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In Wittenberg, October 31, 1517

This old copperplate shows the moment that Dr. Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses on one of the entrance doors of the Palace Church.

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On the Reformation and the Conversion of a Wine Press

by John Huizenga

The flash of insight which brought Johann Gutenberg (b. c. 1398, d. 1468) to his workshop to fasten his recently perfected moveable type to a wine press sparked an explosion that shook the whole world to its foundations. At the time of the Reformation, the wine and oil press was a very common piece of equipment. A simple push on the lever forced a thick plate down to crush grapes or olives and squeeze the juice or oil out into a bucket. This type of press had already been modified in Martin Luther's day so that it could be used to squeeze the water out of a pulp mixture to produce a sheet of paper, but paper was of little value until a scribe had spent hours printing words one letter at a time upon that paper. Every book written until this time had been written by hand and was very expensive. The conversion of a wine press into a printing press made it much easier to copy books and was invaluable for the Reformation.

Some have even argued that the Reformation would have failed without the printing press. The child of God, however, knows that the life of the true church does not depend upon mans inventions but rather upon the gracious providence of God. The printing press in the hands of Martin Luther was a powerful means used by God for reform, but it was not the determining factor in the success of the Reformation.

The determining factor for every true reform is the pure preaching of the Word and the work of God in the hearts of men. Johann Gutenberg's invention changed the way books had been written for thousands of years. He developed a way to produce efficiently individual raised metal letters that could be coated with ink and stamped on paper over and over. He developed a way to lock those letters together into words, sentences, and pages which when coated in ink could print page after page with the flick of a wrist.

He also worked with a special ink mixture of chimney soot, turpentine, and linseed oil that printed sharp letters with no soaking and blurring. Together the new press and ink made an excellent printing press. The advantage of a printing press was obvious and Mr. Gutenberg took out a loan so that he could make enough type and suitable press to begin printing copies of the Bible. Each metal "page" of type probably took about one day to make, but once made, it could print thousands of copies on paper. His banker, however, was either a very impatient man or greedily sought the great profit of such a press because he demanded repayment before Mr. Gutenberg could pay back his debt. The banker then brought a lawsuit against him that landed

the press in his own hands. Before being forced to give up his press, however, Johann Gutenberg managed to produce complete copies of the Bible known today as the Gutenberg Bible. The Bibles produced by Gutenberg's press were very high quality and much less expensive than the hand-copied versions. Thus demand for the Bibles and other material printed on the new press was very high.

Printing developed rapidly after Gutenberg set up his first commercial press in 1455, but it was Martin Luther who sent the presses into a blur of action. Luther did not immediately realize how valuable the press would be for his proclamation of the truth and was himself quite amazed at how quickly his 95 thesis had been reproduced and spread throughout all Germany. Unlike the Roman authorities who did their best to keep the written word out of the hands of the people and feared the effect of the press, Luther saw the press as an effective means for spreading the truth of God's Word to the people and began to use it extensively. When the reformers began to use the printing presses, the volume of material printed increased seven fold. The doctrines found on the pages that flowed from the first printing presses were powerful doctrines and produced a strong impact on the general population of Germany. When the power of *sola scriptura* and *sola fidei* was unleashed for the people, it inflicted heavy damage within the Roman Church and shook loose the bonds that held many of God's people in the prison of popery. To a large extent, the printing presses under the use of the Reformers can be credited for unleashing this great power. Later on and still today, the ability to print ideas cheaply and quickly results in rapid development in technology and the lives of people. Though a very powerful influence, we must understand that the printing press alone, even in the hands of Luther could not have brought reformation to the church. The life of the true church does not depend upon technology. God has determined to use the foolishness of humble and simple preaching by men who may be very poor and ignorant of the latest technology to gather and preserve His church. True riches and power are found in the Word of God alone.

If Luther's pamphlets and translation of the Bible into German had not been followed by the pure preaching of the word, all the pamphlets and Bibles would have floated out of peasant chimneys. Some have argued that reformation would never have happened if it were not for the printing press. Though it is difficult for us mere men to understand how the reformation could have occurred without the printing press, the truth of Scripture noted in the previous paragraph teaches us that God gathers and preserves his church by the pure preaching of the Word. If Luther had had a computer and had published his 95 thesis on the World Wide Web, it still would have been fruitless without the pure preaching of the Word. If God had determined to bring reformation to the church without the printing press, the reformation would have occurred without the printing press. God determined, however, to govern the progress and invention of the printing press so that it would be used by Luther to bring true reform to the church. All history, every invention, and every ruler serves the purpose of God as He gathers His people from every tribe tongue and people. When we understand that God is in sovereign control, then it does not make sense to ponder whether or not the reformation would have happened without the printing press. All we can do by faith is glorify God for His mighty works in the earth for His people. Today books, magazines, newspapers, and junk mail is everywhere.

We have good Reformed literature in abundance, though it is now only a minute fraction of the total material printed today. Computers make printing and publishing nearly effortless in comparison to the days before Luther. Even so, the church is small and we can see that the church lives on only by the pure preaching of the Word. This does not mean we abandon technology as useless because God directs the production of computers and other technology also for the sake of His church. Knowing our God as sovereign in all things compels us to ask in prayer what God will have us do with the things He gives to us. Computers make it easier than ever before to get ones ideas into writing, but what is important are the ideas that are written.

The great writers such as Luther and Calvin were men of prayer. We too must be men of prayer as we work with words and develop the truth in our Churches. The written word is clearly vital to the pure preaching of the word. God gave His word to us in written form so that we can read it and ministers can exegete and preach it. Reformed people must recognize and appreciate the importance of the written word and spend much time with it. Our schools must put a strong emphasis on reading skills and writing skills. Further education in the skills of writing and publishing is very valuable.

We need people in our churches who read and are also able to communicate effectively with others in writing. Above all, the church needs people who are strong in faith. If faith is lacking, then all the reading and writing in the world is worthless. We can be thankful to God for faithful preachers because our faith comes by hearing the Word preached as we read in Scripture. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:14-15). ❖

Wittenberg

Where The Reformation Came From

by J.P. de Klerk

Dr. Martin Luther was born on November 10, 1483, in Eisleben (Germany) as the second son of a miner, Hans Luder. He attended school from 1488-1496 in Mansfield, in 1497 in Magdeburg, and went then to the Georgen school from 1498-1501 in Eisenach.

From 1501-1506 he did his philosophical studies in the University of Erfurt, which he completed with the award of a Mater of Arts degree. He abandoned his subsequent law studies, as he felt obliged to join the Augustinian-Hermit monastery, after his experience during a thunder storm, when he was almost struck by lightning (July 2, 1505).

On April 4, 1507, Martin Luther received his ordination in the Erfurt cathedral and started his study of theology. Johan von Staupitz sent him the following year to Wittenberg to teach moral philosophy to the young monks there. He went for some time back to Erfurt, to teach

In Wittenberg, October 31, 1517

The old copperplate (on the front cover) shows the moment that Dr. Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses "against the doctrine of indulgences" etc. (in Latin) on one of the entrance doors of the Palace Church. The nobility and clergy showed much interest. They translated the Theses for the farmers and merchants.

Luther did not have a discussion with the crowd, but sent an elucidation to pope Leo X in Rome, archbishop Albrecht van Brandenburg, professor Johannes Eck and the Dominican Johannes Tetzel.

During a meeting of theologians in Heidelberg, in April 1518, he defended his viewpoints, and several important people became convinced (like Johannes Brenz and Martin Bucer). He urged the people to listen to Paulus instead of Aristoteles. King Friedrich ("the Wise") and emperor Maximilian of Germany agree with Luther and protect him when he has to defend himself in Augsburg, where Cardinal Cajetanus questions him in the name of the pope.

there dogmatics. In 1510 he paid a visit to Rome, where he was disappointed by what he saw of the monks and priests. In 1511 he received his final summons to the Augustinian-Hermit monastery in Wittenburg, where he resided until his death. (That building is now known as the Luther house, at Nr. 62 in the Collegienstrasse, a gift from King Friedrich "the Wise.")

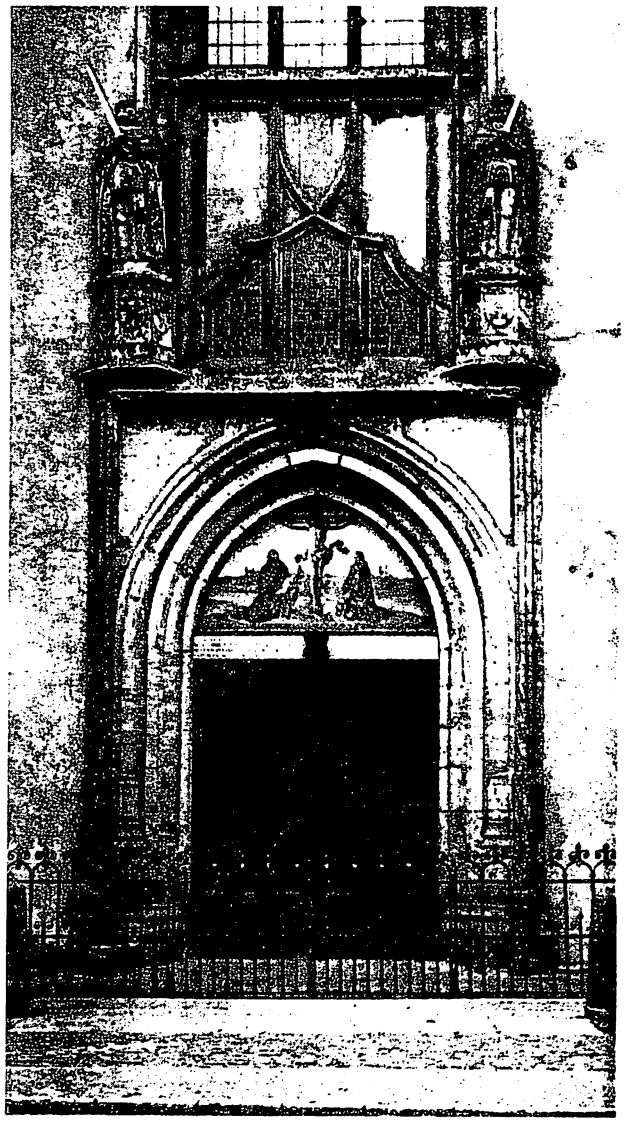
In 1512 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Theology and became Bible Professor at the Wittenberg University. On October 31, 1517, he published his 95 theses against the Roman Catholic doctrine of indulgences, at the oak doors of the Palace Church. In 1524 the reformer put his habit aside and on June 13, 1525, he married the former nun Katharina von Bora, who bore him three sons and three daughters. He was sometimes ill (kidney problems) but forced himself to continue his work. He wrote numerous books. He preached every Lord's Day in the Palace Church as well as in the big City Church.

On February 18, 1546, Dr. Martin Luther died during a visit to Eisleben and was buried on February 22, 1546, in the Palace Church in Wittenberg, at the foot of the staircase of the pulpit there. (The place is marked by a stone with an inscription.)

Luther's house was a centre of activity for the Reformation. A contemporary advised against visiting the reformer, saying, "In the Doctor's house lives a mixed crowd of young people, students, young girls, widows, old ladies and children." Katharina Luther had great difficulty looking after the large family and the lodgers. She used the right to build, tended the garden, gradually acquired several plots of land and bred cattle extensively, as to provide everybody with food. She received also gifts from followers of her husband, who refused to receive money for his work.

The history of Wittenberg is very interesting. It started as a fortress in 1130. In 1293 the Ascanian Duke Albrecht II conferred upon Wittenberg the status of a town.

The Ascanians reigned in Saxony-Wittenberg until 1422. From 1356 they also held the rank of Electors in the German Empire. In 1423 the Wettines became their successors as sovereigns, also taking over the Electorship. Under King Friedrich III, called "the Wise," from the Ernestine branch of the House of Wettin, Wittenberg experienced a unique upsurge as an electoral residential town. After the reconstruction of the residential palace and the Palace Church (from 1492) and the foundation of the University (1502), an extensive building program started in town. Particularly through the work of Dr.



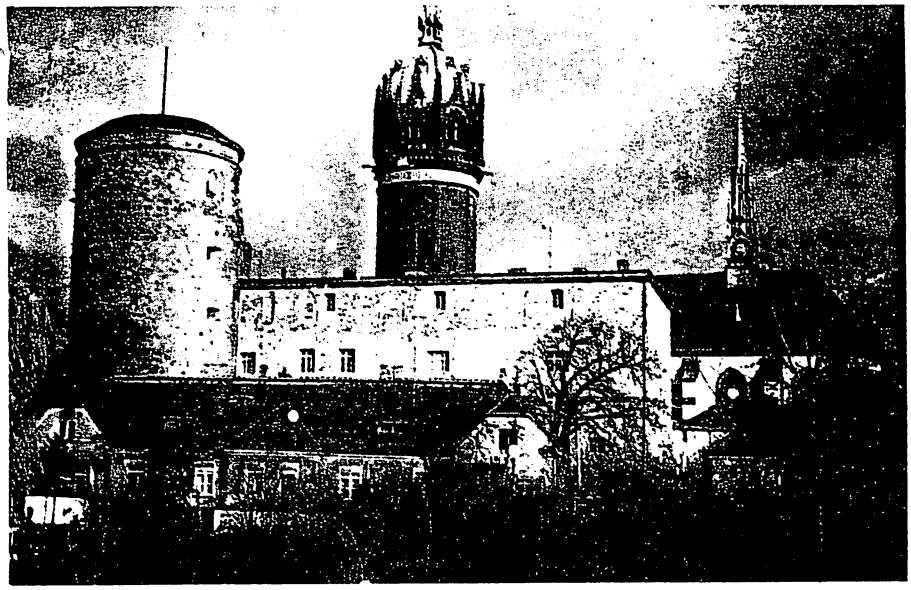
In Wittenberg Today

Here is the famous entrance of the Palace Church of Wittenberg as it looks like today, behind a fence of cast iron.

Two statues of knights on both sides of the windows above, partly broken and boarded up. Everything is dirty because of dirt in the air from the factories around the city.

Wittenberg is situated 70 kilometers north of the big city of Leipzig, in the province Saksen, formerly part of East Germany (D.D.R.).

Luther as well as King Friedrich III, his protector, are buried under the floor of the church. The Communist government of the past fifty years did not dare to touch this building; they didn't have friends in Wittenberg.



In the Reformation City

The remnant of the old Castle of Friedrich III, which has been part of a fortification against many enemy armies during the past four centuries. Behind it the Palace Church, with a big and a small tower, carefully restored. They were built by the king of Saksen at the same time (1489-1525). It is visited by thousands of people every year. Wittenberg is the Luther-City, the birthplace of the Reformation.

Martin Luther the Wittenberg University became one of the most important centres of European intellectual life and the advance of the doctrines of the Reformation.

Especially profitable, in the general economic stimulus in Wittenberg, was business concerned with the production and distribution of books. With the outbreak of the Schmalkaldian War (1546-47), shortly after Luther's death, Wittenberg's medieval heyday came to a close. The new sovereign, Moritz of Saxony, was only interested in Wittenberg as a fortress, which was razed in 1873. ❖

J.P. de Klerk is an author and journalist from the Protestant Reformed Church of New Zealand.

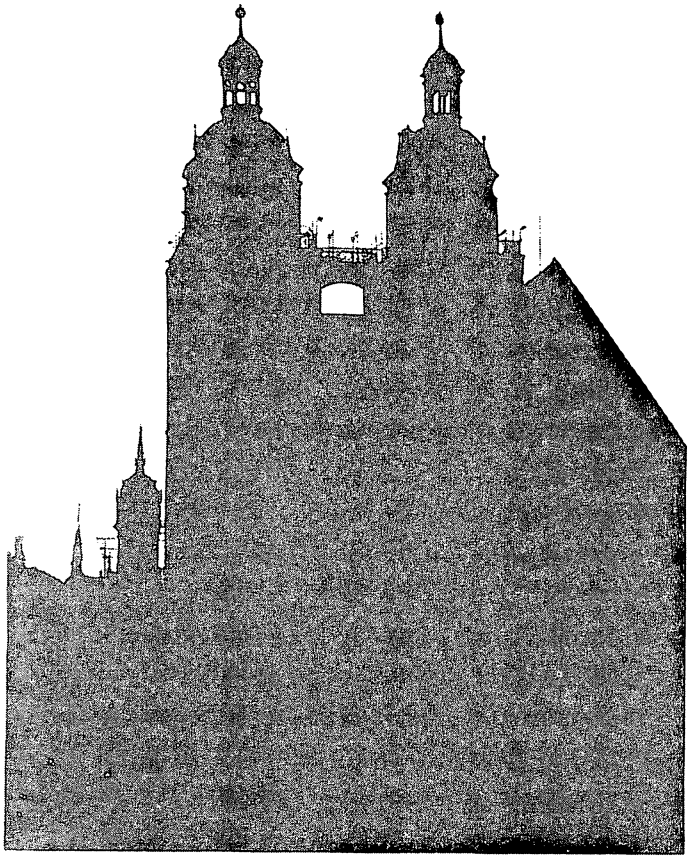
Wittenberg

View at the city, from the river , the Elbe.

In the middle the famous Palace Church with a round tower, which has a roof made of copper. Around it in gold lettering the first words of Luther's well-known "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." Left of it you see a restored remnant of the castle of King Friedrich III, who supported Dr. Martin Luther every step of the way and gave him also as much protection as he could against his enemies.

Through the Congress of Vienna (1815), Wittenberg became Prussian territory and remained a fortress through the wish of the new ruling house, until 1873. The University was amalgamated with Halle University. A fast economic and municipal development followed in the ensuing time and through the establishment of many industries (which still pollute the air and make the houses dirty) a rapid increase in population occurred. Wittenberg survived the Second World War without major damage to its historic building.

After the unification of Eastern Germany with the "Bundesrepublik" restoration and reconstruction measures were undertaken in the old center to restore the glory of "Luther's city" (in German: Lutherstadt).



The Churches of Wittenberg

The beautiful silhouettes of the two important churches of the history of the Reformation in the center of Wittenberg, while the sun begins to color the sky. To the left the tower of the Palace Church, in front the two towers of the Lutheran City Church.

On the western edge of Wittenberg lies the once magnificent Palace of the Elector of Saxony. It was built from 1489 to 1525 under King Friedrich III together with the Palace Church ("Schlosskirche"). In 1503 it also became University Church. In 1524 the evangelical (Lutheran) service was officially introduced. Before reaching the entrance of the Church next to the 88 meters high tower, coming from the direction of the market, one sees the Theses doors, inscribed with Luther's 95 Theses in Latin. The original doors of 1517 went up in flames with the whole church during a bombardment in 1760 (only the external wall and the gravestones in the floor survived), but everything was rebuilt. Again destructed in 1815 during the battles with Napoleon. From 1885 to 1892 the Palace Church and the tower on its western side were comprehensively renovated. Since then the tower has been graced with a striking dome. Below the dome on the brick work the first words of Luther's hymn in big golden lettering; "A safe stronghold our God is still, a trusty shield and weapon," surrounded by colored mosaics. Inside the Church octagonal columns were used together with a new vaulting in late Gothic style. Many figures, coat of arms and medallions form a fitting memorial hall to the Reformation.

Below the pulpit a simple bronze plaque on a stone base indicates the place where Martin Luther was buried.

The City Church is 300 years older than the Palace Church and has survived several wars and restorations. But the pulpit from which Luther held his sermons there remained undamaged. The front is a treasure cast in bronze in 1457. There are paintings of Cranach (father and son), witnesses to Luther's Reformation. There is also a Reformation alter (1547) that found its place in the choir room. Luther and all his friends and relatives can be seen on the paintings (including Luther dressed as "Junker Jörg," when he had to live in hiding, protected against his enemies).

Martin Luther (1483-1546):

"We are here of the conviction that the papacy is the seat of the true and real antiChrist...I declare that I owe the pope no other obedience than that to antiChrist....The antiChrist of whom Paul speaks now reigns in the court of Rome."

Susan Tripped

by J.P. de Klerk

Susan Mole was very nervous. When she entered the classroom, she choose quickly a corner with a table at the back. It was the last part of sitting for a scholarship and Susan had not taken the time to prepare herself well enough. The night before she had been to her next door neighbors who had invited her to come to see a beautiful film. It took longer than they had expected and so she had gone to bed far too late.

Her friend Laura was only a mediocre pupil, but she had studied as much as she could and was now in a good mood. She smiled in an encouraging way when she saw Susan. When Mr. Douma gave her the papers she had to work at, she started straight away with writing and looked neither right nor left. She seemed not worried about a thing. Susan saw most of the others busy and she understood she could not just sit there; there was a time-limit.

Well, perhaps, it was not all that bad, she thought. But soon she discovered one problem after another. The answers slipped from her. It seemed her head was a blank. Slowly she became seized by panic. She had to guess several answers or else fill in nothing. She could not remember what she had learned already at the beginning of the year. What was the capitol of Iraq again? At what river? She looked at Laura, who worked quietly.

She filled in what she knew and skipped the other questions till later. It was all she could do. Of all the subjects, she was best in algebra, and she went quickly through it. She noticed she could easily look at Laura's paper and she picked up two answers and wrote them down. She realized it was not honest, it was no good, she should not do it, but...Mr. Douma did not look in her direction, Laura was concentrating on her work, so she did it again, and again. A strange excitement took possession of her; it was like a tumult. She felt she reddened. Her blood drummed in her temples....

It was quite a job, but when the bell rang, Susan had just written down the last answer she had taken from Laura's papers and looked skittishly about her. "Well, boys and girls," said Mr. Douma. That has been done and you can all go home relieved.

Put your papers on my desk." Susan was one of the first to become rid of her papers, but her legs trembled. She tried to leave the school building in a rush, but suddenly she felt a hand at her shoulder and that gave her shock. She turned around and looked in the face of Lilian Roberts, who had been sitting behind her. She said: "Now Susan, I saw that you managed to do very well this morning, using the answers of Laura Weir!... I did not know, that conservative Christians did such things!"

Susan could not move, here eyelids fluttered, her lips quivered. She did not know what to say. Last week she had invited Lilian to go with her to church. What a bad example she had given her. How could she ever regain her trust and speak about the Christian faith? This was terrible. She went home through the back door.

The following two days she felt miserable, disillusioned, bad, and with a poor appetite. She prayed and asked God to forgive her, but she knew she had to do something to put the record straight. The third day, she met Adrian, a boy from another class, who asked her, "Did you hear already about Laura Weir?"

"No, what is the matter with her?"

"Mister Douma went with her to the office of the boss. They say that she had copied all the answers of the test from your papers. Even two wrong ones are the same!" He walked away chuckling. Susan watched him with a bewildered look on her face. It was clear that matters had become worse, because she had not acted immediately. Mister Douma had concluded that Laura had done it. Now she knew what she had to do...

She went to school and knocked at the door of the teachers' room, where Mr. Douma was at work. "Come in, the door is open!"

When she entered, it was obviously a surprise for him. "Sir, I would like to... I must tell you... I have...," stammered Susan.

He pointed to a chair and said, "Now, sit down and tell me quietly what is bothering you."

Susan asked the Lord in silence to guide her. With lowered eyes she told him the whole story about what she had done, and that she regretted it very much, also because what had happened now to Laura. She pleaded to forgive her.

"I shall never hold up my head again," she sobbed.

He regarded her in silence. Then he said, "I had never expected this from you, Susan. I will have to destroy your papers and give Laura the high mark she deserves. I think this is enough for a punishment.... I forgive you, but you will have to talk with Laura yourself. I can not give you a second chance. That would be wrong in this case, but if you work hard you still have a future. You tripped. Let us leave it there. You can go now."

"Thank you, sir," muttered Susan and shuffled away. She felt relieved and dismayed at the same time. She knew where Laura lived and decided to pay her a visit. She saw her in the garden in front of her house. Laura was not angry. She said she understood why Susan had copied. She knew the temptation herself. They agreed they would not talk about the incident with others. Susan would not soon forget what had happened. ❖

J.P. de Klerk is an author and journalist from the Protestant Reformed Church of New Zealand.

Where We Stand

Dealing with Liberalism in Reformed Theology

by Marty VanderWal

We can all be agreed that liberalism, or modernism, is the enemy of all true theology, i.e., the true knowledge of God. But we must first understand exactly what liberalism is. According to the New Dictionary of Theology (Sinclair Ferguson, David Wright, editors), liberalism has the following features:

> 1. A purpose of adapting the substance of faith... to current naturalistic and anthropocentric viewpoints, abandoning traditional dogmas when necessary. 2. A skepticism regarding the supernatural. 3. A view of the Bible as human record of religious thought and experience. 4. God working only in natural human development (e.g., evolution) for the progress of the human race. 5. A theology based on experience rather than revelation. 6. Denial of the fall, depravity, guilt removed by atonement, and Christ's personal return.

On the basis of these six features, we may conclude that liberalism is a doctrinal system which, based on human experience rather than divine revelation, presents God as the product of man's thought and opinion, and salvation as inherent human progress. Ultimately, Liberalism makes man into God, by making man the final judge of truth and by presenting man as his own savior.

Continued on page 18

Watching Daily At My Gates

We need writers if this devotional is to continue. If you contribute even one month, you will receive our writers newsletter.

Reprinted from
Daily Meditations for Spiritual Comfort
by Rev. John A. Heys, minister emeritus from the Protestant Reformed Churches

November 1

THE BELIEVERS BLESSED AFFLICTIONS It makes a world of difference whether you stand at the cross of Christ and see the hatred of the unbelieving Jews, and the shed blood and pain which He endured, or whether you look at what He was earning for us through that suffering and death. It makes a world of difference also whether you look simply at your own afflictions, or at that which these afflictions will bring you. Thus in II Corinthians 4:17 we read, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Look at those bodily afflictions and you will see what Adam brought upon man through his sin. If you look no deeper, you will judge the punishment of God to be falling upon the afflicted. But if you look into the heart of the child of God who is being afflicted, you see the work of God's grace whereby He is bringing that child of God to heavenly glory. As Paul says to the Philippians in chapter 1:21, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Get that! For the child of God to suffer and die brings him gain, not loss. This is certainly true when the affliction is persecution because of faith in God. It is that to which Paul refers here in II Corinthians 4:17. These afflictions will be "for a moment," but they bring us to everlasting glory in a life completely without affliction. When you look at what God did to your soul you see what He will do pretty soon to your body. Sooner or later men are going to see our dead bodies in coffins. But take hold of this comforting truth that through death God brings our souls out of all misery and pain into an endless life of heavenly glory. Therefore it is also a sign that the body will be raised, when Christ returns, and will be changed into one that will never have an ache or pain, but enjoy an everlasting fellowship with God in a more wonderful world than Adam and Eve enjoyed before they fell into sin. Fear not if the world persecutes. Look at what God is doing. **Read: II Corinthians 4.**

November 2

REST FOR THE RESTLESS Ever since man fell into sin, he has been restless. For the curse which fell upon mankind, when Adam sinned, gives man no rest. Resting is not ceasing from all activity. Man must cease from his physical activity, and take the rest of sleep in order to be able to work the next day. But while he sleeps, his heart keeps beating, and his body is performing the work of making it able to take up work once again as before. When then in Matthew 11:28 Jesus says, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, " He is not promising us idleness and inactivity. Do we not read of God resting the seventh day after creating heaven and earth and all their creatures? And is He inactive today? Do we not also in Hebrews 4:9 read that "there remaineth to the people of God" a rest? Will we then be idle in the new Jerusalem? No, we shall be very busy serving and praising God. To enter into that blessed rest we must come unto Christ. For He earned it for us and opened the way for us to enter into it and enjoy it. He made it possible for restless people to have an end to their restlessness, and for them to enjoy being active in heavenly glory. His cross finished the work of salvation so that we could begin to walk in love for God. And since we cannot get rid of our load of sin and guilt which is upon us, we have this call to come to Christ, Who removed our load of guilt which we hopelessly try to get rid of, and opened the door for us to come where, with body and soul, we may serve God every moment of everlasting life. Seek then your salvation in Christ, for there is no rest for the weary except through Him. On His cross He cried out that it is finished. Through Him we can enter the glorious state and condition of serving God with perfect souls in glorified bodies. **Read: Hebrews 4.**

November 3

DWELLING WITH GOD IN HIS TABERNACLE What lies ahead for the world of unbelievers is the opposite of that which the believers will forever enjoy. This is presented to us in Revelation 21:3, where we read, "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." Now, a tabernacle is a dwelling place; and here we have the place where God will dwell with His people. He needs no dwelling place. He is not limited to one place. He is the everywhere present God. He has, however, promised, and is preparing, a place where His people will have fellowship with Him. That is the truth presented in this verse. Look then and see that there is a dwelling place which God makes for His people so that they may have sweet communion with Him. This life with God will be far richer than what Adam and Eve enjoyed before they fell into sin and death. Their fellowship with God was wonderful, but it was far more limited than the one now being prepared by God through Christ and His cross. This dwelling place brings us, as the next verse states, where God wipes away all tears from our eyes, where there is no death, sorrow, crying, or pain. And that means that here will be boundless and endless rejoicing, singing, and delight. For we shall be with God as we are with Christ, Who is God come in our flesh. Take hold of that word "Behold." Look at and into the blessings which God has realized for us through His Son and which will be given us, as far as our souls are concerned, the moment we die, and fully when Christ returns and gives us glorified bodies. Here is the rest which we considered yesterday: dwelling with God and knowing to a wonderful degree His love for us as revealed in and bestowed upon us through Christ. Behold this blessedness now by faith in God and in His Christ. **Read: Revelation 21.**

November 4

THAT CERTAIN VICTORY It might seem strange. In fact it may even appear to be that which should not have been written in our holy Bible. For in Psalm 2:4 we read, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." However, if you turn to Psalm 37:13 and Psalm 59:8, you will find the same statements. For God is not laughing because He is pleased with what He sees and hears. That He shall have them in derision reveals that He considers all the works of the unbelievers to be folly. The idea is that our God considers all the attempts of the ungodly to destroy His church to be sheer folly. The point is that our God does not worry. He does not in fear watch Satan, the antichrists, and the whole world of unbelievers as they attack and try to destroy His church. All things are always completely under His control. Satan with all the fallen angels and human enemies of God's church have their plans, and think that they will succeed in getting the godless kingdom of the Anti-Christ established and victorious. But the almighty God, our covenant Father, knows the folly and hopelessness of their plans. Here is a truth we should hold on to tightly. Here is that which should make us laugh, not in the sense of expressing delight in the worlds attempt to set up its devilish kingdom, but in the peace of mind and joy that all is well. The world is today striving desperately to do what the unbelievers tried when they began building the tower of Babel. But they failed then and are going to fail again. The kingdom of the Antichrist will stand briefly. But rejoice in the truth that even in this the ungodly world shall serve God's plan and purpose. Satan, the Antichrist, and all the ungodly are but tools in God's hand to work all things together for our good. Our victory is sure. **Read: Psalm 37:1-17.**

November 5

THAT WONDERFUL PEACE OF GOD When in Philippians 4:6 Paul tells us to be careful for nothing, he is not telling us to be careless. The Greek word Paul uses here means to worry. We are told not to worry, but instead to put all our trust in God and in all the promises which He gives us in Christ. That becomes very plain when in verse 7 he writes, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." What is more, he exhorts us to let all our requests be made known unto God by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. Our hearts and minds must be fixed upon God's promises, but also on what He wrought for us through Christ Jesus, His Son and our Savior. Do that and you will have peace of mind and heart. The idea is that we must not doubt God's ability to keep the promises which He gave us, but also that no matter what happens, God is fulfilling every letter in every promise which He has given us in Christ. We may be sure that, at the cross of Christ, His mother, the disciples, and other men and women who believed in God and in His Christ, were filled with care and anxiety, and worried about the outcome of it. But all that changed when He arose from the dead. For then they saw that His cross had not put an end to His work, but that by it He realized more blessedness for His people. We also, as we approach not only darker days and persecution, but also our own sicknesses, losses, and bereavements, must not worry. Instead we should take hold of the truth which we find in a versification of Psalm 149: "His saints shall not fail, but over the earth their power shall prevail; All kingdoms and nations shall yield to their sway. To God give the glory and praise Him for aye." **Read: Philippians 4.**

November 6

SEEKING OUR GOD The longest book of prophecy is Isaiah, which has 66 chapters. In Isaiah 55:6 we find this striking exhortation: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." This verse, however, is better translated, "Seek ye the Lord in His finding, call ye upon Him in His nearness." For the Hebrew preposition used here basically is "in," not "while" He is near. For God does not change. His name "Jehovah" means "I Am." He does not change, and does not "plead" with men to "accept" an "offer" which He will withdraw. This militates against Ephesians 2:1 which tells us that we are spiritually dead before He begins salvation in us. To those whom He did not eternally choose in Christ, God presents salvation only in the sense of setting the truth before them, not in the sense of inviting, begging, pleading that they accept it. But there is a place where God can be found, and where He graciously is near His elect children. He is near them in Christ His Son. And it is in Christ that we can call upon Him and be heard. We must seek Him in Christ, and call upon Him in Christ, after He has already implanted in us the spiritual life which Christ earned for us. The blessed fruit of such seeking in Christ is in the next verse: He will have mercy upon us and abundantly pardon. He will enable us to believe in Him that He is merciful and does pardon us through the cross of Christ. The awesome truth is that only when we, by His grace, seek Him and call upon Him will we experience the blessings which come through His Son. Then we not only know that Jehovah saves, but we will be enjoying that salvation. Seek Him then in Christ. Call upon Him through Christ and you will receive the joy of salvation, and be assured of its fullness when Christ returns. **Read: Isaiah 55.**

November 7

RICH TOWARD GOD There were in Old Testament times men of God to whom God gave much material wealth. There was Job with his host of sheep, camels, oxen, and donkeys. There was also Solomon, who was an extremely rich man. And today there are children of God who have more luxurious homes, more beautiful clothes, and more effective means of transportation than those Solomon had. All this is well. It is God's gift. But what counts is the gift of spiritual riches. Jesus expressed this very plainly in Luke 12:21, when He concluded His parable about a foolish rich man, who was an unbeliever, who lost all his earthly goods, because God took away his life. Concerning him Jesus said, "So is he that layeth up treasures for himself, and is not rich toward God." That man had said to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." He went into the everlasting torment of hell! He could not take with him the smallest part of the earthly treasures, which he had not received as that wherewith to serve God. Here we are taught to be, first of all and very seriously concerned with being rich spiritually, with blessings from the hand of God through His Son and His cross. What counts is whether we are rich toward God, not how much earthly treasure we have for a short period of time. What counts is what we will have everlastingly after we have left this life which is a continual death. What counts is not what we have materially in this present life, but what we will receive when this life ends, and our souls go to their everlasting goal. Our bodies for a while will be in the grave; and then earthly treasures will mean nothing to them. Let us then seek the kingdom of God. Jesus applied this parable with the words, "Seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you." **Read: Luke 12:11-31.**

November 8

PUTTING ON THE ARMOR OF GOD Through the years there have been wars between nations. In fact, the first child to be born, namely Cain, in anger killed his brother Abel. Because people want earthly things they fight to get possessions. Now, fighting is not always sin. In fact God tells us in Ephesians 6:11 to "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." This means that we must fight against Satan, because he is fighting us through men. God told us in the day that Adam sinned that we would have to fight, because there would be enmity between the serpent and his seed and the woman and her seed. He also in that declaration assures us that we will have the victory. We can in that light understand that we need armor in a very dangerous battle. And we can be thankful to God that He gives us protection. He changes His elect children and makes them hate the devil and all the sin he brings into this world. The devil hates those whom God has changed spiritually so that they love God and hate sin. Let us not forget that this spiritual battle is far more important than physical warfare of men who hate men for worldly reasons and carnal

craving. Now our fighting must be spiritual, not physical. We must be fighting against the lie, against false doctrines, against sin of every kind, and against all the attempts of the devil and his soldiers (men and fallen angels) which tempt us to walk in sin, and thus in hatred against God, Whose law we must keep fully and constantly. Seek your protection then from all false doctrines which today are increasing in number and subtlety. Never give in to a false doctrine. Fight against all attempts to get us to turn away from God. And remember what happened to Adam and Eve when they agreed with Satan. Seek all the protection you can against Satan and his lies and love of sin. **Read: Ephesians 6:10-19.**

November 9

LIVING IN HOLINESS One who claimed to be a shepherd of Christ's sheep once said, "Christ died for our sins. Dare we make His martyrdom meaningless by not committing them?" Must we make Christ's death on His cross the reason for us to commit sin, so that His cross gets more meaning and importance? Did not the apostle Paul write in Romans 6:1, 2, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Salvation does not mean simply that our guilt is removed, and that we now are righteous before God. It also means that we are made holy, and that salvation implants in us love for God, and thus the desire to be pleasing in His sight in all that which we do. The evidence that He died for us is that we have been given love of God, and in that love want to be pleasing in His sight. It reveals, that salvation does, that we want to walk as our Savior did, walk in obedience and love for God. Would you want to drink poison so that the skill and wisdom of your doctor would be revealed? Being cured, would you want to take even more of that poison to give that physician more honor and credit for his skill? Instead, you would be making it possible for your mortician to earn a bit more money by your funeral. No, of course not! Likewise, if you are saved from sin, you are saved from the love of sin. If Christ died for your sins, He will cause you to be born again with a life that wants to walk every step of the way in the obedience wherein He walked. With Paul you will say, "God forbid." You will take hold of the truth in verse 23 that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is everlasting life. That means a life like that of Christ Who saved us. **Read: Romans 6.**

November 10

COMING AFTER CHRIST As was pointed out yesterday, salvation not only saves us from the punishment we deserve, but also from the love of sin. We must not take man's word about this, but Christ's. For in Mark 8:34 He says, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me." The point here is: that we come into heavenly glory only by coming after Christ. We must walk after Him in God's holy law. And to do this we must deny ourselves and take up our cross, and follow Christ. In the beginning of history Adam turned away from God and went the way his flesh wanted. Yes, this was the way designed by Satan and suggested to man by him. Adam agreed to go the way of sin. We now must deny this evil desire wherewith we were born. That we take up our cross means that we willingly suffer what the world wants to inflict upon us. It cannot mean taking up Christ's cross. On it He cried out that "It is finished." It means that we suffer at Satan's and his followers' hands. It means that we confess Christ to be our Savior. And it means that we are willing to suffer the ridicule, mockery, and pain the world wants to inflict upon us. We must walk after Christ, no matter how much affliction the world heaps upon us. Only by following Christ will we arrive where He is in heavenly glory. No, we do not earn that glory by that walk. Christ paved the way to glory, and He gives the life and strength to follow Him. If we do not come after Him, we are coming against Him. Then we are not following Christ but following Satan; and that leads to hell and its everlasting woes. Deny your flesh and its love of sin. Confess God to be your God; and do this not simply with your lips. Do it with all your works. Come after Christ no matter what it costs physically. You will then have assurance of everlasting blessedness with Christ in glory. **Read: Mark 8:34-38.**

November 11

MAKING OUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE Are you sure that you are an elect child of God? No, the question is not whether you made it sure in God's mind. When in II Peter 1:10 we read, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall," this refers to our minds, not God's. We cannot give God information which He does not eternally have. We cannot move Him to make a decision concerning our salvation. To mention that is to present a god over whom we have control. It is to deny that He is Jehovah, which name literally means I AM. And because He is Jehovah we can not change His mind, or bring into it something that is not eternally there. With us it is so different. We are sure that aches and pains, misery and grief are all around us, and that death is coming for us. What we as sinners deserve is everlasting torment in hell because of our guilt before God. We know that there are elect children of God, because the Scriptures from Genesis through Revelation teach us that there are such. Beginning in Genesis 3:15 God made known that there are two seeds, those of the devil, and those of Christ. Our calling is to give diligence to make it sure in our minds that God called us to spiritual life and makes us know our eternal election. As noted yesterday, we must walk as Christ walked. Then we will receive the assurance that we are by God called to be His children, those for whom Christ died. Read repeatedly, and study God's Word for this truth. Walk in love toward God, keeping His commandments. Seek the comfort and peace of mind that Christ died for your sins, by finding yourself walking here below as Christ did. Then you will make your calling and election sure in your mind, and you will find the peace that passeth all understanding. **Read: II Peter 1:1-11.**

November 12

THAT PERFECT PEACE There is that which has never been realized by man, and never will be accomplished by man, but is God's perfect gift to us as believers. That gift is peace, perfect peace that will never end. The very first child to be born of man killed his first brother. And Scripture throughout speaks of wars and predicts more of them. All these wars are here because man began to fight against God. Satan got Adam and Eve to go against God by doing what He had forbidden them. World War I and World War II are only pictures of what is coming. But a wonderful and blessed truth is presented to us in Isaiah 26:3. There we read, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." Here is THE peace that passeth all understanding. Here is the perfect and everlasting peace. For here is peace with God. Then all is well. Where there is no peace with God, there is no peace among men. Of that we can be sure. It is because God sent His own Son into our flesh, so that He could blot out our sins and remove all our guilt, by His life of perfect obedience and His death and suffering of hellish agony which we deserve, that today and everlastingly we can have peace with God, and will live together in perfect peace in His coming Kingdom of Heaven. Having peace with God we have no reason to be afraid of what happens in this world wherein we live now. It all is due to what God does to realize the day when His Son returns and brings forth a world of perfect peace, a world wherein all men love God and reveal this in love to one another. Trusting in God means that we accept Him as God alone. It also means that we have no doubt as to whether He will keep His promises. It means that we are sure all is well, because He is the almighty, ever-faithful God, Who has already brought His Son to this perfect peace to bring us there. **Read: Isaiah 26.**

November 13

WHAT REALLY COUNTS In many ways people do not agree. Some people prefer this color, and the taste of this kind of fruit. Others prefer a different color for a coat or dress, and this food rather than that. For some, the more money they have the richer they think that

they are. But in his wisdom, wealthy Solomon, as moved by God, wrote in Proverbs 15:16, "Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith." The best thing for us to have is the fear of God. Earthly treasures can bring joy to our flesh. But the fear of God assures us of everlasting blessedness in God's kingdom. Now, by fear of the Lord Solomon means faith, reverence, respect for God. The most precious possession we can have in this life is trust and confidence in God as our heavenly Father, Who sent His Son to earn our salvation by His cross. Yes, we become rich by losing! We must lose all our guilt. Every sin must be blotted out, or we go to everlasting woe. All the gold and silver in the world, all the houses and lands, cannot remove the punishment of ONE sin! In fact, the more earthly goods we have, the more we are tempted to forget God, to walk in sin, and to have no thought for salvation. What counts is what we have in our hearts, not in our pockets or bank account. What is most precious is faith, hope, and love of God. And all the material possessions which we have in this life should be used to cause our faith to grow and to be strengthened. The material must be used to the strengthening of our spiritual life. What counts is what is in Christ and what brings us to live with Him and to serve God perfectly. Thank God for that spiritual gift of God's grace: faith in Him. And use material things for a deeper and richer enjoyment of the spiritual wealth that Christ earned for us. **Read: Matthew 6:19-34.**

November 14

SEEING THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN It is amazing what we see today that men could not see in days gone by. Today we can see what is happening on the other side of this earth while it is taking place. Television is an amazing device which man learned how to make. Today we see things in full color, and hear the words spoken as they come out of a man's mouth on the other side of the earth. What counts, however, is what our God does and says to man. A few there are that hear and see what He is doing, and what He says to us. Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:3, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Here we have what it counts to see. Do not see the kingdom of heaven, and you will some day see hell and all the holy wrath of God against sin and sinners. What is more, that we will see (i.e., enjoy) all the blessings of God's kingdom is possible because of what God does to us, not what we invent, find, or make. We must be born again, that is, receive a new spiritual life from God in our souls. In fact, if we are not born again we will not even care to see the kingdom of God, and we will fight against those who are its citizens. All those who were not born again, and who did not see the kingdom of God, when they saw Christ, its king, killed Him, not having any interest in His kingdom. We see that kingdom because God caused us to be born again. We see Christ, His Son, as the door which opened the way for us, who were born again, to enter with our souls at the moment of death, and with our bodies when Christ returns. Pray then unto God that He will give you to see more of that kingdom, to see it more clearly, and more in detail, as what He wrought for us through His Son and His cross and resurrection and ascension up into heaven. **Read: Romans 9:14-26.**

November 15

SAVED THROUGH FAITH Never should we claim to be saved because of what we did. It is true that we are saved through faith, as Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:8. But God does not offer salvation and wait to see whether we accept it or not. He is not limited by our will and work. It is true what Paul said to the jail keeper: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31). This was his answer to the prison keepers question, "What must I do to be saved?" But take note of the fact that the very question asked by this jail keeper reveals that God had already begun the work of salvation in him. He had implanted in his soul the desire for salvation. God does not "offer" salvation and wait to see whether sinners are going to let Him save them. That insults the almighty God. He is never frustrated by any creature. He does not depend upon man's will and work. No, Paul tells this jailer that if he believes, and if those in his house believe, then salvation has already been begun in them by God, and will be fully accomplished when Christ returns on the judgment day. For we are saved by grace, not by our works (Ephesians 2:8-10). God's grace gives us the new spiritual life that wants salvation, wants spiritual life that believes in Christ as our Savior. Believe, and you know that God has begun it. Believe, and that means that already you have been engrafted into Christ by faith as God's gift. We are saved through faith, not because we believe by our own power. We are saved by God, not by letting God save us by "accepting" His "offer." God saves us by making us to be believers. Then He brings salvation into our consciousness. If we are saved, we will thank God for every bit of our salvation, and confess Him to be our complete Savior. **Read: John 3:1-21.**

November 16

VICTORIOUS BY FAITH There is a striking statement in I John 5:3. There John states that God's commandments are not grievous. If we are really serious and sincere, we will confess that it is awfully hard for us, even years after being born again, to keep God's commandments. Even that strong servant, the apostle Paul, said, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24). The comforting truth, however, is found in I John 5:4, where we read, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Faith is God's gift to us that enables us to have the victory over the world, but also over our flesh. If we have faith in God, and in His Son Jesus Christ as our Savior, the undeniable evidence that we were born again, that is, born with a new spiritual life that loves God, is manifest. Never, before we were born physically, could we do anything. And likewise, before we were born again with that new spiritual life, we could not even desire to keep God's commandments. Here we are taught again that our salvation is all God's work. God causes us to be born again. We do no more for that spiritual rebirth than we did for our physical birth. We did not ask our parents to bring us forth into this world. We could not before our conception and birth even want to come into being. Our spiritual rebirth, and our salvation from beginning onward, are not what we wanted to have come into being. All of our salvation, including the desire for it, is God's gift to us. He gives us the victory then over our spiritual death. We have the victory over the world, to which by nature we belong, because of what God did. We do and must sing: "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow." Faith is one of these blessings for which we owe Him everlasting thanks. **Read: I John 5.**

November 17

ORDAINED TO EVERLASTING LIFE Ask a man what "life" is, and he will probably have a different idea from that of the next man whom you ask. He may even say, "I do not know." The world sings the song, "Ah, sweet mystery of life." But believers turn to God's Word and say that it means knowing God and Jesus Christ Whom He has sent. This we read in John 17:3 where Jesus says, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." He who does not know God does not have an everlasting life. He comes into the world spiritually dead. For, did not God tell Adam that the day he committed his first sin, he would die spiritually? Because he did sin, all earthly fathers bring forth children who are spiritually dead. These children have a physical life, but not one bit of spiritual life. Everlasting life comes from the eternal God, and only unto those whom He eternally chose in Christ. Our God sent Christ to earn a life of heavenly bliss for us, an everlasting life of knowing God. This does not mean simply knowing about God. The devil knows that, and the minute men die they will know that there is one God, against Whom they sinned all their life. What Jesus means is that everlasting life is enjoying covenant fellowship with Him. That is life! That is what God promises us and what is realized for us through His Son. Everlasting life is enjoying the blessedness that God has realized for us through His Son. Do you want to know God that way? Do you want to know Him as the true God Who keeps every word of His promises, and

will give His people that everlasting joy of living with Him in holiness and glory? If that is your desire, you now have proof that He has begun giving you everlasting life already. And you are going to know it fully. **Read: John 17.**

November 18

BEING SOBER CHILDREN OF GOD To be sober means to be serious-minded by putting away silliness and flippancy. But basically it means not being drunken. Drunkenness does bring on silliness and flippancy; but when in I Thessalonians 5:8 Paul wrote, "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation," he means that we are not spiritually drunken but sober. This is plain from the fact that in the preceding verse he had written that they that be drunken are drunken in the night. We ought to take hold of that awesome truth that our God has brought us out of spiritual drunkenness into heavenly sobriety. The sad fact is, however, that worldly riches and pleasures do make us spiritually drunken. For our flesh enjoys forgetting God, and doing as Satan caused Adam to do. As spiritually drunken we follow thousands of ways of seeking and enjoying forbidden fruit, that is, enjoying sins of every kind. We behave as spiritually drunken members of the human race. Because Satan is attacking us every day through man and earthly riches, we must be armed with faith, hope, and love of God. For, as Paul presents it, we need faith and love as a breastplate in our spiritual battle; and we need hope as the helmet for the protection of our heads. But only as we are spiritually sober can we use this breastplate and helmet. In His grace God has brought us spiritual sobriety. By all means do not despise this gift, but cherish it and be thankful for it. As Paul writes, let us be sober, use that breastplate and helmet, and resist all the attacks of Satan. For in the day in which we live Satan has so many more, and more subtle, means of tempting us to spiritual drunkenness. By God's grace we are soldiers in the battle of faith. Let us not be so foolish as to lay aside our breastplate of faith and love and our helmet of hope, that it will not protect us. **Read: I Thessalonians 5:1-11.**

November 19

THAT BREASTPLATE OF FAITH AND LOVE Yesterday we took note of a fierce and subtle spiritual battle that we have with Satan, through men who have no faith in and love for God, and who attack us. Today we do well to look more closely at Paul's exhortation to put on the breastplate of faith and of love. It certainly is plain that Paul is speaking here of a spiritual battle. Faith and love are a spiritual breastplate for us in a spiritual battle, not in a physical warfare. We must protect ourselves but not by a steel, brass, metallic breastplate, when Satan is trying to get us to turn away from Christ and God, and to walk in unrighteousness. In Ephesians 6:14 Paul makes this very clear. For there he writes, "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness." Our breastplate of faith and love is the breastplate of righteousness. Our protection against all that which Satan uses, to stop us from holding on to righteousness, is to believe God in all that which He tells us about our salvation. It is also love toward God that keeps us walking in righteousness, rather than going with Satan in unrighteousness, as Satan got Adam and Eve to do. We are therefore, as Paul warns the Ephesians, saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8). Faith causes us to know and believe that we are righteous in God's judgment, and that we love Him, and are thankful to Him for having saved us from our guilt by His Son and His cross. Hold on to that truth, and do not let Satan work unbelief in you and cause you to hate God. He succeeded in this devilish work in Adam and Eve. But God has given us faith and love for Him. Hold on to these, and keep on that breastplate of faith and love. Be a soldier who fights against Satan and his seed; and be not a sinner revealing unbelief and hatred against God. **Read: Ephesians 6:10-18.**

November 20

LOVE THAT PRODUCES LOVE In I John 4:19 we find this instructive and beautiful truth, namely, "We love him, because he first loved us." This not only explains why we love God, but also how it is possible for us to love Him. Because God loves us He causes us to love Him. That is why Paul wrote to the Thessalonians that we can put on the breastplate of faith and love (II Thessalonians 5:8). Love of God will keep us safe when Satan and his army try, as they constantly are trying, to get us to hate God, and to repeat Adam's sin of doing what God forbids. The love God has for us produces in us love for God. And that love, as well as faith, is the breastplate that protects us when Satan attacks us through men and things. Love of God enables us to be Christians and to protect ourselves spiritually from all the attacks of antichristians. Satan is antichristian, for the word "anti" means "against." And being against Christ is to be against God, Who sent Him for our salvation. Christians have Christ by His Spirit in them. Antichrists and antichristians have Satan as their father. They constantly go against Christ. But through Christ God implants love for Him in us and hatred against Satan and his army. Christ revealed to us His love for us when He laid down His life on His cross. He did this with a view to implanting the love of God in us. And when He implants that love of God in us, we are willing to die at the hands of the enemy, even as He did, and to continue to walk in love toward God. The awesome question, therefore, is whether you do love God. The question is not merely whether it looks as though you love God. The question is whether you do love Him, and are willing to fight all the attempts of Satan to get you to walk in hatred towards God. By all means let the love of God, given you through Christ, make you resist all temptations to walk in sin. Let your love of God be the shield that protects your soul, and produces a walk of love toward God. **Read: I John 4: 1-19.**

November 21

HOPE AS THE ANCHOR OF OUR SOULS Our hearts are not the only organ that decides what we are going to do. Our minds work with the heart. We may with our hearts want something very strongly, but because our mind sees that what we crave may kill us, we do what our mind says, and not what our heart wants. That is also why Paul, having told us to put on the breastplate of faith and love, tells us also to put on the helmet of the hope of salvation. This truth is based on what we find in Hebrews 6:19, where we read, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the souls, both sure and steadfast." Is it not unique that in I Corinthians 13:13 Paul speaks of faith, hope, and love? The word translated as "charity" actually is the strongest word for "love" in Scripture. In I Thessalonians 5:8 Paul spoke of faith and love being our breastplate, and hope being our helmet in the battle of faith. These are three very, very important things in our lives. What we believe, what we love, and what our hope is has tremendous importance. Hope is not merely wishing. Its basic meaning is expecting what we desire to have. When then in Hebrews 6:19 it is called the anchor of our souls, we can see why it makes us steadfast when Satan through men comes to keep us from being sober, and to make us spiritually silly and foolish. In all our temptations we must have upon us the helmet of hope. Otherwise we are going to be spiritually shipwrecked. We are going to be swept into hell! Only the expectation of what Christ earned for us, and God promises us, will keep us living wisely and safely. By God's grace then seek the strengthening of your hope, so that in every temptation you may say, as Jesus did, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" Do not let him deceive you and make you long for that which sweeps man into hell. By reading and by study of God's Word, seek the strengthening of your hope. In that way keep on your head the helmet of hope, and stand firmly in safety. **Read: Hebrews 6.**

November 22

THE THANKSGIVING OF THE UPRIGHT There are times when one is very sad; and there are moments of great joy. There are times when we are glad that we got something we wanted; and there are times when we have lost what we had. But an important question is whether we are thankful to our God no matter what it is that He sends us, or takes from us. A truth we ought to consider is found in Psalm 140: 13. There David says, "Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name; the

upright shall dwell in thy presence." The question then is whether we shall give thanks to God no matter what He sends us. For the text states that the righteous give thanks, and that means that they do the right thing. Righteous people do what is right in God's sight. And the righteous, according to Romans 8:28, know that "all things work together for good to them that love God." All things, not merely some things. Loss as well as gain; health but also sickness; death as well as life work together for our good. We give thanks, do we not, for what we consider to be good? We have then the astounding truth that our calling is always to give thanks to God for all that which He does, whether it hurts our flesh or brings it pleasure. Look also at I Corinthians 15:57. There Paul states, "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Through Christ comes our salvation. And because He is Lord of all at God's right hand, all that which He sends us and which He causes to happen to us and around us is for our good. Let us therefore examine our souls and lives. Are we a thankful people? Do we really believe that all things work together for our good? Is this or that physical loss a gain for us? Do we always believe that all things work together for good to those that love God? Note what David wrote: The upright shall dwell in God's presence. Are you in God's presence when He sends things that hurt the flesh? Be sure that He works all things together for good for each child of God. **Read: Psalm 140.**

November 23

WALKING AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT In Ephesians 5:8 we read, "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." To understand this we should take note of what is written in I John 1:5. There we are told that "God is light, and in him is no darkness." This means that God is holy. And that we came into this world as darkness means that we came in as unholy, and thus as sinners. For we all fell with Adam. Now we are called to walk a holy, sinless life. We are called to do only that which pleases God, only that of which He approves. That we now are light in the Lord means that Christ has made us holy, that is, those who hate sin and love what pleases God. Through the cross of Christ we became righteous, that is, not guilty; but by His Spirit we become holy. We are therefore people who love God and who can, by the new life which God gives us, do what is pleasing in His sight. Now to walk as children of light we must walk as Christ walked. He never committed one sin. Never had He had a sinful thought or desire; and never did He break the smallest part of any of God's commandments. Since He is the Son of God, He is light; and surely He is a perfect example for us to follow. It is true that Satan tried to get Him to sin; but Jesus told him to get behind Him and quit his tempting. Satan comes every day trying to get us to be unholy; and we need to pay attention to this call to walk as children of light. Those who walk as Christ did are Christians. They reveal it in what they do. Stand therefore before the mirror of God's Word to see every step of your earthly life; and then you may know whether you are a Christian, one with the life of Christ in you. Are God and Christ manifest in your life? Do men see you as a child of light? If you walk in the light, you will live with Christ in glory. **Read: I John 1:1—2: 6.**

November 24

THAT BLESSED RECONCILIATION What does salvation mean to you? From what do you want to be saved? As a child of God you are going to say that you want to be saved from sin. The question however is, What do you mean by salvation from sin? It is so easy for our flesh to say that we want to be saved from all the aches and pains of life here below, from death and all that everlasting punishment in hell which comes upon all those who hate God. With all the unbelievers we want to be saved from God's wrath and the punishment which it brings. We are right, if we want all this with a view to something deeper, something which is the heart of our salvation. We must want to be saved from our act of sin, not simply from its punishment. Paul presents this so beautifully in Colossians 1:21, when he writes, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." That is what we need and need first. We need to be reconciled, that is, to be changed spiritually, if we are to have our life changed physically by relief from all the punishment of sin. It means that we want to be saved from our hatred toward God, and to be given a deep, abiding love toward Him. It means that we want to be able to do only that which pleases our God. Do you find that in your heart and mind? That must be there, or you are not one whose body and soul are saved from all the punishment of God's curse. When God told Satan that He would put enmity in our hearts against him, so that there would be love of God in us, He spoke of the heart of our salvation. It will come not only by Christ's heel being crushed, but by His Spirit implanting hatred against sin in our hearts. Look deeply then into your soul. Look for love of God in that soul. And if you find a desire to be saved from sin, you can be sure that God will save you from the punishment of sin. Reconciliation is a blessed pearl of our salvation that assures us of glorification. **Read: Colossians 1:1-22.**

November 25

SURE OF OUR CALLING AND ELECTION There is a reason why our God tells us in Scripture that His name is Jehovah. For a truth to which we must hold on to tightly is that He is unchangeable. Never may we say that He was or will be different from what He is now. He Himself says in Malachi 3:6, "I am the Lord, I change not." In fact, the Hebrew word translated here as "Lord" actually is "Jehovah," which means "I Am." Thus here He says, "I am the I Am." When then we read in II Peter 1:10 that we must "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fail," we take the position that Peter is speaking here of what we have and desire, not what God will do and desires. We can become doubtful about our salvation and calling as well as our election. We must make sure in our hearts that God called us and elected us eternally and unchangeably. We must give diligence for the confirmation of this in our minds. We must strive to obtain assurance, by a holy walk of life, that we are God's children who will receive everlasting blessedness. For in verses 4-9 he tells us that if we lack faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity, we are blind, cannot see afar off, and have forgotten that God purged us of our sins through His Son and His cross. We do not make our calling and election sure in God's mind. It is sure in Him Who is the I Am and changes not. Very urgent therefore is our calling here to strive to grow in faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. For as we do that we become sure in our minds that God called us to be His children, and did so because He eternally elected us to be such. The important question here is whether our walk of life gives us this assurance that God called us and elected us to be His covenant people. Take hold then of this word to give diligence to become stronger in your faith that you are a child of God. **Read: II Peter 1**

November 26

A CALL TO TRY THE SPIRITS Ever since Satan succeeded in getting Adam and Eve to fall into sin, through his lie about what God said, we have the calling to be sure that those who "preach the gospel" do indeed bring forth the "good news" of our salvation through Christ and His cross and Spirit. Satan did not after his victory quit bringing false doctrines to man. Instead he has increased his intensity, especially after Christ's birth, cross, resurrection, and ascension to God's right hand. He, the Deceiver, is today working very hard with his lie that we can become gods through sin. The form of his lie changes, but that makes it even more deceitful and dangerous. Therefore we should hold on to the truth, and to the calling which we find in I John 4:1. There we read, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." We should heed this warning, because there is such a strong effort put forth by Satan today to promote a wrong harmony and peace in the church world, by compromises rather than by clearer and richer understanding of that which God says in His Word. The tendency today is to get bigger in numbers, rather than richer in the truth.

The preaching seeks to please man's flesh rather than to glorify God. The aim is to make men happy about fleshly advantages, rather than bout glorification of our God and His Son. The question we must try to answer is whether the preaching glorifies God and sets Him forth as the holy God that He is. It is God Himself Who through John calls us to try the spirits that preach. If they are of God, they are going to call us to glorify Him, not change His Word for the glory of man's flesh. Be concerned then with God's glory. Defend the truth that all of our salvation is His gift to us, including the desire for that salvation. That is what He declares in His Word. Try, that is, test, the spirits that preach. **Read: I John 4:1-6**

November 27

THE REVELATION OF THE MAN OF SIN Sin is in a sense like man in that there was a moment in time when sin was conceived and born, and through the years has grown and will soon present in the world the Man of Sin. We have the warning in Scripture that this man of sin is coming. In II Thessalonians 2:3 Paul wrote, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." What Paul says here is that sin will reach a climax before Christ returns to bring His church to glory. Of this return he spoke in the preceding verses. He calls attention to the Thessalonians, that they were taught the false doctrine that Christ was coming in their lifetime. How correct Paul was, for now, almost 2,000 years later, Christ still has not returned. The Thessalonians had been taught that which was not the truth. This was not a false doctrine of the world, but one taught in the churches. It was preached by men whom one would be inclined to believe, because they did preach some undeniable truths. This demonstrates why what we considered yesterday is so important. We must try the spirits whether they are of God. We may be sure that the richer the truth is in a church, the more feverishly Satan works to get his false doctrines there. Satan is sly, crafty, and extremely dangerous. Today, as we rush toward the days of the Anti-Christ, we should be very careful, and alert to the fact that Satan is trying to get us to eat, with our souls, forbidden fruit, doctrines that God commands us not to eat. It is revealing that God moved John to call him, who will be Satan's most powerful and crafty tool, the Antichrist. "Anti" means "against." There are many today who are in the church but against Christ as tools of Satan. It is well for us to be warned, as we approach the day of that Antichrist's coming. Satan deceived Adam and Eve; and he is trying to deceive us today. **READ: II THESSALONIANS 2.**

November 28

GOD'S GIFT OF SALVATION Never, no never, should we accept and believe that which denies God His glory, and makes Christ's salvation dependent upon what man does. Let us avoid all teachings which are a modern form of Satan's lie to Adam and Eve, that man can by his works become a god. Our works do not determine whether we are going to obtain salvation. Our salvation, as God's work, determines whether we are those whom Christ saves. We need to be saved from the lack of interest in salvation. God must and does give to His elect even the desire for salvation. If we desire salvation we have the evidence that God has already begun that work in us, and will finish it when Christ returns. A very important truth which God gave us through Paul is found in Philippians 2: 13. There we read, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Note that all that God works in us is not due to what we gave Him. HE works in us to will as well as to do. We believe and want salvation; but it is God Who makes us want that salvation. He gives us all of our faith. Notice carefully that Paul says that God works in us, and that we must work out that salvation. God commands us to believe, but He also gives us the desire and power to do so. Note that God through Paul here tells us that He works in us to will as well as to do of His good pleasure. Before we can will and believe, God has already caused us to be born again. He does not wait to see whether spiritually dead people will believe and "accept" salvation. Be careful then and take a strong hold on the truth that even our desire for salvation is God's gift to us. WE cannot give God anything that He has not already given us. In Him we live and move and have our being, physically but also spiritually. **Read: Philippians 2:1-12.**

November 29

THE CHURCH'S CERTAIN SAFETY In the Old Testament the church is presented as having a host of enemies. For a long time all the members of the church of God lived in a small section of this earth, namely, the land of Canaan. Today the church is scattered over all the earth in every nation, tongue, and tribe. It pleases our God to gather the members of the body of Christ, His church, from far and wide, from all types of people. Whereas in the old dispensation the church was limited mostly to the Jewish race, now it is gathered from every color, race, and nationality. Even as our bodies have different kinds of members, and need different kinds of members, so the church has different kinds of people from a physical point of view. Even though the church has only a handful of people, compared with the millions upon millions of those outside that church, we have a very comforting truth concerning us in Deuteronomy 33:28. There we find Moses stating, as God's mouthpiece, "Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon the land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew." We do well to take note of the fact that the church shall dwell in safety alone, and that its members shall have all that which we need. That corn, wine, and dew must be taken figuratively. These literally will not be in the new Jerusalem that is coming when Christ returns. What we have here is that word of comfort which God gives His church. She is safe. We do correctly sing, "Safe in the arms of Jesus." The church has that calling which we considered yesterday. She has a host of enemies, a number greater than we can count. But all is well. And as we approach the days of the Antichrist, as pictured in Revelation 13, we need not fear. The almighty God is our protector and savior. God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in time of need, and trouble (Psalm 46). **Read: Deuteronomy 33:26-29.**

November 30

SAFE IN GOD'S ALMIGHTY ARMS What a comforting truth! What an evidence that all is well with God's church! We are rushing toward the day when the Antichrist, as pictured in Revelation 13, will rule the world and persecute God's church. But take hold of that truth which we find in Deuteronomy 33:27, which makes possible what we read of in the next verse. There, as moved by God, Moses declares, "The eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them." Our God, the only true God, is eternal. He has everlasting arms that can and will destroy our enemies completely. Yea, He will cause all of His own children to reach everlasting heavenly blessedness. That does not mean that we are not going to suffer and die physically, and that many of us will not be killed by Satan's army. Revelation 13 shows us that this will happen to many believers. But Satan, and all his host together, cannot take one bit of strength out of God's arms. These arms will have everlasting power of infinite might that will cause to happen everything that He promises us. He is the eternal God, and He is our refuge eternally. His almighty arms are under us and will carry us away from Satan and all his hatred, and into His house of many mansions through Christ. We will all reach all the glory that He promised us in Christ. Do not for one split second question His power or faithfulness. Remember that Jesus cross made it all look hopeless; but it served the preparation of our way to heavenly glory in God's everlasting power and grace. He was our refuge there; and He is our refuge every moment of time with His arms underneath us to carry us to glory. In His wisdom and power He used Satan so that Christ was crucified to earn a place for us in heavenly glory. Put all your trust in Him; and be sure that His arms are carrying you to victory, and using Satan and his servants to serve us, not hurt us. **Read: Psalm 48.**

Dealing with Liberalism in Reformed Theology
continued from page 10

Liberalism is the enemy of Reformed theology because it is sharply opposed to the very basis upon which Reformed theology stands. That basis is the revelation of God in Christ to His people in the Holy Scriptures. Liberalism is the enemy also because it denies the truth about God and about man. And, since it is the enemy, it must not only be dealt with, but also completely driven out of Reformed theology with the sharpest anathemas.

The question I intend to answer is how to deal with Liberalism. My thesis is that Liberalism is best dealt with by the Reformed theologian who always keeps in mind two things. First, he must always remember Who God is. Second, he must always remember who he is, and what the human race is.

The true knowledge of God and the true knowledge of man (based on Scripture, the only source of truth) will shut liberalism out and keep it out. The Reformed theologian knows that God is, and that He stands infinitely exalted above all that is created. God is the independent one. He has no need of the creation, not even to add to His glory, His glory which is infinite in Himself. But, God has also created, placing Himself in a certain relationship to that creation. Because He is king over creation, He has all authority over it. And everything that happens in the creation serves His purpose.

The true knowledge of man will also shut and keep out Liberalism. Man is but a creature, who is always and everywhere dependent upon his Creator for all that he is and has. This should be enough to keep man humble before God. But there is more ground for humility. Man is not only a creature, but also a sinful creature. And his sinfulness is not a mild restraint upon his innate progress. The sinfulness of man is his death, so that he can do nothing, absolutely nothing, to please God. More, the sinfulness of man is such that he neither can nor will know anything true. Sinful man knows nothing at all.

This is where Scripture comes in. The Reformed theologian knows that he can know nothing except God, Who alone knows the truth, reveal that truth. And God does reveal the truth, both about Himself and about mankind, in Scripture. Scripture, since it is the Word of God, must be received as inspired in its very words. Such a view of Scripture is essential to Reformed theology, and certainly safeguards against Liberalism. If Scripture is only the record of man's earlier religious thought and experience, then we ought to give ourselves up, and change our theology from Reformed to Liberal. For then, God would not have spoken, and would have revealed no truth. Then we would, of all men, be most miserable.

Knowing these two things, Who God is and who man is, will keep Reformed theology safe from liberalism. But it must also be understood that this knowledge is not simply of an intellectual nature. Reformed theology is safe only when the theologian loves the true knowledge of God and himself. The truth must not only be confessed but also embraced whole-heartedly. The one who works with Reformed theology must, therefore, be a child of God. He must be born again by the Spirit of God before the Spirit can lead him into the true knowledge of God and himself.

To summarize, then, in order to deal with Liberalism in Reformed theology, the theologian must know Who God is and who he is. He must also love that truth. This means that God must work by His Holy Spirit in His church, so that true, Biblical, Reformed theology is preserved from the destructive force of Liberalism. Let the church then pray for the Spirit's work in her pastors and teachers, that Reformed theology may be kept safe from Liberalism. ❖

liberalism is a doctrinal system which, based on human experience rather than divine revelation, presents God as the product of man's thought and opinion, and salvation as inherent human progress.

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1996 BRF Family Holiday Conference Report

By Mike Feenstra

As we approached Gatwick Airport in London, England, I was filled with curiosity as to what this land full of rich history would be like. I looked out the window of the plane and saw beautiful rolling hills covered with fields defined by hedges of green that made the land appear as a hodgepodge of geometric shapes. Out in the distance I saw a narrow road winding through the countryside, making its way past the farmhouses that dotted the landscape. In a town below, I noticed that the roads didn't intersect by simply crossing other roads, but circular intersections were used. To add to the differences, I saw that the cars were driving on the wrong side of the road!

Before my curiosity was totally satisfied, our plane rumbled onto the runway and finally reached the gate. After departing the aircraft I passed through numerous checkpoints until I finally spotted my friends who generously took the time to pick me up. Proceeding on through still more red tape, we finally made our way out of the airport. On our way to the conference grounds I noticed that those same green hedges I enjoyed viewing from the air greatly obstructed my view of the land. I found that cruising around a circular intersection was interesting and an efficient way of traffic control, but because of the long plane ride, I discovered that the circular intersections and the winding roads gave me motion sickness. Despite this problem, we at last made it to Ashburnham Place, the site of the 1996 British Reformed Fellowship (BRF) Family Holiday Conference.

The conference ran from Saturday, July 27 until Saturday, August 3. The purpose of the conference was described by Tony Horne, the secretary of the BRF, in this excerpt from a letter to the conference attendees:

> The week is a FAMILY occasion, so that parents can spend time in relaxation and enjoyment with their children in the family circle; it is also a HOLIDAY, so that we can experience physical, mental and spiritual refreshment; and it is especially a CONFERENCE, so that we can listen to what God has to teach us, feed upon His Word and seek to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As was stated in the letter, the meetings for the week were especially a conference where we could grow spiritually. As to this purpose, we were not disappointed in the least. The fellowship with God's people from a different land was very refreshing, and the conference speeches were full of instruction on a very pertinent doctrine, especially for the BRF. The theme of the conference was "The Doctrine of the Church." This theme was fitting in light of the present organization of the Covenant PRC of Northern Ireland. It was also relevant because it gave added encouragement to the goal of the BRF: to establish Reformed churches in the British Isles. If there is one thing that we Americans learned in England, it was definitely that we should thank God for the blessings He has given us. In the British Isles there are many saints of God who live in isolation, far away from where the true Word is preached. This conference served as a spiritual oasis for these "scattered sheep of the house of Israel."

The conference began on Saturday evening with the first of many pleasurable dining experiences made possible by the diligent work of the Ashburnham staff. Each meal was served in the Oak Room, a large beautiful dining room with tall windows that afforded a colorful view of the flower garden to the west. The room was all oak from the hidden window shutters to the wide doors that

were so thick you would be in deep trouble if you caught your finger between the door and the doorjamb!

After dinner followed a welcome to the conference and an introduction to Ashburnham Place. Next, we all gathered to hear David Blunt, a pastor in the Free Church of Scotland, give the ministry of the Word. He spoke from Song of Solomon 6:10 where the church is described as a fair moon because she reflects the light of Christ, a fitting text to begin the treatment of the doctrine of the church and to prepare us for the Lord's Day.

Following the service we all gathered for devotions, a practice which we followed at the beginning and ending of each day. In devotions one of the men led us in our meditation upon God's Word and prayer. The singing of the Psalms then followed out of the Scottish Metrical. Singing was a different experience for us Americans because it was without accompaniment. Each time a presenter would sing a Psalm to a particular tune and after a few notes all the people would gather in. It was different at first, but we gradually got used to it after much practice at devotions, speeches, and worship services.

> If there is one thing that we Americans learned in England, it was definitely that we should thank God for the blessings He has given us.

Early Sunday morning some of our number rose to attend a prayer service before breakfast and morning devotions. After these activities, we went to morning worship where we heard Prof. Hanko preach from Romans 8:33-34 about our justification before God through Jesus Christ. One of the men attending the conference was so delighted with the sermon that there were tears in his eyes. He couldn't believe that we in the PRC have similar preaching twice each Lord's Day!

On the Sabbath afternoon we young people and other interested individuals were led by Prof. Hanko in a discussion of the doctrine of the catholicity of the church, a truth that was definitely manifested at the conference. This was made clear to me when I found out that my roommates were from Northern Ireland. Although we spoke the same language, our dialects made conversing a bit difficult at first. Nevertheless, after a week with them I found that although we are people of God from different walks of life, we are united in our confession of the truth.

For the evening service Prof. Engelsma preached on Matthew 23:37, a frequently used proof text by the opponents of irresistible grace. He pointed out that Christ will gather every one of His children and that Christ's gracious work can not be frustrated by any creature.

Rising on Monday morning, we began the normal routine of the conference. Every day of the week we ate breakfast at 8:30 am, lunch at 1 pm, and dinner at 6:30 pm. On Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday we heard conference speeches at 10 am and 7:45 pm. After each speech there always was an interesting question period. Between the speeches on these days there was plenty of free time to see the sites of the surrounding cities.

On Monday Prof. Engelsma spoke to us from Ephesians 1 on the topic: "The Church: Elected in Christ." In the course of the speech he brought out the truth that the heart of the church is her election in Jesus Christ. Her origin is in God's work of election before the foundation of the world. That evening we again gathered together to hear an interesting speech by Prof. Hanko based on the vision in Zechariah 4 where the Lord of Hosts declares to Zechariah that He will gather His church not by might, nor by power, but by His Spirit. That is, God will gather and save His church not by the extravagant inventions of modern man but by His Spirit only in the preaching of the Word in the instituted church.

But, what are the characteristics of the church? This is the question that was answered by Prof. Engelsma in his Wednesday morning speech titled "The Church: Its Nature." Taking his text from Ephesians 2, he stated that when considering the "attributes" of the church we should rather think of the "glories" of the church because she is the wonderwork of God. He proceeded to explain that these glories included her spirituality, unity, holiness, universality, and apostolicity. What awesome glories the church has! We should be thankful to God for the church of which we are a living member and forever shall remain!

This church of which we are a part also manifests itself on this earth as the church institute. Prof. Hanko took up this subject in his speech on Wednesday evening.

He spoke from I Timothy 3:15 and brought out that the church, although visible on this earth, is heavenly. Therefore, she is like no other organization on this earth. In the instituted church, Christ is present as Head in the offices of the church, as the one Officebearer serving as Prophet, Priest, and King. But this is only the case in the true church on earth, the instituted church that upholds the truth of the gospel as written in the Holy Scriptures. It is this church that we as Christians are bound to attend.

The question that arises from this demand is: "Where do we find such a church?" Prof. Hanko answered this question with his speech on Thursday morning entitled "The Church: Its Marks." In this speech based on Revelation 3 he laid out the truth that the true church can be found by the marks of the pure preaching of the gospel, the proper administration of the sacraments, and the right exercise of Christian discipline. After the speech, some difficult questions ensued from the audience, serious questions from people in the BRF who are isolated from the true Word preached. Some asked whether they should stay in an apostate church, and if so, how long? Others lamented the fact that the true church was geographically so far away! To these questions Prof. Hanko answered that the members of the BRF should be patient with God for He always gathers His church. Visibly moved by these questions, he reminded us in the PRC to be thankful for what we have!

That evening we gathered to hear the last speech by Prof. Engelsma on the sacraments of the church. Using Ephesians 4 as his passage, he spoke about the place of the sacraments as a means of grace only when administered with the preaching. He also gave a defense of infant baptism by stating that God usually saves His people in the line of continued generations. His covenant is the same to all generations, therefore even as He commanded the children of believers to be circumcised in the Old Testament we must also do the same in the New by baptizing our infant children.

This speech as well as the others generated some spirited discussion, a common occurrence throughout the whole week. It was a welcome thing to able to talk about spiritual things with saints of our own churches as well as saints from the British Isles. Many discussions lasting until early morning took place at the Carpenter's Lodge on the north side of the conference grounds, making it very difficult to rise up the next day for breakfast!

Our other free time, was spent at places such as Battle, the town where the battle of Hastings was fought, and Pevensey Castle, a Norman castle where you can find ancient Roman walls dating to about 300 AD. On Tuesday and Friday the BRF planned tours of the Sussex countryside and London respectively. London was especially exciting for me. I have always wanted to see the great Westminster Abbey, the Tower of London, and the Houses of Parliament. Although I didn't see them in great detail, I enjoyed the experience immensely as I did the entire conference.

The conference was especially a time when all of us could grow in the truth of God's Word about the doctrine of His church which He saves by the blood of His Son Jesus Christ.

This satisfaction with the conference I believe was shared by all. The work of the planning committee and the speakers was excellent and should be commended. The conference was especially a time when all of us could grow in the truth of God's Word about the doctrine of His church which He saves by the blood of His Son Jesus Christ. The conference was also very relaxing. Being able to see the sites of London, and the beautiful countryside of Sussex was well worth the cost. But the fellowship with the saints of God from the British Isles made the trip very special. I urge you to consider going to the next conference in Northern Ireland at Castlewellan Castle Christian Conference Center. The saints from the British Isles will be glad to see you. ❖

Mike is a member of Faith Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan.

Charlemagne: Conqueror and Christian

by Erin Kortering

Charlemagne, meaning Charles the Great, was born to Pepin the Short in 742. His grandfather and father conquered much of modern day France and Germany and like his ancestors, Charlemagne was a great warrior. To his inherited domain of France and Germany, Charlemagne added Switzerland, Belgium, and the Netherlands, along with parts of Austria and Spain. Due to his excellent organizational skills, where every aspect of the battle would be planned his large army moved over enormous expanses of land quickly and efficiently. For instance, Charlemagne and his officers carefully determined the amount of food supplies as well as the wagon in which the supplies were to be carried was carefully chosen. His goal in these campaigns was to Christianize the surrounding countries. For example, in a day when it was common for a conquering king to kill the rulers of the defeated land, Charlemagne often spared these men's lives.

In 768, Charlemagne inherited the crown of the Frankish Empire along with his brother Carlomen. Later, when his brother died in 771, he became the sole ruler. On Christmas Day of 800, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne the first Holy Roman Emperor, while Charlemagne knelt in prayer. Pope Leo III did this for the protection of both Rome and the himself from accusations of weakness and mediocrity. He deemed Charlemagne the best protector.

Poverty and oppression of the common folk by the nobles surrounded Charlemagne's rule. Charlemagne tried to change this by decreeing laws to protect the peasant and farmer. He appointed special men called *missi dominici* to ride about his realm inspecting the local governments, administrating justice, if need be, and re-awakening the locals to their moral and religious responsibilities. He tried to better the lives of his people by encouraging new methods of farming, by promoting commerce with other villages and provinces, and by establishing a money standard.

Charlemagne possessed a ready sense of humor, simple tastes, and a love for outdoor activities such as hunting and swimming. He was very much a family man. He enjoyed having his many children with him, and it was common to see he and his children riding about the countryside.

In a day when little education existed outside of the clergy, Charlemagne set up schools that could be attended by both peasants and nobles. He brought in scholars from England and Ireland to teach at these schools. His interest in an educational system may have stemmed from his own interest in knowledge. He hired a monk from England to be his own private tutor and he mastered both Latin and Greek, along with music and astronomy. At meals, learned books were read to him, instead of the court jester performing. His favorite book was Augustine's *City of God.*

Besides being a great warrior and a firm believer in education, Charlemagne devoted himself to God. He did much to expand the church by urging the clergy and nobles to reform. His devotion to the church motivated him throughout his entire life. ❖

Erin is a member of Georgetown Protestant Reformed Church in Bauer, Michigan.

"LITTLE LIGHTS"

. . . let it shine!

by Connie Meyer

The Journey

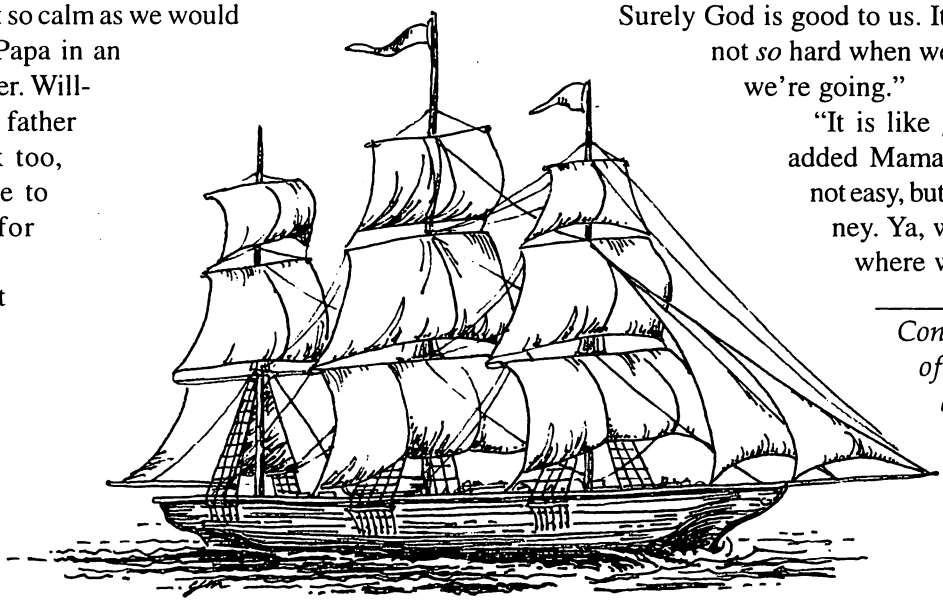
William tightly gripped his ticket as he boarded the ship. Nervously he looked at it one more time before he handed it to a sailor waiting on board. It read, "*...van Nederland to America, April 27, 1838.*" Then he joined his parents and two younger sisters who were waiting near the ship's railing. Now together, silently and thoughtfully, they watched the Dutch port disappear as they began their voyage. It was their last view of their homeland.

"Come, let us find our compartments," Papa said finally.

"Nay, I am not well," countered Mama. William observed his mother then and was surprised to see her so pale. But then, he thought he was not feeling so well himself. His sisters didn't look any better.

"Ya, de sea is not so calm as we would like it today," said Papa in an understanding manner. William wondered if his father was getting seasick too, but he was still able to find some crates for them to rest upon.

William thought about how hard it had been to leave their grandpa behind. There had been many other tearful good-byes as well. He even had to leave his best friend, Peter, behind. He sighed and looked around. The ship had been built for cargo, not comfort. This would not be an easy journey, and as he stomach became even more unsettled he mumbled to himself, "—not easy at all."



Papa glanced over at him then and nodded. "Ya, William," he said, "it is not easy, but we go to a land where we may worship God freely—and in truth. It's a good land too, a land where crops and cattle flourish. Surely God is good to us. It is hard to go, but not *so* hard when we remember where we're going."

"It is like going to heaven," added Mama then. "de way is not easy, but it is worth the journey. Ya, we must remember where we are going." ❖

Connie is the mother of 5 children and attends Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Walker, Michigan.

Unscramble these words from II Corinthians 4, verses 17 and 18:

"For our light FOILFACTIN _____, which is but for a TEMMON _____,
for us a far more TOWERHK _____ and DIGEXENCE _____ REELANT _____
of GEWHIT _____ ROYGL _____; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the
things which are not seen: ...the things which are ... LEARNTE _____."

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Church News

BAPTISMS *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."* *Mark 16:16*

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Mr. & Mrs. Henry Ferguson presented their son, Sean Joel, for baptism.

GRANDVILLE, MI

Mackenzie Laine, daughter of Bill & Diane Huber, was presented for baptism.

HOPE, MI

Mr. & Mrs. Sam Copple presented their son, Mitchel James, for baptism.

HUDSONVILLE, MI

Jared David, son of Mr. & Mrs. David Kraker, was presented for baptism.

HULL, IA

Baptism was administered to Christy Lynn, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Korver, and to Zachary James, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Andinga.

LOVELAND, CO

Mr. & Mrs. Gordon Bonzelaar presented their daughter, Ashtyn Sue, for baptism.

LYNDEN, WA

The sacrament of baptism was administered to Dallas Wayne, son of Mr. & Mrs. Matt Moore, and to

David John, son of Mr. & Mrs. John Tolsma.

SOUTH HOLLAND, IL

Tyler Jeffrey, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Zylstra, was presented for baptism.

Mr. & Mrs. Matt Bennett presented their daughter, Kylie Erin, for baptism.

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH *"...and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* *Romans 10:10*

DOON, IA

Bradley DeBoer & Daniel Wiersma made public their confession in the Lord Jesus Christ.

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Public confession of faith was made by Connie DeVries, Russell Tolsma, and Tracy Tolsma.

LOVELAND, CO

Public confession of faith was made by Tiffany Griess.

PELLA, IA

Public confession in the Lord Jesus Christ was made by Kelli DeZwarte.

SOUTH HOLLAND, IL

Kristen Bruinsma has made her confession in the Lord Jesus public before the congregation.

MARRIAGES *"...and they twain shall be one flesh."* *Matthew 19:5*

BETHEL, IL

United in holy matrimony were Matthew Medema & Stephanie Moore and Mike Machlet & Stacie Moore.

FIRST, MI

Brian VanderKolk and Shelly Slopsema were united in holy matrimony.

GEORGETOWN, MI

United in marriage were Dave Steenwyk and Julie Jabaay.

LYNDEN, WA

Mr. & Mrs. Ron Kaptein were united in holy matrimony.

SOUTH HOLLAND, IL

Tim Van Baren and Pam Bruinius were united in marriage.

A hearty THANK YOU to those who faithfully send in their bulletins! We would like to see news from ***all*** *the churches. Please send your bulletins to:*

Melinda DeMeester
1171 Sunset Hills NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49544