

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

HISTORY & HERITAGE

By Pastor Brian De Jong

Seventy five years ago our world was undergoing tremendous upheaval. Europe was in turmoil, as Adolf Hitler had come to power in Germany and fascism was on the march. The Soviet Union was convulsed by the chaos of communism. And in the U.S., the Great Depression left many out of work. FDR was re-elected to a second term, but much of the country was struggling to simply survive.

Seventy five years ago marked the climax of what is termed “The Presbyterian Conflict.” The roots of that theological crisis go back into the late 1800s and the spread of theological liberalism. Also known as “Modernism,” this was a view that rejected the authority of Scripture, the deity, the miracles, the resurrection and much of the teaching of Jesus Christ.

One brave voice arose to challenge the unbelief that was ravaging Presbyterianism. That voice was Dr. J. Gresham Machen. Considered one of the foremost Biblical scholars of his day, Dr. Machen took his stand against the liberals and modernists and their false theology.

Dr. Machen viewed Modernism as a subtle counterfeit of true Christianity. In the introduction to his book Christianity and Liberalism, he says, “*In the sphere of religion, in particular, the present time is a time of conflict; the great redemptive religion which has always been known as Christianity is battling against a totally*

diverse type of religious belief, which is only the more destructive of the Christian faith because it makes use of traditional Christian terminology. This modern non-redemptive religion is called “modernism” or “liberalism.”



Christianity is ‘the great redemptive religion’ that provides salvation for sin-sick souls. Modernism was a works-based rejection of redemption – a do-it-yourself religion that denied the need for a divine Savior.

For his courageous stance, Dr. Machen was maligned, abused, and condemned by the Presbyterian Church USA – a denomination he had grown up in, and had served faithfully. Because they would not allow him to defend himself, Dr. Machen left their midst and helped to form a new denomination – what would become the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

This new church was to be reformed in doctrine, evangelistic in practice, and Presbyterian in government. It was designed to recapture the Biblical faith that had been eclipsed in the old church – to finally be a truly Presbyterian denomination.

Many years have now passed, and Dr. Machen and our founding fathers are mostly gone to glory. Yet our history and our heritage remain. On June 8th, the seventy-eighth General Assembly will convene at Sandy Cove in Maryland. In addition to the normal business...

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Mnemonics...

- *Sunday Picnic,
June 12th*
- *Session Meeting,
June 14th*

Victory

by J. C. Ryle

...The third and last thing which I shall ask you to notice in this text is, the secret of the true Christian's victory over the world. ... "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our FAITH. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that BELIEVETH that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Simplicity is a distinguishing characteristic of many of God's handiworks. "How beautifully simple!" has often been the philosopher's cry, on finding out some great secret of nature. Simplicity is the striking feature of the principle by which the man "born of God" overcomes the world. Perhaps he hardly understands it himself. But he is what he is, and does what he does, acts as he acts, behaves as he behaves, for one simple reason, he BELIEVES. He realizes the existence of unseen objects, compared to which the frowns or smiles, the favour or blame of the world, are trifles light as air. God, and heaven, and judgment, and eternity, are not "words and names" with him, but vast and substantial realities; and the faith of them makes everything else look shadowy and unreal. But, towering far above all other objects, he sees by faith an unseen Saviour, who loved him, gave Himself for him, paid his debt to God with His own precious blood, went to the grave for him, rose again, and appears in heaven for him as his Advocate with the Father. SEEING HIM, he feels constrained to love Him first and foremost, to set his chief affection on things above, not on things on the earth, and to live not for himself, but for Him who died for him. SEEING HIM, he fears not to face the world's displeasure, and fights on with a firm confidence that he will be "more than conqueror." In short, it is the expulsive power of a new principle, a living faith in an unseen God and an unseen Jesus, that minimizes the difficulties of a true Christian, drives away the fear of man, and overcomes the world.

This is the principle that made the Apostles what they were after the day of Pentecost. When Peter and John stood before the Council, and spoke in such fashion that all men marvelled at their boldness, their vivid faith saw One higher than Annas and Caiaphas and their companions, who would never forsake them.

When Saul, converted and renewed, gave up all his brilliant prospects among his own nation, to become a preacher of the gospel he had once despised, he saw far away, by faith, One that was invisible, who could give him a hundredfold more in this present life, and in the world to come life everlasting. These all overcame by FAITH.

This is the principle which made the primitive Christians hold fast their religion even to death, unshaken by the fiercest persecution of heathen emperors. They were often unlearned and ignorant men, and saw many things through a glass darkly. But their so-called "obstinacy" astonished even philosophers like Pliny.

For centuries there were never wanting men like Polycarp and Ignatius, who were ready to die rather than to deny Christ. Fines, and prisons, and torture, and fire, and sword failed to crush the spirit of the noble army of martyrs. The whole power of imperial Rome, with her legions, proved unable to stamp out the religion which began with a few fishermen and publicans in Palestine. They overcame by FAITH.

This is the principle that made our own Reformers in the sixteenth century endure hardships even unto death, rather than withdraw their protest against the Church of Rome. Many of them, no doubt, ... might have enjoyed rich preferments and died quietly in their beds, if they would only have recanted. But they chose rather to suffer affliction, and strong in faith, died at the stake. This was the principle that made the rank and file of our English martyrs in the same age--labourers, artisans, and apprentices--yield their bodies to be burned. Poor and uneducated as they were, they were rich in faith; and if they could not speak for Christ, they could die for Him. These all overcame by BELIEVING.

...Does any one who reads this paper desire to live the life of a true Christian, and overcome the world? Let him begin by seeking to have the principle of victory within. Without this, all outward show of spirituality is utterly worthless. There is many a worldly heart under a monk's cowl. Faith,

Ryle Concluded...

inward faith, is the one thing needful. Let him begin by praying for FAITH. It is the gift of God, and a gift which those who ask shall never ask in vain. The fountain of faith is not yet dry. The mine is not exhausted. He who is called the "Author of faith" is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and waits to be entreated (Heb. 12:2). Without faith you will never war a good warfare, never set down your foot firmly, never make progress on the ice of this slippery world. You must believe if you would do. If men do nothing in religion, and sit still like uninterested spectators of a show, it is simply because they do not believe. Faith is the first step towards heaven.

Would any one who reads this paper fight the Christian battle with constantly increasing success and prosperity? Then let him pray daily for a continual growth of faith. Let him abide in Christ, get closer to Christ, tighten his hold on Christ every day that he lives. Let him never forget the prayer of the disciples, "Lord, increase our faith." Let him watch jealously over his faith, and never let its fire burn low. According to the degree of his faith will be the measure of his peace, his strength, and his victory over the world.

Taken from Upper Room: Being a Few Truths for the Times by J. C. Ryle, Chapter 8, Victory.

Ask the Pastor

by Pastor Brian De Jong

Recently I was asked, **“What do the letters on the front of our communion table mean?”**

If you look carefully, you will see five letters. The first is a capital A, and is the equivalent of the Greek letter Alpha. Then there is an Ihs. Finally there is something that looks like a mis-shapen capital Q. That is the Greek letter omega, which looks like this: Ω.

So what do these letters mean? What is the message on our communion table? The first and final letters are probably the best known. Alpha is the first letter in the Greek alphabet and the omega is the last letter in that alphabet. Thus “alpha and omega” means “first and last.”

This is a name God takes for Himself in Revelation 1:8, where He says, *“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”* The Old Testament background for this name is found in Isaiah 41:4b where He says, *‘I, the LORD, am the first, and with the last. I am He.’* It also appears in Isaiah 44:6, which reads, *“Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: ‘I am the first*

and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.

This name, “First and Last” is also taken by Jesus in Revelation 1:17, when he speaks to John: *When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last.*



The middle letters – IHS – are more mysterious. They are an ancient contraction of the Greek letters of Jesus’ name. It is called a Christogram. In Greek the name of Jesus is ΙΗΣΟΥΣ. The shortened form takes the first two letters and the final letter. Thus the middle letters are simply a symbol denoting Jesus’ name, and the whole thing could be translated as “Jesus

Christ the First and Last” or “Jesus is Alpha and Omega.”

Let me deal with one more for good measure – have you ever seen the letters INRI? Those are abbreviations for the phrase, “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.” This was the inscription that Pilate hung over Jesus head as he suffered on the cross.

June Birthdays



Save your Stamps!

REMINDER: Please continue to save all US and foreign stamps. Drop them into the special containers on the Mission Table in the Fellowship Hall. The stamps go to the OPC Denomination and turned into cash.

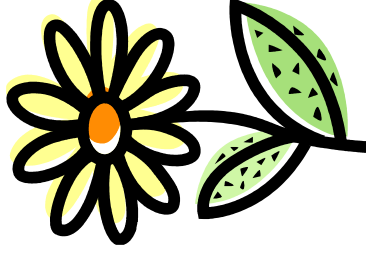




Grace OPC

June 2011

Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	2	3	4
5	6 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	7	8 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	9	10	11
12 Missions Sunday Sunday Picnic	13 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m. Theology Class, 1:30 p.m.	14 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	15 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	16	17	18
19	20 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	21	22 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	23	24	25
26 Lord's Supper, (p.m.)	27 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.	28	29 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	30		

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Thank You

Thank you for the loving
kindness you've shown us!

...from the Vander Waal Family



Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School will be held July 25th-29th from 9:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m. Children from Pre-K to 6th grade are welcome to attend. Be sure to invite your friends and neighbors as we head out to the Old West in Answers in Genesis's *Gold Rush: Discovering the Rock of Ages*. Contact Deborah Arndt for more information.



Encountering Jesus Christ and His Word

It does very little good to race through our reading, if we have to chase down our thoughts afterwards. The more we revere each thought, the better it will cohere.

Thinking slow and deliberate can liberate. Thinking show is not a foe because it gives us time for our thoughts to grow and gives a chance for each nuance to enhance the meaning.

Glen Johnson

Only One Today

<p>I'll never have this day again, and when today is through</p> <p>I may not have another chance for things I'd like to do...</p> <p>The thankfulness that I could show, the kindness someone needs,</p>	<p>The thoughtfulness I could express through little loving deeds</p> <p>The caring words that someone may need to hear me say....</p> <p>LORD, help me to remember there's only one today.</p>
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submitted by Rich Nagle

De Masters in Mount Vernon IN

From the De Masters

The first Sunday here is almost over. Thank you for your prayers for our adjustment and the working of God in and through us, and especially the outreach of this body of Christ to others. It has been a wonderful weekend, getting to know most of the people here and enjoying long periods of conversation. The congregation reminds us of the church in Hammond, with many children and young couples. A couple of the families lived in the house we are living in for short periods of time so the kids were telling about it: rabbits, mulberry bushes, grapes, chickens, swing set and garden. We are more settled, getting a refrigerator from the church today instead of the basement one. When we get a dining room table we can have guests for meals and fellowship.

Today prayer meeting was at 9:30; at 10, Ivan preached on I Timothy; lunch and catechism followed; and the afternoon activity was watching and discussing "How Then Shall We Live?" by Francis Schaeffer. One of the elders led the discussion. It was good to see "The Reformation" from that series again. On Wednesday will be a congregational meeting. Subsequent Wednesdays will be used to learn "Evangelism Explosion." The congregation is in the fourth week of this study and

Ivan will help an elder lead this. Next Tuesday will be the first session meeting Ivan will attend.

The house here reminds me of our farmhouse/manse in Westchester IL. It is across the driveway from the church, a former Methodist Church. The congregation bought it about 2 years ago. From our kitchen window we can see the cemetery beyond the grape vines. Outside the back door are fields with large vehicles plowing and planting. The front door faces the church, which is lighted at night, looking like a calendar picture from history. There are several houses nearby which we hope to visit. The nearest town is Mt. Vernon, 6 miles west. Evansville is about 15 miles east. Lots of country and where the house is, lots of wind!

A violin recital tomorrow, other summer plans in the works. More will follow. Thanks again for your prayers!

Hint: Please communicate!! We love to hear from people all over.

Memorial Day

submitted by Rich Nagle

To all that have sacrificed their lives for the freedom and liberties all enjoy in this great country we say THANK YOU.

To all who are presently offering their service at home and abroad so that we continue to enjoy freedom and liberty we say THANK YOU.

We pray for God's blessing upon you. May His peace and safety be with you and your family.

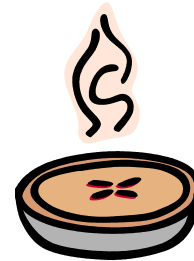
This Memorial Day we celebrate you.

Sour Cream Raisin Pie

- ★ 1 unbaked pie shell
- ★ 3 eggs
- ★ 1 1/3 cup sour cream
- ★ 1 cup sugar + 1 1/2 Tbsp. flour—stir together
- ★ 1 tsp. vanilla
- ★ 1/4 tsp. salt
- ★ 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- ★ 1 1/4 cup raisins

Beat all ingredients except raisins— until well blended. Stir in raisins. Pour into shell and bake 40-45 minutes at 375°. Cool. Top with Cool Whip.

Kate Nagle



“The eyes
of all look
to You,
And You give
them their food
in due time.
You open Your
hand
And satisfy
the desire of
every living
thing.”

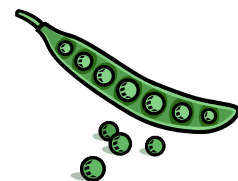
Vegetable Salad

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| ★ 2 cans white corn (Shoe Peg), drained | ★ 1 can water chestnuts, sliced |
| ★ 1 can French Style green beans, drained | ★ 1/4 cup salad oil |
| ★ 1 can baby peas, drained | ★ 3/4 cup sugar (or a little more) |
| ★ 1/2 cup chopped celery | ★ 3/4 cup cider vinegar |
| ★ 1/2 cup chopped onion | ★ 2 Tbsp. water |
| ★ 1 large green pepper (cut in slivers) | ★ salt & pepper to taste |

Let stand for 24 hours before serving. Lasts as long as there is some left!

Liz DeTroye

(This is from last month’s Sunday Night Fellowship Dinner)





Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

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Spurgeon Corner

Fight On!

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.”

(Galatians 5:17)

In every believer’s heart there is a constant struggle between the old nature and the new. The old nature is very active, and loses no opportunity of plying all the weapons of its deadly armoury against newborn grace; while on the other hand, the new nature is ever on the watch to resist and destroy its enemy. Grace within us will employ prayer, and faith, and hope, and love, to cast out the evil; it takes unto it the “whole armour of God,” and wrestles earnestly. These two opposing natures will never cease to struggle so long as we are in this world. The battle of “Christian” with “Apollyon” lasted three hours, but the battle of Christian with himself lasted all the way from the Wicket Gate to the river Jordan. The enemy is so securely entrenched within us that he can never be driven out while we are in this body: but although we are closely beset, and often in sore conflict, we have an Almighty helper, even Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, who is ever with us, and who assures us that we shall eventually come off more than conquerors through Him. With such assistance the new-born nature is more than a match for its foes. Are you fighting with the adversary today? Are Satan, the world, and the flesh, all against you? Be not discouraged nor dismayed. Fight on! For God Himself is with you; Jehovah Nissi is your banner, and Jehovah Rophi is the healer of your wounds. Fear not, you shall overcome, for who can defeat Omnipotence? Fight on, “looking unto Jesus;” and though long and stern be the conflict, sweet will be the victory, and glorious the promised reward. “From strength to strength go on; Wrestle, and fight, and pray, Tread all the powers of darkness down, And win the well-fought day.”

Morning, June 2nd Morning & Evening, by C. H. SPURGEON

Front Article Concluded

...of the church, this year’s assembly will commemorate the seventy fifth anniversary of our denomination.

Looking to the years ahead, will we as a denomination, as a Presbytery and as a congregation continue to be a truly Presbyterian body of believers? Will we continue to uphold reformed doctrine, evangelistic zeal, and Presbyterian polity? Will we live out our heritage, or will we squander all that Dr. Machen worked so hard to establish?

