that more people will be converted after hearing his stories than hearing the Gospel as explained in the Bible. After hearing Luis Palau and rereading some of the Apostle Paul's speeches to unbelievers, it is easy to see which one is from God and which one is not.

Is Luis Palau doing such a fabulous job presenting the gospel? Or are other big time crusaders presenting the gospel so well that we do not have to worry about bringing Christ's Word to all nations? It is time for us to wake up and take the Great Commission seriously. We as a denomination must demand a strong seminary missionary program. We must realize that sending a minister to a foreign country does not make him a missionary nor does it mean that we are doing mission work. We must realize what kind of work is being done today in the name of missions by big crusades. We must remember that Palau and groups singing such as Audio Adrenaline was not organized by some far out group but by 50 denominations and 550 local churches. But this is not mission work! Christ demands that the Church preach the gospel to all nations. It certainly is not happening by this kind of crusade, and we all know too well the little amount we do personally and as a church. We must get busy as individuals and as a denomination.

Little Bilney: Ready to Witness

by Tom Bergman*

Sitting on the grassy slope were hundreds of onlookers. It was August 19, 1531 just outside of Norwich, England. Torn between two religions, England was a bloody sight. In 1531, she had not yet broken from Rome, although King Henry VIII was rearing that decree. Protestants and Catholics alike were suffering from the prolonged civil strife: beheadings, burnings, and such like. This day was to be no different. The gentle hills of Norwich formed a natural amphitheater where spectators could view the afternoon event. Another heretic was to be burned.

Sir Thomas More, King Henry's right-hand man, felt that the burning stake had been idle all too long. A close friend of Erasmus and a staunch Catholic, More hunted down heretics like a hungry lion. So when the news got out that the bishop of Norwich arrested a man for preaching the Reformed faith and distributing William Tyndale's New Testament, Sir Thomas More quickly issued his written permission to burn the preacher.

The prisoner caught in County Norfolk was Thomas Bilney. His friends called him "Little" Bilney because of his height. Yet unlike his physical stature, his preaching was mighty. So he was handed over to the sheriff for burning, his trial a farce.

There is much more to this story than its gruesome ending. This man called Little Bilney had not been so courageous to speak the truth on past occasions. Twice before he had been arrested for preaching illegally, then recanted. Weak of heart, he cracked under pressure and took back everything he had said against the Roman Catholic Church. Both times, he confessed to church officials that he was truly Catholic and embraced all the Catholic Church's teachings. Then, as he wished, Little Bilney was free. Although threatened with death if arrested again, Bilney was released from his prison cell. Free!

Unfortunately, it was not the kind of freedom he wanted. In fact, Little Bilney did not feel free at all. He knew that he had denied the truth to save his own hide. Suffering the agonies of remorse, Bilney realized his true imprisonment by the bondage of sin. Friends and fellow preachers attempted to soothe his pain, but Bilney was miserable, inconsolable. He felt like Peter in his darkest hour, denying his Lord. Little Bilney did not have the strength to stand on his own. Unprepared to be a shining witness, he fell flat on his face.

Falling to his knees instead, he went to the Lord in prayer. It was God alone who could prepare him for battle. Bowing before God's throne of grace, Little Bilney prayed hard. Then filled with a renewed zeal, he reversed his former way. He took to the fields of England, bravely confessing his weakness and lamenting his former cowardice. He preached the Word of God. All over southern England! Even for distributing Bibles, the penalty was death. He knew the consequences, but he sang with the psalmist, "Because Thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee" (Psalm 63:3). Before he left, he hinted to his closest friends, "I must needs go up to Jerusalem." Little Bilney was ready to witness!

Well over 400 years later, we still must be ready to witness. Little Bilney, man of God, witnessed well of His Maker's Name and marvelous works. So must we. Yes, this means *you* and this means *today*. Bilney's calling was in 16th century England; yours is wherever you are, in whatever you do. Each day of your week presents opportunities to let your light shine. At home, Sunday through Saturday: the way you treat and respect your parents. At work—morning to evening—the friendships with co-workers, the humble service to employers, the prayers at lunch break. At school—September to June—the honest studies in God's Name, the love and fellowship among classmates, the respected authority of teachers. The places you go—from childhood to late adulthood. The places you *avoid*. All these reflect the way you live. Each is a chance for others to see *exactly what it is that you intend to*

say by your actions. Let the way you live "say," God is my God, my Father. He has purchased righteousness for me with a price—His own life, His own blood. And be His witness with a life of thanksgiving! Accept your calling to be a Little Bilney.

> Let the words of my mouth,
> and the meditation of my heart,
> be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord,
> my strength, and my redeemer.
> (Psalm 19:14)

Is it difficult? Too much to ask? As Psalm 19 hints, daily witnessing is not in vain when you are near to your Strength and Redeemer in prayer. Mission work is never futile with Jesus Savior piloting us. O sure, we often stumble and fall. Perhaps it is when we do not want co-workers to see us "being Christians." Being a little secretive with professors or bosses about the fact that God has chosen us for a different home, a heavenly palace? The situation never arose, right? Nobody ever specifically asked? Uh-huh. Or perhaps the issue just never "came up" while on a date. Dating can be just for fun, so why mention who we really are? Right? Without prayer, you see how difficult it can be. Our friend Bilney found it all too difficult under pressure. He cracked. By denying the truth, he hid his light under a bushel. (This makes me wonder... Did I hide mine under a bushel today? ...Did You?)

Take it to the Lord in prayer. *Prayer does work.* It is so terribly important, stresses Paul, that we need to "pray without ceasing" (I Thess. 5:17). Otherwise, we will lose—repeatedly. Unprepared to witness—getting knocked over time after time, you need humbly to petition God. Ask in faith, and the Lord of mercy shall reward you with the strength to go forth in His name—as His witness. You! Ready to witness!

On a larger scale, prayer is applied to mission work. The Lord provides missionaries the strength to go forth in His Name as His witnesses, preaching and baptizing. Of all the ways for a congregation (quite literally, a "congregation" here is a group of witnesses, sending forth a preacher from among them) to aid mission work, prayer is chief.

Pray for missionaries!

Pray for God's guiding hand on the mission field.

Pray daily.

These daily prayers are part of a thankful walk.

Prayers of undeserving sinners...

For Jesus' sake...

Before the Almighty Jehovah.

Here lies the mysterious wonder of salvation—that God chose to save wretched sinners—those who deny His holy Name repeatedly. The Lord loves His children and will not leave them. When these wretched sinners cannot live with themselves...no peace, no rest, no hope...just misery and denial...(like the agony of Little Bilney), God is there (Psalm 139). O, thanks be to God for this! "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side...then the proud waters had gone over our soul" (Psalm 124). God Almighty will be praised! Therefore, repent and go to God in prayer.

Right now, the example of Thomas "Little" Bilney may seem to be a bit extreme, but our calling to witness individually and to perform missions collectively is very REAL, regardless of the circumstances. In the following months, the Lord willing, you will see questions answered about missions, witnessing, and the great need for prayer. (1) Preaching the gospel throughout the world, (2) witnessing of Christ in our lives, and (3) praying for God's grace and guidance upon both of these are the three threads woven into the upcoming selections under the rubric ***Missions and Witnessing***. May the Lord graciously bless our studies and always guide us to His Word. You must be ready to witness and sing!

> Lead on, O King eternal;
> The day of march has come.
> Henceforth in fields of conquest,
> Thy tents shall be our home.
> Through days of preparation
> Thy grace has made us strong
> And now, O King eternal,
> We lift our battle song.
> (Lead On, O King Eternal,
> Ernest W. Shurtleff, 1887)

Little Bilney was led out to a deep hollow outside the gate of Norwich. He fell on his knees to pray, then embraced the stake. As the sheriff's men bound him to the wooden stake with chains of iron, God's faithful witness felt more free than ever.

Then, the deputies bent down to light the dry bundles of wood, securing Bilney's martyrdom. The fire waxed hot, but the end was painstakingly slow in coming. Spectators watched as Little Bilney was only somewhat scorched because the afternoon breezes were blowing the flames away from him. Yet it did not last. The fire continued to consume Little Bilney who, licked by the flames, was a brave soldier, a free man, and a true witness of God. He uttered the name of Jesus his Savior amid the fiery blaze. "I believe," he said, and died.

*Note: Some facts taken from *Such a Candle*, by D.C. Wood (Evangelical Press).

John Davenant (1576-1641)

by Rodney Kleyn

The *Canons of Dordt* (1619) is the third of the three confessions in the *Three Forms of Unity*. It was formulated at the Synod of Dordt (1618-1619) in response to the rise, in the Dutch churches, of doctrines which were heretical and which contradicted the earlier confessions of the church, the *Belgic Confession* (1561), and the *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563). The Synod of Dordt was called to revise the earlier confessions and to deal also with these controversial arminian doctrines. As a result we have the *Canons of Dordt.*

This Synod, held at Dordrecht in the Netherlands, consisted of almost one-hundred delegates from almost all of the Reformed Churches of Europe. Representatives included men from the Churches of England, Scotland, Switzerland, Geneva, Bremen and Hesse. At this Synod, Satan was at work to destroy the Church through heresies which caused schism, dissension and bitterness in the Church. However, the Lord was in control and again used these disputes for the furtherance of His Kingdom and the strengthening of the Reformation truths.

Among the representatives at this Synod was John Davenant. He was chosen by the English King and meddlesome theologian, James I, to represent, along with others, the English Church. Davenant and his colleagues had been instructed by the King to soften the bitter narrowness of the Calvinists. Davenant had set himself to overthrow certain of the distinctives of Calvinism. In fact, when the English divines had presented their paper to the Synod, and had been asked to alter its presentations concerning Christ's atonement, Davenant declared, "I would rather have my right hand cut off, than to recall or alter anything." It is clear from this statement that Davenant opposed the true doctrines of Calvinism concerning the limited atonement and particular redemption of Christ to the elect only.

Davenant has been classed as a "moderate Calvinist" by some, an "Arminian" by others. What should we consider him to be, what exactly were his teachings, and how should we treat these teachings?

John Davenant was born in 1576 in Watling Street, London, where his father was a renowned merchant. He had no interest in his father's work and business, but chose instead to study the liberal arts. He was educated at Queens' College in Cambridge, and in 1597 received his bachelor degree. In 1609, he graduated with a doctorate in divinity. Not long after, he was appointed Professor of Theology at Lady Margaret College in Cambridge, and in 1614 was appointed as master of that college.

Early in life, Davenant was influenced by the heretical teachings of Moyse Amyraut. It was around these teachings that he also formulated his theological works and lectures. He was an inspiring teacher and outstanding lecturer and thus gained great renown throughout England. This renown also reached the King and he was therefore appointed as a delegate to the Synod of Dordt.

He was well liked by the King, and the King thus appointed him as Bishop of Salisbury in 1621.

Basically Davenant taught that the atonement purchased by Christ is universal. God entered into a covenant with all mankind, and is obligated to save them from their sinful state and grant them eternal life, if they believe. The death of Christ was sufficient for all mankind, but God only works a saving faith in the hearts of His elect. Thus the redemption purchased by Christ is definite for the elect, and conditional for the reprobate, so that if, perhaps, they should believe, they will be saved.

In this theological explanation of the atonement of Christ, Davenant denied the sovereignty of God and the unity of the Trinity. He denied the sovereignty of God by applying a condition to the salvation of the reprobate, and by putting God under an obligation to save man if he should believe. He further denied the unity of the Trinity by separating the atoning work of Christ from the Grace worked in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. He did this when he proposed that salvation is possible for all mankind, but grace is given only to the elect. Davenant was then a follower of Amyraut and the amyrauldian heresy, and also leaned heavily towards arminian beliefs in his teaching of a conditional salvation.

Against these heresies and the heresies of arminianism the Synod of Dordt formulated the *Canons of Dordt*. In this confession the Synod, in opposition to the heresies of the universal atonement of Christ, stated that (second head, article 8)

> It was the will of God, that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby he confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, **and those only**, who were from eternity chosen to salvation, and given to him by the Father.

Also to refute the heretical teachings of a conditional salvation the canons state that (third and fourth head, article 15)

> God is under no obligation to confer this grace upon any; for how can he be indebted to man, who had no previous gifts to bestow, as a foundation for such recompense?

After the Synod, Davenant returned to England and continued to teach his heretical ideas. However, in 1628, Charles I, the new king in England, forbad ministers to preach against the canons and when Davenant continued to do so he was brought before the king. The king personally instructed him that he henceforth must remain silent concerning these points, and it seems that he did so for the remainder of his life out of a fear of the leadership of the church and a fear of the king. There did, however, arise a school in England which took on his name, the Davenant School, and although Davenant himself was dead this heresy continued to permeate English Theology. The advocates of this heresy, from the Davenant School, were also present at the Westminster Assembly when the Westminster Confession of Faith was drafted. The delegates at this assembly did not, however, leave any room in their Confession for such heresy, but rather stated the following (Chapter III, paragraph 6):

> Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, **but the elect only**.

Thus God used the plotting of Satan and the heresies of Satan's advocates to build the church up in her firm faith, to add truth to her confessions, and to make her more aware of the doctrines of men as opposed to the truth of the Scriptures.

These teachings have and do continue to trouble the churches. The adoption of the three points of common grace by the Christian Reformed Church synod in 1924 shows this in a very close to home sense. According to these points God shows grace to all mankind and mankind possesses some good in himself. This can only lead to arminian thinking. The Liberated churches also advocate a universal atonement of Christ within the covenant. They teach a general conditional promise within the covenant to all baptized children. These heresies must be fought against and realized as heresies and the first fruits of arminianism and apostasy.

We can however be confident that Christ will preserve His church in truth even till the end of the world. We must put on the whole armor of God and stand ready for the evil day. We must have our loins girt about with truth and that coupled with a true faith, because then, and then only, will we be able to stand and persevere till the end. We must do this by knowing our doctrines and confessions and by carrying them with us wherever we go, and we must do this through a constant prayerful walk with our God throughout our whole life. Then God will preserve His truth in our midst, for He has promised this to His church, "lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Rodney Kleyn is a member of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Tasmania, Australia.

Watching Daily At My Gates

by Skip Hunter

November 1

James 1:1-8 How is your faith, people of God? Is it strong enough to stand in the temptations which are around you now and which will strengthen as we get closer to the end of time? If you feel a weakness in this area (and we all do from time to time), then follow the advice of verse 6. Ask God for the wisdom necessary to stand in these evil days. But ask believing that God will give it to you. When you do that, you have the confidence that God will give you all the wisdom and faith that you need to stand in these evil days. Remember, however, to wait patiently for God's answer, for all things come in God's time and not our own. Sing or read Psalter 202.

November 2

James 1:9-15 Are you enduring temptation, people of God? This is part of James' message to us in these verses. We read that God tries His people by using Satan's temptations. We must see that enduring temptations will establish us in the faith and enable us to walk close to our God. We have the blessed word that God will call us blessed, that is happy, as we endure the temptations set before us in this world. We also have the assurance of the reward of the crown of life which will be given to us in heaven. As we walk through this world of sin and evil let us look at every temptation as an opportunity to please our God as we walk in His way. Sing or read Psalter 156.

November 3

James 1:16-21 Enduring temptation is an active work on our part. Two days ago we looked at the idea that we need faith from the only wise God in order to do so. Yesterday we saw that enduring temptation has a great reward. Today we must see how we endure temptation. We must follow the example of Christ as He answered Satan with the words. "It is written." Do you do that, young people? Can you do that? Saying it is written means that you know the Scriptures. Have you learned them well enough so that you can face any temptation with an appropriate passage from the Bible? Are you able to put God's Word into action so that it is more than mere head knowledge? By God's grace let us receive the Word that can save our souls. Sing or read Psalter 325.

November 4

James 1:22-27 Is your religion pure? Do people say of you, "There goes a true child of God?" That is the admonition of the last two verses of today's passage. We must not merely know God's Word; every word we speak, and every action we take must show our religion. Do you show your love for the neighbor by helping those who are in distress? Are there those lonely ones who you do not comfort with a visit and God's Word? Do you show your love for God with your actions in and among the world? Do you give the enemies of the church the opportunity to blaspheme by your conduct? Enduring temptation and living a Christian walk means that we exhibit pure religion. Are we? Sing or read Psalter 25.

November 5

Exodus 2:1-10 What wonderful parents Moses had! Here we read that two parents realizing that their son was a gift from God—as all covenant children are—risked their lives in order to protect him. And then when this was no longer possible they placed their trust in God to save him even as they placed him in the very river where he might have been drowned. Are you thankful for God-fearing parents, young people? Do you show this by obeying them in all things? Being a parent is an awesome responsibility. It is not some thing to be taken lightly. Carrying it out like Moses' parents did has its rewards. Sing or read Psalter 278.

November 6

Hebrews 11:23-17 Moses did not fear the wrath of the king but endured! Could we do that? Moses had been reared in a covenant home for much less time than most of us. But he had learned well what was important in this life. He used the lessons learned at his parents knees to guide him in this decision. Even after years of schooling in the best schools of Egypt, he made the choice for God. Most of us have covenant education for much of our lives. Are we able to make the same choice? Do we make the same choice daily? Do we examine our decisions to see if they are God-glorifying, or do we see if they are convenient for us? The reproaches of Christ are great riches; why do we want the pleasures of this life? Sing or read Psalter 352.

November 7

Exodus 3:1-12 Unknowingly Moses was learning how to be a shepherd of God's people in the desert when God appeared to him and sent him to do the task. He did it in the way of the burning bush. After seeing this miracle and hearing his task, Moses became afraid and asked the question, "Who am I?" Moses did not feel that he was qualified for the work. We, too, are given daunting tasks by our heavenly Father. We, too, are made fit for the work. We must go forward in faith and do what God has for us. Young people, as you seek your life's work, remember Moses and know that God will be with you. Sing or read Psalter 213 especially stanzas 1-4.

November 8

Exodus 5:15-23 Moses was not instantly gratified when he told Pharaoh to let God's people go. Moses obviously expected a different answer than the one he got. He also expected the people to be more patient than they were. He goes to God and asks, "Why is this happening?" Moses and we need to learn how to wait upon Jehovah. We may want things in this life to work out much more smoothly than they do. Often our best efforts seem to end in disaster. We must always remember that God's ways and times are best. Let us pray daily for the grace to wait upon Jehovah. Sing or read Psalter 33.

November 9

Exodus 6:1-8 "I have remembered my covenant." What glorious words for us to read today. Children and young people, these are words which give to your parents great hope. These are words which you will treasure as well in the years to come. Your parents have sacrificed much for this covenant. By God's grace you will as well. God sees our distress in this world; and just when we think there is no help for us, He comes to us in remembrance of His covenant. Israel of old only had this idea in types and shadows. We know this covenant has been fulfilled in the precious blood of the Lamb. Embrace the covenant, people of God, and live lives enriched by it. Sing or read Psalter 243 especially stanzas 1-3.

November 10

Exodus 7:14-25 After a time of proving Israel's faith, God began to show Pharaoh and all of Egypt who He was. He began with their god and source of their life, the Nile River. The river was poisoned so that they could not drink it and the fish that it sustained where killed. With one action Egypt was shown that their gods were no gods at all. God is sovereign, and that is our comfort as we live in the Egypt of today. We may think that the wicked will triumph, but we must believe in our God. Pharaoh's heart was unchanged because he had the stony heart of a reprobate man. But this plague was the beginning of deliverance for Israel. Sing or read Psalter 308.

November 11

Exodus 10:21-29 After eight plagues Pharaoh would not let Israel go. His heart became harder and harder. God was readying him for the final stroke. He was readying him so that at the right time he would let Israel go. Consider the ninth plague. God caused a thick darkness to cover the land of Egypt. This darkness had never been seen before. It was the darkness that covered the earth before God said, "Let there be light." It was the darkness that was felt at the cross for three hours. It is the darkness felt by all those who do not believe that Jesus is the light of the world. This darkness was not felt in the land of Goshen where Israel lived. There was the line of the antithesis between Israel and Egypt—between the typical elect and the typical reprobate. Pharaoh had to endure that darkness; and he still said, "I will not let Israel go." Such is the heart of the reprobate; from that hardness deliver us, O God. Sing or read Psalter 262.

November 12

Exodus 11:1-10 One last plague God would bring upon Egypt. One more time would He show them His power and His wrath. God would kill every firstborn in Egypt. From the lowest slave unto Pharaoh's house cries of anguish would issue forth as they felt God's hand yet again. Even after the previous nine plagues the announcement of this stroke brought no softening of Pharaoh's heart. Why, we might ask? Simply as Paul puts it in Romans that God may show His power to the reprobate. Pharaoh is responsible for His actions, but yet they are in the hand of the sovereign God. We must bow before our God and bless His name even when we see His hand around us. Sing or read Psalter 289 especially stanzas 12-15.

November 13

Exodus 12:1-13 With a mighty stroke God delivers Israel from Egypt. But He also gave them a wonderful sign. For in that lamb and its blood He provided them with the picture of the Christ Who would take away the sin of the world. Israel was commanded to celebrate the Passover every year until the Lamb of God was sacrificed. In order to fulfill all things Jesus ate the Passover feast just before He was sacrificed. We no longer celebrate the Passover because we are redeemed by the Lamb. Let that be our joy daily as we pray, and as we live. Sing or read Psalter 290 especially stanzas 1-5.

November 14

Exodus 13:17-22 As Moses began the enormous task of leading Israel, he was comforted that it was God Who led them. First of all the path that God chose was one that fitted the task. Israel had to learn how to be the people of God and they could not do that by fighting the Philistines. They had to learn what it was like to fight first. God also gave them the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire as a huge sign of encouragement. During the day they could see in the cloud God's presence. Then during the night the fire would serve notice that God was with them. We have His Word to lead us day and night. Let us let it serve as our comfort and encouragement. Sing or read Psalter 292.

November 15

Exodus 15:1-11 Most of us know the history of Israel's passage through the Red Sea. We know of Pharaoh's foolish decision, and the destruction God sent to his army and him. Moses celebrated Israel's victory with the inspired song found in today's passage. Here we read of God's power and sovereignty. Here we read that we have no reason to fear what evil men may do unto us for our God is almighty. We must always sing with Moses and Israel, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" Sing or read Psalter 221.

November 16

Exodus 16:1-10 Bread and quail from heaven? Have you ever heard anything so ridiculous? That was what Israel heard when they complained to Moses about going without food. Here they had just been delivered very miraculously less than two months before, and now they doubt the power of God. But God was gracious to them and sent them manna and quail. He was gracious to us as well, as that manna was a picture of the heavenly manna Christ Jesus. As we consider these Old Testament passages we must see that there *is* a message for us the church of the new dispensation. Christ is the manna sent from heaven; let us complain no longer. Sing or read Psalter 289 especially stanzas 16-19.

November 17

Exodus 17:8-16 Once again God tested and proved Israel. He brought Amelek to fight against them. But He also gave them Moses, a capable and wise leader. He was also preparing Joshua to take his place as a type of Christ. They fought the battle learning more and more that they must place their trust in Jehovah. Do we learn this lesson as we go through life? Do we see in our trials and tribulations that in God we must trust at all times? Moses celebrated the victory with an altar named Jehovah My Banner. Is Jehovah our banner in our fights against Satan and his hosts? Young people, do you fly Jehovah's banner as you go through life? Sing or read Psalter 200.

November 18

Exodus 19:1-9 Israel had come to Mount Sinai. Once again God prepared to teach them and Moses that He was God. For Moses this was the answer to a promise that God had made to him. At the burning bush God had promised to bring Moses back to this place, and now here he was. In these verses we have the words of a covenant God Who bares His peculiar people on eagle's wings. We see that God had made us elect and has shown us the way of salvation. The people responded to God's words by saying that they would obey. Is that our response? Sing or read Psalter 91.

November 19

Exodus 24:1-8 After hearing the Ten Commandments, Moses directs the people in worship of Jehovah. They build an alter and sacrifice burnt offerings before the Lord. Then Moses takes blood and sprinkles it on the people as a sign of the covenant. We no longer need the blood of bulls and goats because our High Priest has given of Himself for us. We must give the sacrifice of our praise when we worship. We need to give good works in thankfulness for the great salvation that has been wrought for us. We need this because this is the command of God and is our expression of thanksgiving. Are we truly thankful? Sing or read Psalter 109.

November 20

Exodus 24:9-18 In these verses we see a blessing upon Moses and other elders of Israel. They were able to commune with God in a most blessed way. No, they did not see God face to face, but they came to experience His glory in a way that we will not have until we go to heaven. Then they ate a meal in His presence. Do you wish for this experience, people of God? Do we truly long for the day that we enter heaven and can enjoy the communion of saints in its most perfect way? This earth is not our home; we are only pilgrims here. Let us pray earnestly, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus." Let us live lives in which we wait for the return of our Savior. Sing or read Psalter 203.

November 21

Exodus 25:1-9 The call went out to the children of Israel to bring offerings so that a house for God to dwell in on this earth could be constructed. We read in Exodus 36 that the people responded willingly to this call. In fact they had to be told not to bring anymore. Is that our response to calls for the service of Jehovah's kingdom? Are we willing to give of the wealth that God has given us in order to worship Him? Are we thankful for the great sacrifice that Christ has made for us? Our offerings must be expressions of thankfulness for all that Christ has done. Therefore we are never finished giving because His work was limitless on our behalf. Sing or read Psalter 137 especially stanzas 1, 4 and 6.

November 22

Exodus 32:7-14 God looked down from Mount Sinai and saw the horrible evils in which the people of Israel were engaging. His anger was kindled because He is a holy God and abhors sin. Moses ,however, as a type of Christ, interceded for the people of God. He became their mediator, and assuaged the wrath of God toward the people. We, too, daily are in danger of being swallowed up by God's wrath. Our sins daily would cause His holy anger to consume us if it were not for our mediator Christ Who sits at God's right hand making continual intercession for us. Daily we must pray to God that He will forgive our sins through the blood of Christ. Sing or read Psalter 143.

November 23

Exodus 32:25-35 As Moses came down the mountain, he saw the terrible evils committed by the children of Israel. He broke the law as a sign of God's law being broken. He took the golden calf and ground it up and made the people drink the bitter mixture he made. But he was not done. He had to rid the church of those who did not belong. He made the cry, "Who is on the Lord's side?" Would we answer that call?

Would we be ready to defend the faith even among those whom we know well, or would we want to continue in the sins that please our flesh? Are you on the Lord's side? If you are, take up the Word and fight for His honor and glory. Sing or read Psalter 36 especially stanzas 1-3.

November 24

Exodus 39:32-43 The preceding chapters give an account of the work of the building of the tabernacle. We read of the cheerful giving of the people, and also of the craftsmanship of those appointed by God to this task. Then Moses inspects the work. He finds that it is done as the Lord commanded it, and he blesses them. How about us? If someone inspected our work before the mirror of God's law, would the reflection be perfect? Our work is ever before the face of God; let it not be found wanting. Even today, as we in the United States give thanks for what God has given us, we realize that we must show thankfulness by our works daily. Sing or read Psalter 374 especially stanzas 1, 2, 4, and 5.

November 25

Leviticus 1:1-9 The book of Leviticus is sometimes called the book of the law. In this book Moses, by God's command, orders the life and worship of the people of Israel. Some of these laws are civil; others are ceremonial. They all had a purpose; that purpose was to lead the people to Christ. In these days of lawlessness, we would do well to pay heed to the Old Testament laws, for in them we can find principles to guide our daily life. Even though the sacrifices have been fulfilled in Christ, we daily live a life of gratitude which can be guided by these laws. Sing or read Psalter 40.

November 26

Leviticus 10:8-15 In the preceding verses of this chapter two men were destroyed by fire for not worshipping God as He commanded. In these verses Moses gives strict instructions to Aaron and his sons in the way of worship. The principles laid down here should serve for our instruction as we prepare to go to God's house to worship. How will we worship tomorrow? Will it be as God has commanded in His Word? Or will we as mere men decide how God is to be worshipped? Will we in our personal worship make the preaching of the Word the central part of the service, or will we let other aspects become more important including getting out "on time?" Worship is important to the child of God. Let us remember to worship in "spirit and in truth." Sing or read Psalter 349.

November 27

Leviticus 13:1-8 The laws concerning leprosy are very instructive to us today. Even though leprosy is almost unknown to us we must always remember that it is the disease ordained by God as a sign of sin. Just as leprosy rots away the body so sin rots away the soul. Just as leprosy starts out small but grows and grows; so also a little sin can grow and consume the whole body. The teaching concerning leprosy also instructed one who was healed. That person had to bring to the tabernacle or temple a thank offering. We, too, when we become healed from sin must bring our offering of thanksgiving to God. We must do this daily as we reap the benefits of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Sing or read Psalter 311.

November 28

Numbers 11:1-9 After the giving of all the laws and ordering the camp of Israel, Moses led the people away from Mount Sinai toward Caanan. Not very far away from Sinai the people began to complain about the manna. This complaining began outside the camp but soon spread into the Israelite nation. They began to lust after the luxuries of Egypt. Are we any better? Do we sometimes complain about the place God has given us and wish that we had more of the world's goods? Are we unhappy about our stations and callings in this life and do we forget the true import of praying "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Israel fell into this sin, and Israel was punished even as they ate the quail that God sent them. Let us be instructed by this account and be satisfied with whatever good things God chooses to give us. Sing or read Psalter 100.

November 29

Numbers 14:1-10 Do you desire heaven? Are you willing to leave the things of this life to go there? Are you willing to go through the troubles of this life to get there? Are you looking forward to the persecution that awaits the church before Christ returns? Israel had been told that Caanan was a land flowing with milk and honey. But they had also been told that there were adversaries awaiting them. Instead of trusting in God they once again began to murmur and complain. They would not even listen to the good words of Joshua and Caleb. The Bible gives us good words about heaven. Are we willing to listen? Sing or read Psalter 365.

November 30

Numbers 14:26-39 Even after the words of Joshua and Caleb the people continued to complain. Once again Moses had to act as mediator between God and the people. Once again God remembered His promises and did not utterly destroy the nation. But He did bring chastisement for their sins. For their complaining, not one, save Joshua and Caleb, would enter the land. Faithful Joshua and Caleb were rewarded for their obedience. Let that be the lesson to us and let us obey at all times the Word of the Lord. Sing or read Psalter 265.

Glorification

by Martin L. Vander Wal

Glorification is the last step in the golden chain of salvation. Romans 8:29-30 gives us that order.

> For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Glorification is the final process which makes you fit to live forever in heaven.

But what is glorification? If you take the work apart, you will see two different words which come from the Latin and mean *glory* and *make*. The word literally means, "to make glorious." The final step, therefore, is that in which God makes you glorious.

You must know from the start that the glorification which God performs is far different from the way in which the world glorifies. Remember the Olympics, when the top three athletes in each event stood on their pedestals with the medals around their necks and their national anthems playing? That is how the world glorifies. Nations of the world glorify themselves with their displays of troops, battleships and fighter-jets. Throngs of people glorify actors and actresses who star in the most violent and lewd films.

This is not how God glorifies. God takes the glory that is in Himself and places a little bit of that glory in you, without any change in His own infinite glory. Because of this, you must know what God's glory is. In the Old Testament God showed His glory several times. The most impressive was when God filled the tabernacle and temple with His glory. When the tabernacle was finished we read in Exodus 40:35 that Moses was not able to go inside because "the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." When the temple was finished by Solomon and the ark was put inside the Holy of Holies, the same thing happened. "The priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord," I Kings 8:11. God's glory actually kept these men from entering the tabernacle and temple. It was a real, physical barrier.

God's glory was also that before which people could not stand. They were so struck by that glory that they had to fall to the ground and worship. If God were to show His glory today as He did then, you and I would do exactly the same thing. Part of that which makes God's glory so powerful and awe-inspiring is that it is an expression of God's holiness. What sinner can ever stand in God's glorious presence and not melt away in horror and say with Isaiah, "Woe is me!"?

Consider two instances of that glory appearing in men. The first is Moses. In Exodus 34, God showed Moses part of His great glory. When Moses came back down from his meeting with God, the Israelites were afraid of him because his face shone with the reflection of that glory. In order to be able to talk with the people, he had to wear a veil over his face to hide that glory. The other instance, of course, was when Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James, and John. According to Matthew 17, "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light."

Someday, you will have that glory, because God will give it to you. He will make you to be as glorious as Christ on that mountain. But even today, as you walk on earth here below you have in prin-

ciple that same glory. What is that glory today? If you compare yourself with the people of the rest of the world, you cannot say that you appear to be glorious, while they do not. There is no difference between your body and their body. There is a world of difference, however, between your heart and theirs. That is because you have been regenerated by the power of God's Word and Spirit. You seek the things which are above, the things of God's kingdom, rather than the things below. You lay up for yourself treasures in heaven. You love God the Father, Son, and Spirit. You gain the victory, slowly, but surely, over your sinful nature.

There is a more direct way in which you can see this principle of glorification. Younger people usually do not experience this as much as older people, so you may have to look more carefully to find it. That principle is seen in your attitude towards death and the Second Coming. Both events bring deliverance from this world of sin, and your body of sin. Both events mean that you will no longer have to fight against sin. That awful, seemingly endless war, that war which takes up so much time and energy will be over once and for all. That enemy will fall, never to rise up again.

Because death and the Second Coming lead to that victory, to that ultimate glory, you strain toward it with every fiber of your being, every ounce of your energy. You go through life with the taste of that victory in your mouth. That is what glorification in this life is about.

Now you ask, "That is all well and good, but what about glorification after Jesus comes again?" The Heidelberg Catechism sums it up well in Answer 58. "I shall inherit perfect salvation, which 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard neither hath it entered into the heart of man' to conceive, and that, to praise God therein for ever." You can tell from this answer that there is very little to say *positively* about glory. That is because you, having a mind geared to this present earthly life, are unable to understand what it is. You can know far more about what it is not. The best possible picture of glory is in Revelation 21:3,4.

> And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Notice that, although the second part of this is negative—you see what is not in heaven, you do see the essence of heaven. God will dwell with you and the entire church in perfect fellowship and friendship. That is the covenant. No greater bliss and joy is there.

That covenant, expressed in Revelation 21:3, is the very same covenant that you are in today, the covenant of grace. Because it is the same covenant from beginning to end, you experience the beginning of that glory right here and now. Walk in that covenant with your God. Then, when you get to heaven you will say to yourself, "This is where I belong. My whole life on earth was never really home, but only a time of shadows. I am now all that I was ever meant to be." Practice that glorification now and thus prepare yourself for that final glory.

Martin Vander Wal is a member of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church and is currently a second year seminary student in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

NOTICE OF BIBLE STUDY AT DORDT: A group of students dedicated to the historic Reformed faith meets together Monday evenings at 7:00 in the Dordt College library for a Bible study. The meetings are sponsored by the Protestant Reformed Churches in the area. The plans are to begin the study with the prophecy of Jonah. The study is in no way limited to Protestant Reformed students; those outside the PRC are most welcome. If you know students at Dordt who may be interested, please do encourage them to attend. Questions may be directed to Rev. Russ Dykstra (712) 726-3382.

Concern for the young people

The following are my concerns about Mr. Allen J. Brummel's review of the *Life and Mission of William Carey* by Timothy George in the June / 1994 issue of the *Beacon Lights*.

Mr. Brummel has failed to show the errors of the Baptist religion. The readers of the *Beacon Lights* (our beloved young people) may conclude from this review that the Baptist religion is without error. In Paragraph two; "Carey felt responsible to bring this glorious (Baptist) gospel to all of his relatives." In paragraph seven; "This trio was able to accomplish much in the way of spreading the (Baptist) gospel through India. A Baptist church was organized as well as schools for the training of the children." The "unshakable" and "unchangeble" principles" of paragraph eight re not being taught in the Baptist churches and schools of today.

Our young people should hear and know why they are Protestant Reformed. They should be hearing about the subtle evils that lurk in other religions.

Would Mr. Brummel please correct this situation for the sake of what our churches stand for and for the sake of our beloved young people. Thank you.

Clarence De Groot

Dear Mr. Clarence De Groot,

Thank you for your concerns regarding my book review of *The Life and Times of William Carey.* I appreciate your concern for our young people as I also desire that our young people be informed regarding the subtle evils of other religions.

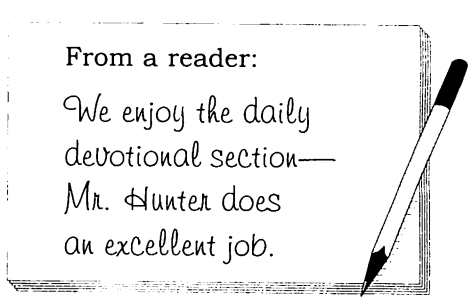
The focus of the book which I reviewed was not on the Baptist religion, but on William Carey. I do not know enough about the Baptist churches of the 18th century to offer a knowledgeable critique. My focus was on Carey's mission principles. The principles of missions to which William Carey subscribed were Biblical. He viewed missions as the work of the sovereign God. Carey viewed the Scriptures as the revelation of God's infallible Word. Carey preached salvation through Jesus Christ alone. Only God knows his heart, but from this book it seems evident that Carey was a pious, devoted Christian. Carey would be disappointed with most modern day missionaries who go under the Baptist name.

William Carey had many weaknesses. I deliberately chose not to expose all of his faults. William Carey was subject to a mission board instead of a church. He sacrificed everything, even his wife and family, for the sake of the gospel. Whether or not he should have done these things is open to debate. Any careful reading of this or any other biography of a missionary will bring up many questions. Rather than exposing all of Carey's weaknesses, I wanted to encourage our young people (and adults) to read with discernment.

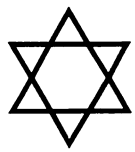
My intent in the book review was to convey some of the enthusiasm for missions which was evident in William Carey's life and work. My intent was not to critique the Baptist religion. I am in no way in favor of the Baptist religion, nor am I a disciple of Baptist mission principles. I assumed that the readers were aware of the errors prevalent in the Baptist movement. This may have been an unwise assumption. If anyone has concluded from my review that the Baptist religion is without error, I have led them astray. For this I apologize.

Although the Baptists have many serious errors, we can learn much from the Baptist's zeal for missions. Today, when many other mainline denominations are struggling in their mission work, the Southern Baptists are forging ahead. They are so zealous in spreading what we know is a watered down gospel. We confess and preach the precious gospel of Christ in its most pure form. This ought to cause us to tremble. What is God's expectation of us? Are we as zealous as we ought to be?

In Christ's love
Allen J. Brummel



Followers of the Law



or

Followers of Christ?

by Sarah Ondersma

You probably know who Michael Jordan is and you might even be able to tell a lot about his life, but how much do you know about the Apostle Paul...

I asked my 8th grade class one morning to tell me anything they knew about Michael Jordan. I furiously made a list while they spoke:

- retired from Bulls
- likes to golf
- #23
- didn't make Jr. High basketball team
- played basketball for University of North Carolina
- has 2 kids
- father died
- black
- Nike commercials
- Wheaties box
- trying out for baseball with White Sox
- gambler
- Fruit-of-the-Loom, McDonald's, Gatorade, and Coca-Cola commercials

On another morning, I planned to ask them about a second person whom we should know much about. When I tried to make a list about this second person, I found that I could not remember details about this person's life. I asked by class, "Tell me anything you know about the Apostle Paul." I had a couple of students that were able to come up with more facts than I thought they would. The list:

- went on missionary journeys
- persecuted Christians
- in Damascus was blind for a long time
- held coat when Stephen was stoned
- in jail
- wrote over 1/2 of the New Testament books
- went to Rome
- not married
- Jew but also a Roman citizen
- preacher
- tent-maker
- had a conversion

That was a pretty good list; I had forgotten some of these things about Paul. Because Michael Jordan lives right now, most students would probably know more about him than the apostle Paul who lived hundreds of years ago.

In your lifetime, you will read many, many (and probably countless) times from the New Testament. There are 27 books in the New Testament. Open to the beginning of your Bible to the listing of all the books in the New Testament. Did you know that God used the same person to write Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I and II Thessalonians, I and II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews?

God used Paul to write 14 of the 27 books of the New Testament! Paul wrote just over *half of the New Testament!* Because of the fact that God used Paul to write over half of the New Testament, Paul must be an important person from whom we can learn much. If we understand *who* Paul *was*, we'll discover that we will more clearly understand *what* he wrote. I want to highlight a few things I found interesting in Paul's life from the time he

was born until the time he was around 30 years old.

Let's start at the beginning. Paul was born between 10 and 15 A.D. It's 1994 A.D. right now so Paul was born about 1980 years ago. We figure that Paul was about 20 years old when Jesus died on the cross. Paul was born in the city of Tarsus, the capital of the province of Cilicia in Asia Minor.

There are two important facts about Paul's family. One key fact is that his family was *Jewish.* Jews are a group of people that lived or once lived in Palestine. What country did many of our ancestors come from? Many of us could say that our great-grandfathers or great-great-grandfathers came from the Netherlands. If that is true for you, you could say that you are *Dutch* because people that live in the Netherlands are called Dutch people. Because Paul's ancestors came from the kingdom of Israel, located in Palestine where *Jews* lived, he was *Jewish.* Paul's ancestors had been members of the tribe of Benjamin which in past history was located by the Dead Sea.

If we understand *who* Paul *was,* we'll discover that we will more clearly understand *what* he wrote.

The second important fact about Paul's family is that Paul's father was a Pharisee and when Paul became older he too was a Pharisee. The Pharisees were a group of Jews who prided themselves on keeping the Jewish law perfectly. If you did not break any of the commandments, you would go to heaven.

What were the Jewish laws that the Pharisees kept?

Well, at that time the Old Testament, which had the Ten Commandments in it, was written in the Hebrew language. The people living in Palestine could not read the Old Testament because they spoke a different language. Some of you might have at home an old Bible that is written in Dutch. The Dutch people in the Netherlands used to speak and write in the Dutch language. You can not read or understand it! The people in Palestine had the same problem—they could not read or understand the Bible because they could not read Hebrew!

There were some men who learned the Hebrew language and spent their whole life studying the Old Testament and determining the laws that should be kept. These men were called rabbis; they taught the people about the Old Testament.

The rabbis were greatly honored because they knew so much about the Old Testament. The rabbis taught the people about the Ten Commandments and the laws that Moses had given to the people and which were written in the early part of the Bible.

Part of the Jewish law was the Ten Commandments given to them by God through Moses. Moses also tells the Jews of many other laws to be kept that taught the people how to worship God and make sacrifices to God. For example, there were some animals that the people were allowed to eat (the clean animals) and some animals that were against the law to eat (the unclean animals). The unclean animals could not be used in sacrifices to God. In more detail, the people

1. Could not eat any animal or bird that in nature ate other animals for food: they couldn't eat, then, bears, wolves, lions, tigers, eagles, hawks.... In science, the term given to this type of animal is a carnivore.
2. Could not eat insects except grasshoppers! (Remember, John the Baptist ate locusts in the wilderness.)
3. Could not eat eels and water animals that were not fish. How many of you have ever eaten shrimp, lobster, or crab? Then you would have broken the Jewish law!
4. Could not eat small creeping things like snakes or lizards.

Basically, the people were allowed to eat and sacrifice animals like oxen, sheep, goats, turtledoves, and pigeons. However, if these animals were found dead, or if they were killed by another animal, or strangled, then they were considered unclean and you couldn't eat or sacrifice them.

The rabbis also wrote down many, many rules that would help the people keep the Ten Commandments. In fact, there were 613 *rules* to be followed! Who could ever keep all of these rules in mind? How easy it was to break one of the rules!

Let's take for example the command given to us by God to *Remember the Sabbath Day to Keep It Holy.* The rabbis had come up with 39 different types of *work* that were not allowed on the Sabbath Day.

1. You were not allowed to harvest corn on the Sabbath. Even taking one ear of corn off a plant was considered harvesting and so not allowed.

2. You were not allowed on the Sabbath to travel further than 1.75 miles. If you traveled further you would be working which would be breaking God's command. Think how many miles you travel to go from your house to church on Sunday! This rule is more clearly understood if you consider the next rule.
3. You were not allowed to climb a tree or ride an animal. In those days if you traveled long distances, you rode an animal—they didn't have cars! On Sunday if you went anywhere you were allowed only to walk.
4. *Warm* food had to be prepared before Sunday started. They could not light a fire; stoves and microwaves wouldn't be allowed to be used on Sunday. And so the food was made on Saturday and stored until Sunday. Laws also described how they could store their food: the people were not allowed to store food in salt, sand, or straw but could put the food in garments...

These were just a *few* of the 613 laws that had to be kept by the Jews. You will see that I have a chart labeled **The Followers of the Law** (See Table 1). First on the list are the Jews who definitely had many laws to be followed. I also put the Pharisees down as followers of the law. The Pharisees got to be known as a group that *outwardly* kept all these Jewish laws but in their *hearts* missed the reason why. Let me explain what I mean.

Moses and the Israelites back in history had laws about sacrifices and clean/unclean animals because these laws all pointed to Christ. The special way of sacrificing lambs and goats was a symbol of when Christ would come. The reason for these laws was to point to the coming of Christ. Christ would come and make the greatest sacrifice of all—He paid for our sins through His death. After Christ came, these laws about sacrifices were no longer needed. Christ had fulfilled those laws.

Followers of the Law	Followers of Christ
* Jews	* Christians
* The Pharisees	* The Disciples
* Paul	* Stephen

Table 1

Christ had come and died on the cross about 10 years previously. However, the Pharisees did not believe that Christ had already come. The Pharisees would not believe that Jesus was the promised Christ! They were still waiting for the "real" Christ to come. And so these Pharisees who were so concerned with following all the Jewish laws had missed the fact that Jesus had come!

Back to Paul. Remember now that Paul's father was a Pharisee—one committed outwardly to keeping those zillions of laws. Paul was brought up in such a home. When Paul was a young man, he wanted to study the law in greater detail and become a rabbi. The best place for Paul to go to school was Jerusalem. Jerusalem was a city of religion. Jerusalem was then known as the place of God's presence upon the earth. Many important rabbis taught in Jerusalem. Paul moved to Jerusalem to study the Old Testament laws.

Many of the Pharisees thought they kept the law so perfectly that they were superior to the common people.

It is not known exactly how old Paul was when he went to Jerusalem to school. I have read in a couple of books that Paul could have been around 13 years of age. Seventh and eighth graders, Paul could have been your age when he moved away from home. Another author thought Paul was about 18 years of age (the age when you finish high school).

Paul became an eager Pharisee in Jerusalem. Many of the Pharisees thought they kept the law so perfectly that they were superior to the common people. Paul also then belongs on the chart as a follower of the law (See Table 1). Now remember, I said that the Pharisees did not think that God's Son, the Christ, had come to earth.

There were some people that realized that Jesus was God's Son and had died on the cross to save them. I call these people the followers of Christ. These people realized that it was not important outwardly to keep hundreds of laws. What was important was that in your heart you were sorry for your sins and that you needed Christ to save you. If you were truly sorry for your sins you would obey God's commandments because He saved you. What is most important is what is in your *heart*; not the following of laws so that you look good in front of others.

The *followers of Christ* were the Christians and the disciples who believed that Christ had come

(See Table 1). There were not very many followers of Christ but through the work of the disciples that

> the followers of Christ...realized that it was not important to outwardly keep hundreds of laws. What was important was that in your heart you were sorry for your sins and that you needed Christ to save you.

number was growing. The Jews and Pharisees hated the followers of Christ and these two groups were always fighting against each other.

I pointed out one individual who followed Christ—-Stephen. Stephen was the first deacon in a church of Christians in Jerusalem. Stephen was having a discussion about religion. There were some Jews around him that were very angry with him because Stephen talked about Jesus being the Christ. The Jews brought Stephen before a supreme court. Stephen tried to defend himself and show them the truth—that Jesus was Christ. After the end of his speech Stephen argued against the Jews and said that the Jews persecuted the prophets God had sent and had killed the Son of God. The angry court said Stephen was saying wicked things about God and ruled that Stephen should be stoned to death.

Let's continue the story by turning to Acts 7:57. In this passage the name Saul refers to Paul. We read,

> ...Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul was consenting unto his death...

This is the first time that Paul appears in the Bible. Paul at that time was an eager Pharisee and agreed upon the death of Stephen. Paul was about 30 years old at this time. The Pharisees wanted to get rid of all of the followers of Jesus. Let's read the rest of verse 1 of Acts 8:

> ...And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Paul was enthusiastic about getting rid of all the followers of Christ—Paul thought these Christians were wicked. Acts 8:3—"As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison." Paul would take the Christians and put them in prison and beat them!

If you were a Christian and these Pharisees were going to put you in prison, most likely you would do what many Christians did—they fled from Jerusalem. Were the Christians safe once they got out of Jerusalem? No! The Pharisees even hunted for the Christians outside of Jerusalem. Paul got permission from the high priest to go to Damascus to search for Christians. He was to bring back to Jerusalem any Christians he found. Acts 9:1-9:

> And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.
> And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? and he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.
> And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

As we read in this section, God had spoken to Paul. Paul was converted; he became a Christian! In the next few days God would show to Paul that he was very wrong in his way of life. Paul had to be led the rest of the way to Damascus for God had blinded Paul for three days.

What's next is remarkable. Paul had gone to Damascus to persecute the Christians. Read verse 20 of Acts 9, "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." When Paul was a Pharisee he didn't believe Christ had come. Now Paul was in the synagogues preaching that *Christ was the Son of God!* Paul totally made a change from being a follower of the law to being a follower of Christ (See Table 2). Paul left the Jews

Followers of the Law	Followers of Christ
* Jews	* Christians
* The Pharisees	* The Disciples
* Paul ⟶	* Stephen

Table 2

and Pharisees and joined the Christians and the disciples.

The people in Damascus were confused. Paul was known as a persecutor of the Christians and now he was on the Christians' side! We read in verses 20-21, "But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ."

The Jews in Damascus were very angry at Paul because he was a traitor! Paul left them and went to the side of the hated Christians! The Jews plotted to kill Paul. Some Jews were secretly waiting for Paul by the gates of the city. As soon as Paul left Damascus to go back to Jerusalem they were going to kill him. However, the disciples outwitted the Jews! "Then the disciples took him (Paul) by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket" (Acts 9:25). Paul was able to escape from Damascus without being seen by the Jews! Paul returned to Jerusalem safely.

This concludes the story of Paul becoming a Christian. Paul was about 30 years old at this time. In his life, he would become a great missionary. God would use this same Paul to write over half of the New Testament!

Sarah Ondersma is a teacher at Heritage Christian School. The above article was given as a Chapel speech in February, 1994.

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Renewed Day by Day

by Rev. John A. Heys

From a physical point of view, Young People, and from the day when we were born, we began to go through some wonderful changes. That day we were very, very helpless and weak, compared with what we are now, and can do today. For many months we could cry; but we could not talk. It took weeks before we could crawl; and could not yet walk. We could not read or write, and could not sing, or even with our mouths ask for that which we wanted.

Now, however, we can do so many of these things and many more. We do well, therefore, to bear in mind that, as children of God, who were born with a new spiritual life, we remain children, that is, children of God. Even though, in the physical sense, we can and do become men or women, we from a spiritual point of view remain children, all through this present physical life. We are correctly taught that in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 44, Question and Answer 114. There it is correctly stated that "The holiest of men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of this obedience," Get that truth. We now have only a small beginning of that new spiritual life which we receive, when born again by God's grace.

That, however, will change the moment we die. Then our old man of sin has come to the end of his life; and our new man in Christ is separated from that old, sinful man. That new man in Christ now becomes very active and powerful in worshipping God and in glorifying Him in heaven. Although in this life we have only a small beginning of obedience, we through death are freed from our old man of sin. We are completely free from our sinful nature, the moment we die; and are with Christ in heavenly glory.

Being such children of God we, in this life, are fiercely attacked by Satan in several different ways. He strives to take away from us the love of God, which we received when, by God's grace, we were born again. Satan strives in many ways, and with many devices to make us hate God, even as he succeeded in doing so to Adam and Eve. Satan hates us because we love God. And Satan strives every day, and in many ways, to get us to be his devilish children, rather than God's holy children. And his actions will come more powerfully, when he has brought forth the Antichrist and his kingdom, which is not far away. More and more he is getting all the people of the world to be a godless nation, even as he got that to happen before the flood, which God sent to save Noah and his family.

But, Young People, come what may, all is well for everyone whom God eternally chose, and caused to be born with a new spiritual life. We are by that rebirth citizens in the Kingdom of Heaven. Not one of us shall be, or can be, led into spiritual death by Satan, as he got Adam and Eve. In II Corinthians 4:17 and 18 we read: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

What is more, our God is not only the creator of heaven and earth, and all that which they contain. Our God will realize everything that He eternally decreed, and everything He promised those whom He chose in Christ. Everything that God wants, and all that which He promises, He will cause to be realized in every smallest detail.

Therefore there is absolutely no possibility, that any one of God's elect, who was eternally chosen in Christ, can by Satan be caused to die spiritually, as Satan got Adam and Eve to die. What is more, and extremely important, is the truth that God does NOT offer salvation. Young People, re-

ject one hundred percent that Arminian lie that God, through the preaching of the gospel, offers salvation to all who hear it preached. God does not leave salvation up to man's decision. God does not depend upon man and what he does.

The name Jehovah means I AM. That truth is denied by Arminianism, which claims that God offers salvation, and that only those who accept it will be saved. The awesome truth however is that God, as the I AM, always commands what He eternally decreed would take place. As the I AM, God does completely, in every smallest detail, all that which He eternally decreed. There is absolutely nothing that He desires that does not take place at the exact time, and in the perfect way that He determined its coming to pass.

As God's children we have evidence in our hearts that we are renewed day by day.

We are not saved because we want the salvation which God has made possible. As the almighty God, the I AM, God begins salvation in us by causing us to be born again, and by the life of this rebirth He causes us to want that salvation. That truth is presented in Ephesians 2:8 where Paul points out that we are saved by grace, through faith, "and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Paul even adds in verse 9, "Not of works, lest any man should boast." Still more, Paul points out that: "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God before ordained that we should walk in them." We want salvation only after God has already begun it in us. Away then, from the Arminian teaching that God offers it to us, and if we let Him do so, He will be our Savior.

Still more, in John 3:3 we read: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And our calling is to maintain what God commands us to believe,. He not only makes us, as already born again, to want it; but also to believe that this salvation is a gift of God's grace. Salvation realizes in us the thankfulness to God for a free gift, which we can enjoy only by His grace. We must not in our doctrine change God, the I AM, into an "I will be, if you let Me."

What we should hold on to tightly is what God through Paul presents to us in II Corinthians 4:15, namely, that "our inward man is renewed day by day." Having begun salvation in us, that salvation is never taken from us. We cannot change God. He does not stop realizing salvation in us. That He renews it day by day means that no day comes in between another day, when God has taken that salvation from us. We have a very striking and comforting evidence of God renewing our new man day by day.

Peter, when Christ Jesus was being tried after His capture, three times denied Christ, as we read in Luke 22:54-60. That same day he in his inward man was renewed. Then in verses 61 and 62 we read that he remembered the word of Christ. He remembered the word which He had spoken, namely that before the cock would crow, he, Peter, would deny Him three times. Peter heard that and went out weeping bitterly, revealing that he was renewed by God that day. His new man in Christ was hurt by that deviltry, which his old man of sin revealed. His new man in Christ was renewed that day.

We can then be absolutely sure that when the Antichrist does come, and is used by Satan, we as born again children of God will reveal that we by God's grace are renewed day by day in our attitude toward Antichrist.

It will be hard for our flesh. Our old man of sin will strongly want the mark on his right hand or forehead that the Antichrist will demand; and we will not be allowed to buy or sell, if we refuse; and thus starve to death. But our new man in Christ will by God's grace be renewed day be day.

How about it, Young People? Do you have God-given evidence that you have a heart that is renewed day by day? The temptations, that comfort our flesh today, are far more subtle, and tempting to our flesh, than they were in the past. When sins are revealed to you in the preaching of a sermon, or by what you read in God's Word, does it make you, like Peter, weep in your soul? Does it move you to pray to God that He keep you from doing that sin again? Do sins bother you? Does it in your life reveal that God is renewing you day by day?

This is extremely important, so that we find in our lives that God did renew us, when we have fallen into a sin. It reveals that we have been born again, and are the objects of God's love, and grace in Christ. Be thankful then, and let the songs of Zion, not those of the world, move you, and express your thankfulness that God is renewing you day by day.

Rev Heys is an emeritus minister in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

. . . LET IT SHINE!

by Connie Meyer

Who Is Thankful?

It was supper time at the Tentcon family home. Dong, dong, dong... The clock chimed six times, and with that the Tentcon children hurried to their places at the table. After Mr. Tentcon opened with prayer, Mrs. Tentcon began to pour hot oatmeal into everyone's bowl. The steam rose from the food, and made a sharp contrast with the cold wind that was swirling just outside the walls of their house.

"Warm oatmeal really hits the spot on these winter nights," commented Mr. Tentcon.

Everyone nodded in agreement, except baby John who was too busy trying to get his spoon into his mouth. Even the wind seemed to answer as it howled still louder. The sound made them shiver, and they were glad they were all safe and warm inside.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

It was supper time at the Dygree family home. Ding, ding, ding... The timer on the oven rang until Mrs. Dygree turned it off. Then she very carefully took out a nicely browned roast, and put the roast, potatoes, vegetables and a salad all on the table.

As the children came to their places, one of them mumbled, "I hate carrots," while another one sighed and said, "It's such a hot day, do we have to eat a *hot* meal too?"

Mr. and Mrs. Dygree gave warning glances to their children, and then settled in at the table with them. After giving everyone his helping of the food, the parents dug into the meal with relish. The children, however, dawdled and waited until their food was cold.

Just then a cool breeze came through the diningroom window.

"Ah, just what we need," commented Mr. Dygree when he felt the breeze. But it was already cold inside.

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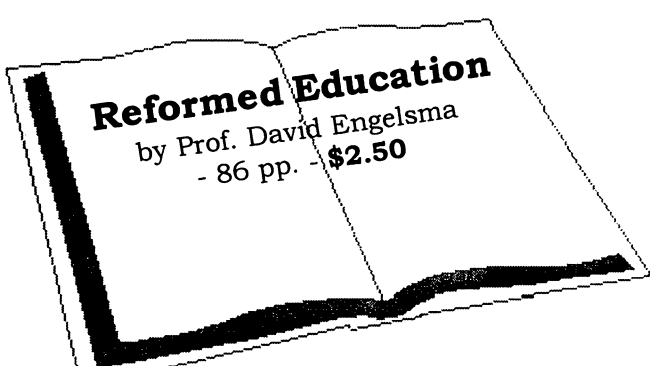

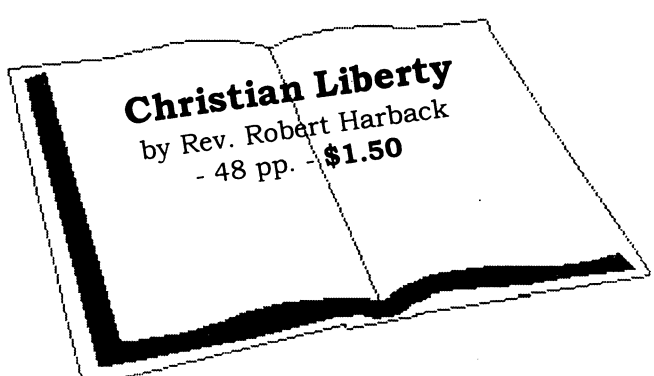

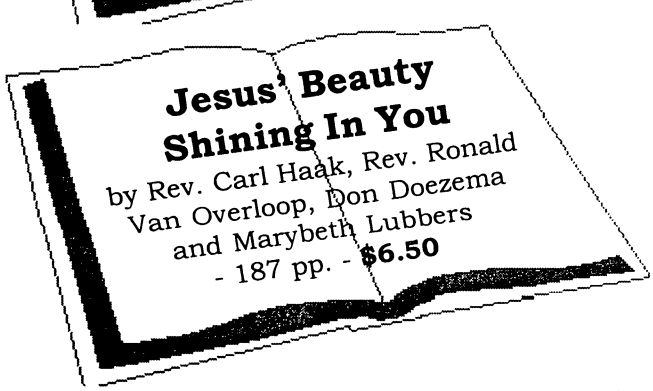

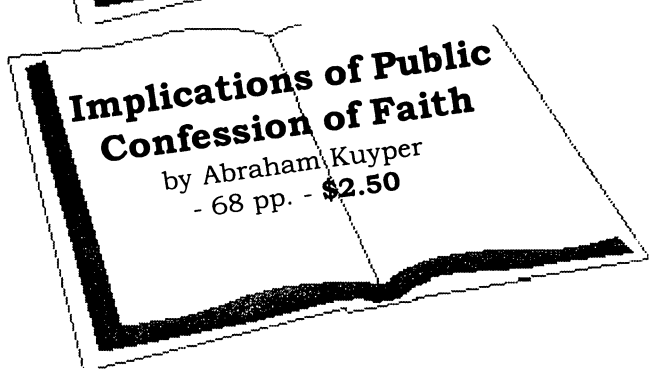

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