

Readings

for the Week of Prayer

To be read from Friday,
December 2,
through Sabbath,
December 10, 2016



*Prominent
Reformers
of the Sixteenth Century Reformation*

Introduction

In 1517, Martin Luther nailed to the door of the Wittenberg chapel 95 theses questioning numerous doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church, leading to the expansion of the Protestant Reformation. Next year Protestants and Catholics alike will commemorate at numerous events five hundred years since that action was taken by Luther. Meanwhile, the religious world is moving further and further away from the principles on which the Reformation was based:

- *Sola scriptura* (by Scripture alone)
- *Sola fide* (by faith alone)
- *Sola gratia* (by grace alone)
- *Solus Christus* (through Christ alone)
- *Soli Deo Gloria* (glory to God alone)

Pope Francis met with Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb, the grand imam of Al-Azhar Mosque, in Cairo, Egypt, on May 23, 2016. Vatican spokesman Federico Lombardi said that the pope and the Islamic cleric had “mainly addressed the common challenges faced by the authorities and faithful of the major religions of the world.” The pope continues to work very strongly to unite all religions under the Catholic Church.

In fact, “the 500th anniversary of the Christian Reformation in 2017 is to be profoundly ecumenical, with Pope Francis even taking part in a celebratory service with Lutherans in Sweden in October of this year....

“In recent years ... Roman Catholics and Lutherans have reached agreement on the doctrine of justification, a key dividing issue between the papacy and Luther and his followers, and many doctrinal differences should no longer have a church-dividing character,” according to the chair of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany. —ecumenicalnews.com, May 18, 2016.

During this Week of Prayer, the experiences, beliefs, and dedication of seven prominent Reformers from the Sixteenth Century will be presented. The purpose of this is to focus on the principles that showed their devotion to God for the saving of lost souls. This is very essential, for the events just prior to Jesus’ second coming will require the

upholding of Biblical truth more than at any other time in history, and we can learn a lot from these Reformers.

“In our day few of the professed followers of the Reformers are actuated by their spirit. Few are listening for the voice of God, and ready to accept truth in whatever guise it may be presented.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 232.

“The Reformation did not, as many suppose, end with Luther. It is to be continued to the close of this world’s history. Luther had a great work to do in reflecting to others the light which God had permitted to shine upon him; yet he did not receive all the light which was to be given to the world. From that time to this, new light has been continually shining upon the Scriptures, and new truths have been constantly unfolding....

“The message of the third angel will be proclaimed.... Men of faith and prayer will be constrained to go forth

with holy zeal, declaring the words which God gives them. The sins of Babylon will be laid open. The fearful results of enforcing the observances of the church by civil authority, the inroads of spiritualism, the stealthy but rapid progress of the papal power—all will be unmasked. By these solemn warnings the people will be stirred. Thousands upon thousands will listen who have never heard words like these. In amazement they hear the testimony that Babylon is the church, fallen because of her errors and sins, because of her rejection of the truth sent to her from heaven.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 148, 149, 606, 607.

“Choose poverty, reproach, separation from friends, or any suffering rather than to defile the soul with sin. Death before dishonor or the transgression of God’s law should be the motto of every Christian. As a people professing to be reformers, treasuring the

Readings for the Week of Prayer

December 2-10, 2016

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most solemn, purifying truths of God's word, we must elevate the standard far higher than it is at the present time." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 147.

This Week of Prayer is a unique opportunity to come together and pray for the Holy Spirit to plant divine truth deep within our hearts so the indwelling of Jesus will shine out when our testimony is called for. "The faithful discharge of today's duties is the best preparation for tomorrow's trials." —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 481.

All church leaders and officers are urged to make these Readings for the Week of Prayer available to the members, especially those who are not always able to meet with a group, and to take time to pray with them. The Readings are also available on various Internet websites for download and printing, such as www.sda1844.org and www.sda1888.org (English, Spanish, and French), www.asd1844.org (Spanish), www.reform-adventisten.net (German), and others.

Sabbath, December 10, the final day of the Week of Prayer, is a day of fasting and prayer; all are encouraged to take part in the meetings as the believers all over the world unite to plead with God to prepare each one to be a faithful servant. The annual Week of Prayer offerings will be gathered for the General Conference; this fund is used for a broad spectrum of missionary outreach. Please give generously.

"'The thoughts of the coming of the Lord,' said Baxter, 'are most sweet and joyful to me.' 'It is the work of faith and the character of His saints to love His appearing and to look for that blessed hope.' 'If death be the last enemy to be destroyed at the resurrection, we may learn how earnestly believers should long and pray for the second coming of Christ, when this full and final conquest shall be made.' 'This is the day that all believers should long, and hope, and wait for, as being the accomplishment of all the work of their redemption, and all the desires and endeavors of their souls.' 'Hasten, O Lord, this blessed day!' Such was the hope of the apostolic church, of the 'church in the wilderness,' and of the reformers." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 303, 304.

—*The brothers and sisters of the General Conference*

Reading 1 – Friday, December 2, 2016

Ulrich Zwingli— Combating Error

By Jose Vicente Giner, Switzerland



A message for all times

In all ages, Christ's message has been preached in this world by men and women chosen by God. Every era received the light of the gospel that was necessary for its time. In the days of Noah, there was a very specific message of salvation and eternal life with a specific time of grace. Genesis 6:3. The people of Israel were instrumental in giving to the nations the light of the knowledge of the true God (Deuteronomy 4:6-8; 7:6), a work that the Jews should have carried on at the time of Jesus (Acts 3:25, 26); but unfortunately the chosen people refused to accept this responsibility and ended up rejecting the messiahship of the Lord Jesus Christ, the light of the world. John 8:12. Jesus founded His church with a remnant of the Jewish people to carry on the work of spreading the saving truth to every nation, tribe, language, and people. Mark 16:15; 1 Peter 2:9.

Over the centuries and throughout the history of the seven churches of Revelation, the gospel light shone in every period, with human instruments being selected for that purpose. Every generation of the Christian era received precious rays of light with special emphasis on aspects of the message that were

necessary for each time. For example, in the period of Thyatira, spanning the Sixth to Sixteenth Centuries (Revelation 2:18-29), terrible errors and heresies infiltrated Christianity, and the truth was trampled underfoot and ignored. In the Sixteenth Century, with the beginning of the prophetic period of Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6), men of courage were inspired to fight for the faith once delivered to the saints; they were willing to face death to defend and preach the gospel truth, suffering terrible opposition and atrocious persecution.

The most curious and, we can say, surprising and paradoxical thing was that all of these brave Reformers had to face a prevailing religious system that claimed to serve God and love Christ, while denying Him in their actions. What stand out most about the papal system, that held virtually all political and religious power in the greater part of Europe, were the upholding of human doctrines in the place of Biblical truth, its persecuting character, and its open enmity against God's holy law.

The known world was impregnated with the error, and divine intervention was necessary to meet the satanic advances. At that time, God raised up spokesmen for the gospel in different parts of the old world who dedicated their lives to counteract the error and whose efforts through the grace of God made it possible for the light of Christ to reach thousands of sincere hearts.

Switzerland and the influence of Zwingli

This was the case for Huldrych or Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531), the Swiss Reformer, who is considered one of the three most prominent Reformers with Martin

Luther and John Calvin. Zwingli, whom we will consider in this Reading, was born in 1484 in Wildhaus, Sankt Gallen, Switzerland. His family was well off, which made it possible for him to study at the universities of Basel and Vienna for a career as a clergyman, being ordained to the priesthood in 1506. He obtained the degree of *Magister Artium* (Master of Arts). He received a thorough education that included music studies, grammar, philosophy, theology, etc. Luther would be ordained as a priest a year later. In 1518, Zwingli became a preacher in the cathedral of Zurich, a year after Luther wrote his 95 Theses. It is very interesting to note how the Spirit of God works. Zwingli attacked the sale of indulgences and influenced the government in this matter to expel those who sold them. Luther in Germany and Zwingli in Switzerland were doing a similar work, both being moved by God.

Zwingli was influenced by the humanist thinking of Erasmus and also by Swiss patriotism. He became a professor and was a chaplain for the Swiss army for a short period. Note that in this time Switzerland was famous for producing a special class of mercenaries—men of war who provided good cash income for various Swiss districts; in fact, the character of William Tell was known as a man of courage and bravery who opposed the power of the Habsburgs and later became a source of inspiration for the mercenaries. Glaris was like a military base, a breeding ground of soldiers for the army of the pope. For a while, Zwingli was moved by the ideal of serving the Holy Father and the Holy Mother Church as an army chaplain of the pope; but in 1515 in a confrontation, some ten thousand Swiss soldiers died. This carnage made a huge impact on Zwingli and probably greatly influenced his view of the Christian faith, questioning the practice of serving Christ with weapons. In 1519, the plague swept through the city of Zurich, and Zwingli became seriously ill. In this situation, he clung to God's mercy and miraculously regained his health. History says that from that moment on he decided to completely put his trust exclusively in the Creator, not in images, saints, relics, or sacraments invented by human beings.

When Zwingli was privileged to have the Holy Scriptures, he investi-

gated them with unusual zeal; in fact, it is said that he decided to copy almost all the epistles of Paul and memorized the New Testament in Greek. He also studied Hebrew to understand the language of the Old Testament. He found in the Bible the *raison d'être* of his life.

He was familiar with the works of the Reformer Martin Luther, but actually Zwingli followed a personal direction in the work of Reformation that began in Switzerland. He and the German Reformer had points of disagreements, but what was outstanding about these two men was their sincere and deep desire to bring about reform in the religious fabric of their time. They both faced a system that sought to devour anyone who did not submit to it; but, imbued with a burning zeal, they carried forward a work that greatly affected the thinking of their day.

When someone examines God's word without prejudice and sincerely seeks the gems of truth, God reveals Himself to him, according to the Biblical promise (Jeremiah 29:13); only the truth revealed in the sacred pages of the Bible can make an individual free and enlighten his mind. John 8:32. The error, heresy, and falsehoods taught in God's name distract the soul, unite it with darkness, and threaten one's eternal salvation. Isaiah 8:20. How important it is to make sure that we stand on the platform of eternal truth, not on human traditions and doctrines! Matthew 15:8, 9.

Zwingli understood that the church that he represented and served was teaching enormous errors. His heart burned with holy fervor, and he began to denounce the customs and Catholic teachings, such as image worship and the veneration of saints and relics; he attacked the abuses of indulgences and defended the primacy of Scripture against Catholic dogma, as did Luther, rejecting the magisterium of the church and its submission to Rome. Today we see this as normal and logical, but in his time it was something very daring and dangerous that was a risk to one's life. Nevertheless this is the heart inspired by God and moved by His word; nothing and no one frightens him.

One cannot accuse the Reformers of being separatists and fanatics or of wanting to start their own churches, because this was not their original aim.

When the leaven of truth penetrates the heart, it cannot be indifferent to abuses, errors, and false doctrines. To comply with the system and adjust to it is synonymous with participating in it; therefore, the universal and timeless message that must be applied to any movement that does not lift high the truth as stated clearly in Revelation is: "... Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Revelation 18:4.

"Those who have too little courage to reprove wrong, or who through indolence or lack of interest make no earnest effort to purify the family or the church of God, are held accountable for the evil that may result from their neglect of duty. We are just as responsible for evils that we might have checked in others by exercise of parental or pastoral authority as if the acts had been our own." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 578.

"As the light and life of men was rejected by the ecclesiastical authorities in the days of Christ, so it has been rejected in every succeeding generation.... When the Reformers preached the word of God, they had no thought of separating themselves from the established church; but the religious leaders would not tolerate the light, and those that bore it were forced to seek another class, who were longing for the truth.... Often those who follow in the steps of the Reformers are forced to turn away from the churches they love, in order to declare the plain teaching of the word of God. And many times those who are seeking for light are by the same teaching obliged to leave the church of their fathers, that they may render obedience." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 232.

This was the case with Zwingli, Luther, and other Reformers who had no thought of leaving the church they loved and served. The only desire that motivated them was to reform what was incorrect, according to the Scriptures. Pope Adrian VI forbade Zwingli to preach; the Reformer was considered a heretic; consequently in 1523, the rupture with the Catholic Church took place.

His educational work

As did Luther, Zwingli wrote a thesis containing 67 points. In these he attacked the prohibition against mar-

riage for the clergy (the doctrine of celibacy, point 49), arguing that marriage was lawful for all men (point 28). In point 3, he emphasized the fact that Christ alone is the way to eternal salvation, rejecting any other intercessor. To Zwingli, only God can forgive sins through Jesus Christ (point 50); moreover, the Reformer denied the existence of purgatory, saying that it had no Biblical basis (point 57), and encouraged all Christians to spread the light of the gospel throughout the world (point 14), among other things. Zwingli agreed with Luther that the supreme authority is Scripture.

It should be noted that his desire was to give the people the knowledge of God's word, which the church he served had denied. Therefore, he exchanged Latin for German in the religious services and translated the Bible into the language of the people. His translation is known as the *Zurich Bible*. His influence was noticeably strong in German-speaking Switzerland; he was the main Reformer and leader of the people of Zurich, Bern, and Basel. Calvin would later do the same for the French-speaking area. The Zwinglians and Calvinists were united by the time of the *Helvetic Confession*.

Of his different literary works, we mention especially the *Commentary on True and False Religion* (1525), which includes 29 chapters explaining the evangelical doctrine; this is considered Zwingli's basic work. That same year, he began writing a course in exegesis that interprets the Bible; and in 1531, in close collaboration with Leo Jud, he published the *Zurich Bible* in German with special characteristics of the Swiss language.

A doctrine in which the teaching of Zwingli stands out is that of the Lord's Supper. He rejected the idea of transubstantiation (change of substance), which was taught by the church of Rome. He stated that one cannot speak of the actual, literal presence of Jesus in the bread and the cup of the Lord's Supper. Based on the words of Jesus, "This do in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19), the Reformer repeated the words of the apostle Paul: "... Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying,

This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me" (1 Corinthians 11:24, 25); he concluded correctly that the Lord's Supper is not a repetition of Christ's sacrifice but a "commemoration," a reminder of His sacrifice. In keeping with this principle, Zwingli explained that Jesus' words, "This is My body," meant "This represents My body." He also confirmed this by saying that the Saviour often used the verb "to be" figuratively, such as when He said: "I am the bread, of life," "I am the light of the world," "I am the door," "I am the way," and "I am the vine." In fact, on this subject, he had more light than did Martin Luther.

Referring to this sacred ceremony, the Spirit of prophecy states: "The symbols of the Lord's house are simple and plainly understood, and the truths represented by them are of the deepest significance to us. In instituting the sacramental service to take the place of the Passover, Christ left for His church a memorial of His great sacrifice for man. 'This do,' He said, 'in remembrance of Me.' " —*Evangelism*, p. 273).

Death overtook Zwingli in 1531 at the Battle of Kappel, where he was serving as a preacher for the troops of Zurich when the six Swiss Protestant cantons battled against five Swiss Catholic cantons. The influence of this Reformer was very significant and has affected the politics and religion of the country up to this day. The Protestants in Switzerland are the second largest religious group after the Catholics. Protestantism in modern Switzerland gives great importance to diligent work and attributes its material prosperity to divine grace, things that the great Reformer Zwingli emphasized.

Our time and challenge

We want to emphasize the fact that the great Reformers were not perfect people. God chose them despite their imperfections, because of their spiritual zeal. God does not choose perfect men and women to do His work, but He does His work through people who, despite their frailty, place themselves in His hands to be molded. The glory belongs completely to God; the human instrument must remain silent, hidden

under the wings of the Almighty, his work only thus being effective. Zechariah 4:6; Ephesians 2:8, 9.

It is true that some of the Reformers' actions are surprising to us, and they did not preach all of the truth that we know today, such as the Sabbath, health reform, pacifism, the investigative judgment, etc.; but they upheld the light that was needed for that time. They ardently defended what was necessary then, especially the doctrine of justification by faith. The world is dying for lack of this light, and the Reformers completed their work. Others have to continue the work until the perfect day. Proverbs 4:18.

Today, God's people must preach the threefold message of the three angels. It is His message for a world that is coming to its end (Revelation 14:1-13); it is the eternal message, the present truth (Revelation 14:6), but with specific application to our time; it includes forgotten and distorted truths and invites people to take their place among the remnant people of God, who uphold the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. It is a last call to repentance and an opportunity to board the ark of salvation.

Waldo, Wycliffe, Huss, Jerome, later Zwingli, Farel, Calvin, Luther, Melancthon, Knox, Tyndale, and others paved the way for the final reformation; it is up to us to finish what they began. The work is enormous and complex; but it is necessary and urgent, for we are on the threshold of eternity. Despite being a small and insignificant people in the country of Switzerland, the Adventist Reform Movement still owes a great deal to the heroes of faith, having received the baton in the spiritual relay race. We are not alone. As those Reformers, we have the help of our God. Deuteronomy 31:8. He is bringing His final work to an end and gives us the privilege of cooperating with Him.

Each of us, no matter in what country we are, will be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, and the result of our work will be seen at the end. Our prayer to God is that we will be found righteous through the merits of Jesus Christ. I invite you to continue to build on the foundation that has been laid (1 Corinthians 3:10, 11), for many souls need to be given the warning message. May the Lord bless His people. Amen! ■

Alone—and Yet Not Alone

By Helmut Welker, Germany



Worms. April 17, 1521. Before the assembled Reichstag (Imperial Diet), Emperor Charles V asked Martin Luther two questions. The first one was whether he acknowledged “these writings” as his. That concerned the books that appeared in 1520—*The Freedom of a Christian, To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate*, and *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*. Martin Luther gave affirmation. The second question was whether he was ready to retract these writings. Luther asked for a day to think about this.

“With his mind stayed upon God, Luther prepared for the struggle before him. He thought upon the plan of his answer, examined passages in his own writings, and drew from the Holy Scriptures suitable proofs to sustain his positions. Then, laying his left hand on the sacred volume, which was open before him, he lifted his right hand to heaven, and vowed ‘to adhere constantly to the gospel, and to confess his faith freely, even though he should be called to seal his testimony with his blood.’” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 158. He knew, “And when they bring you ... unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in

the same hour, what ye ought to say.” Luke 12:11, 12.

When he was “ushered into the presence of the Diet, his countenance bore no trace of fear or embarrassment. Calm and peaceful, yet grandly brave and noble, he stood as God’s witness among the great ones of the earth.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 158. The deciding statement of his defense was: “If, then, I am not convinced by proof from Holy Scripture, or by cogent reasons; if I am not satisfied by the very texts that I have cited, and if my judgment is not in this way brought into subjection to God’s word, *I neither can nor will retract anything*; for it cannot be right for a Christian to speak against his conscience.”¹ He closed with the words: “‘Here I take my stand; I cannot do otherwise. God be my help! Amen.’” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 160.

Luther was asked to exit the Diet. There was internal discussion, and then he was called back and given another chance to retract. His answer was clear: “‘I have no other answer to give,’ he said, ‘than I have already given.’” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 161. What happened? “Christ had spoken through Luther’s testimony with a power and grandeur that ... inspired both friends and foes with awe and wonder. The Spirit of God had been present in that council, impressing the hearts of the chiefs of the empire.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 162.

Martin Luther traveled back to Wittenberg on April 25, 1521. After his departure, Emperor Charles V imposed the “Edict of Worms” against him, thus making him an outlaw. On the way back, on May 4, Frederick the Wise (1463-1525), Elector of Saxony, had Luther “kidnapped” (Luther knew about this ahead of time). This happened on one hand to guarantee Luther’s safety and, on the other hand, to have him

temporarily disappear from sight. The rumor that Luther had died spread rapidly.

His youth

“Foremost among those who were called to lead the church from the darkness of popery into the light of a purer faith, stood Martin Luther.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 120. He was born on November 10, 1483, in Eisleben. His parents, Hans and Margarete, lived in modest circumstances, were faithful to the church, but not overly pious. His father was a miner. After eleven years of school, Luther mastered Latin—both spoken and written—which was very important for his later life. He concluded his studies at the University of Erfurt with the “*Magister Artium*” (Master of Arts) degree. Then he began the study of law.

“While one day examining the books in the library of the university, Luther discovered a Latin Bible. Such a book he had never before seen. He was ignorant even of its existence.... Now, for the first time, he looked upon the whole of God’s Word.... Angels of Heaven were by his side, and rays of light from the throne of God revealed the treasures of truth to his understanding.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 122.

Against the wishes of his father, he entered the Augustinian Monastery in Erfurt on July 17, 1505. The following quotation comes from this time: “The fear of the Lord dwelt in the heart of Luther,... ‘To pray well,’ he often said, ‘is the better half of study.’” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 122.

In the monastery, he led an austere life. With fasting, flagellation, and self-mortification, he wanted to “work out,” or thus experience, the merciful God. About this self-redemption, he

himself writes: “‘If ever monk could attain Heaven by his monkish works, I should certainly have been entitled to it.’” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 123. Instead of calming him, this life drove him to greater and greater distress of conscience. His confessor, Johann von Staupitz, told him: “‘Instead of torturing yourself on account of your sins, cast yourself into the arms of your Redeemer. Trust in Him—in the righteousness of His life—in the atonement of His death.’” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 123, 124. In addition, he recommended that Luther study theology and transferred him for this purpose to Wittenberg in the fall of 1508. After a year, he received two bachelor degrees, one of which was the “*baccalarius Biblicus*” (Professor of the Bible). He was then recalled to Erfurt.

The journey to Rome

In late summer 1511, Luther went with a friar on the approximately 1,400-km (870-mile) trip to Rome, as the monastic rules specified: Silently and in single file (so people could not even talk to each other). Arriving in Rome, he was shocked: “As he mingled with the monks and citizens, he met dissipation, debauchery. Turn where he would, in the place of sanctity he found profanation. ‘It is incredible,’ he wrote, ‘what sins and atrocities are committed in Rome; they must be seen and heard to be believed. So that it is usual to say, “If there be a hell, Rome is built above it. It is an abyss whence all sins proceed.”’” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 125.

In addition to making a general confession, he climbed the “Holy Staircase,” the “*Scala Santa*.” This 28-step staircase is supposed to have been removed from Pilate’s palace and brought to Rome. Even Jesus Christ supposedly descended this staircase after His trial.² On the second, eleventh, and twenty-eighth steps, a window had been inserted, through which one could supposedly see traces of Jesus’ blood. Once a year or on certain holidays, the Catholic Church gave a general indulgence to every pilgrim who climbed the steps on his knees and said the Lord’s prayer at each step. However, a partial indulgence was possible every day. Martin Luther, who was searching

for the “merciful God,” was climbing these steps on his knees “when suddenly a voice like thunder seemed to say to him, ‘The just shall live by faith.’” Romans 1:17. He sprung upon his feet, and hastened from the place, in shame and horror.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 125.

Because of his knowledge of the Bible, he immediately grasped the importance of the inspiration, for he knew the verse: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” Romans 1:16, 17.

Two pillars of faith are given here: (1) The gospel makes all blessed who believe in it; (2) The just (righteous) will live by faith. However, on closer examination of the text, it is seen that this text says: “The righteous will live by faith.” What might look like quibbling is critically important: *He who is righteous by faith....* Here faith is explicitly reinforced, and the focus of faith is clearly emphasized.

“That text [Romans 1:17] never lost its power upon his soul.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 125. “Not by good works, intercession of the saints, and the sacramental mediation of ordained priests is the salvation of the individual achieved, but it is given to him by God solely on the basis of his faith through pure grace.”²

University of Wittenberg

After his return, in 1512, he received at Wittenberg University the title of Doctor of Theology. He was 29 years old. He lectured on the Psalms (1514/15), Romans (1515/16), Galatians (1516/17), and Hebrews (1517/18). With these topics, Martin Luther delved more and more into the theme that we today call justification by faith, or “Christ our Righteousness.” As a devout Catholic, in the Catholic way of thinking with the pope as the head, the saints, the traditions, and the indulgences, he lectured on the core theme of the apostle Paul: “He who is righteous by faith....” Soon he formulated the thesis “that Christians should receive no other doctrines

than those which rest on the authority of the Sacred Scriptures.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 125. This statement was in stark contrast to Catholic theology, for the Bible was the “chained book”—chained because it was “dangerous.”

“Luther saw the danger of exalting human theories above the word of God.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 125. He described such studies as “worthless” and “perishable.” The blooming indulgences under Johann Tetzel (1460-1519) stood in sharp contrast to the Bible. Simon Magus wanted to buy from the apostles the power to perform miracles. “But Peter said unto him: Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.” Acts 8:20. Luther shared the teaching with his hearers that “The grace of Christ cannot be purchased; it is a free gift. He counseled the people not to buy the indulgences, but to look in faith to a crucified Redeemer.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 129.

As a result of the unbiblical indulgences, on the eve of the Catholic All Saints Day, Martin Luther nailed 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. On All Saints’ Day, because of the relics in the church, many visitors were expected. Through the 95 Theses, it was shown that the power to forgive sins had never been passed to a man, and not to the Pope either. These thoughts from the Reformation spread like wildfire in all directions.

“Luther was as yet but partially converted from the errors of Romanism. But as he compared the Holy Oracles with the papal decrees and constitutions, he was filled with wonder. ‘I am reading,’ he wrote, ‘the decretals of the popes, and I know not whether the pope is antichrist himself, or whether he is his apostle; so misrepresented and even crucified does Christ appear in them.’ Yet at this time Luther was still a supporter of the Roman Church, and had no thought that he would ever separate from her communion.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 139.

Human struggles and doubt

Luther trembled as he looked at himself. He saw himself alone, opposed by the mightiest powers of the earth.

All the kings and emperors of this earth trembled before the pope. And he, Martin Luther, faced him. "When enemies appealed to custom and tradition, or to the assertions and authority of the pope, Luther met them with the Bible and the Bible only. Here were arguments which they could not answer; therefore [they] clamored for his blood,... 'He is a heretic,' cried the Roman zealots. 'It is high treason against the church to allow so horrible a heretic to live one hour longer. Let the scaffold be instantly erected for him!' –Ibid., b. 3, ch. 9. But Luther did not fall a prey to their fury. God had a work for him to do, and angels of heaven were sent to protect him. Many, however, who had received from Luther the precious light were made the objects of Satan's wrath and for the truth's sake fearlessly suffered torture and death." –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 132, 133.

The Roman trial in Augsburg

In June 1518, the Roman Curia summoned Luther to Rome to convict him of heresy. Even before the date the indictment was expanded to notorious heresy; spies in Luther's Wittenberg lectures had denounced him. For health reasons, he attempted to get a hearing on German soil. The Saxon Elector Frederick the Wise, who was supposed to turn him over to the authorities, supported him in this. Thus Luther's trial was entangled in political interests: Pope Leo X needed the Elector for the upcoming imperial election and therefore lodged his objection in August 1518. Cardinal Thomas Cajetan (1469-1534) was supposed to interrogate Luther before the Diet of Augsburg. From October 12 to 14, 1518, Luther spoke there. He refused to retract if he was not refuted from the Bible. For Cajetan he was therefore found guilty as a heretic and would have to be handed over. But the Elector Frederick the Wise refused to do this. Luther escaped the threat of arrest on the night of October 20-21, 1518, by fleeing from Augsburg. In His words, "'He who resolves to bear the word of Christ to the world, must expect death at every hour.'" –*The Great Controversy*, p. 134.

The final separation from Rome

The Elector Frederick the Wise "saw also that as a professor in the university Luther was eminently successful. Only a year had passed since the reformer posted his theses on the castle church, yet there was already a great falling off in the number of pilgrims that visited the church at the festival of All-Saints. Rome had been deprived of worshipers and offerings, but their place was filled by another class, who now came to Wittenberg—not pilgrims to adore her relics, but students to fill her halls of learning. The writings of Luther had kindled everywhere a new interest in the Holy Scriptures, and not only from all parts of Germany, but from other lands, students flocked to the university. Young men, coming in sight of Wittenberg for the first time, would 'raise their hands to heaven, and bless God for having caused the light of truth to shine forth from Wittenberg, as in former ages from Mount Zion, that it might penetrate to the most distant lands.'" –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 138, 139.

Luther was not blind to the storm that was about to break upon him; but he stood firm: "'I am in the hands of God,'... 'What can man do unto me?'" –*The Great Controversy*, p. 139.

"When the papal bull reached Luther, he said: 'I despise and attack it, as impious, false.... It is Christ Himself who is condemned therein.... I rejoice in having to bear such ills for the best of causes. Already I feel greater liberty in my heart; for at last I know that the pope is antichrist, and that his throne is that of Satan himself.'" –*The Story of Redemption*, p. 344.

On December 10, 1520, the final break with Rome took place when, in answer to the burning of his books, Luther burned the papal bull in front of the Wittenberg Elster gate. He was then excommunicated on January 3, 1521, through the papal edict, *Decet Romanum Pontificem*.

This courageous act and his primary reformatory writings made Luther known throughout the entire empire. The invention of the modern printing press by Johannes Gutenberg (1400-1468) helped him to achieve extraordinary success: By the end of 1520, 81

different books and collections by him had appeared, many of them translated into other languages, for a total of 653 editions.

The journey to Worms

Luther left on April 2, 1521, for the journey to Worms. His arrival at the Diet was not the penance that the church hoped for but rather a triumphal procession. He was received with enthusiasm everywhere. He preached in Naumburg, Erfurt, Gotha, and in the George Church in Eisenach. Even in Worms, where he arrived on April 16, he was received with jubilation.

Of course, it was clear to Martin Luther that this was a very dangerous journey. He was aware that he would possibly look death in the face. But his conviction was more important to him than his life. "Pray not for me, but for the Word of God," he told his friends. –*The Great Controversy*, p. 150. He said goodbye to his friend Melancthon with the words: "'If I do not return, and my enemies put me to death, continue to teach; stand fast in the truth. Labor in my stead;... if thy life be spared, my death will matter little.'" –*The Great Controversy*, p. 151.

Junker Jörg

On May 4, 1521, Elector Frederick the Wise had Luther brought to the Wartburg Castle in Eisenach. The powerful Elector hoped that this would take Luther out of the spotlight for a short time and somewhat weaken the constant attacks against the Reformation movement. Luther lived incognito at the Wartburg; he called himself Junker Jörg and styled his hair and beard to keep from being recognized.

In the fall of 1521, Luther translated the New Testament into German in only eleven weeks. The Greek Bible of Erasmus of Rotterdam, a Latin translation, as well as the Vulgate, served as his template. Thus Luther made the content of the Bible accessible to ordinary people.

In 1523, the first part of a translation of the Old Testament appeared; by 1525 there were 22 authorized editions and 110 reprints. Up to 1534, with a group of Reformers, Luther translated

the New Testament from ancient manuscripts. The famous, richly expressive Luther Bible was created!

Katharina von Bora

In Zisterzienserinnen Convent Marie in Nimbschen, Katharina von Bora and the other sisters of the order read the writings of the Reformer. The idea of escaping from the convent eventually developed among the nuns. Therefore, they asked Luther for help to flee. On Easter 1523 he sent them a wagon in which Katharina and eight of her sisters from the order hid in empty herring barrels. However, because these women were afraid to return home, Luther made arrangements for them to stay with friends in Wittenberg.

On June 13, 1525, Martin Luther and the 19-years-younger Katharina von Bora were married. The couple set up house in the former Augustinian monastery in Wittenberg. Over time, they were blessed with six children.

First, Katharina brought order into Luther's life. Luther confessed that he had not changed or shaken out his straw mattress in the bedroom for a year. Although Luther received good income as a professor of theology, he never had any money, because every day beggars came seeking help, and he gave them liberal assistance.

Katharina took over the management of the house and yard, stables and rooms, bank accounts and debt repayments. She had the house repaired and freshly painted, made an herb garden in the monastery cemetery, converted the ground floor into a barn, and installed a kitchen. On her behalf, Luther purchased more gardens and land where she raised cattle and fruit trees. He jokingly called his wife "Mr. Käthe" because of her talent for management. Without Katharina von Bora, the Reformer would have been distracted by the chaos of everyday life and the Lutheran Reformation would not have advanced.³

God's intention for marriage and the family was here shown clearly: "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." Genesis 2:18. Katharina was his assistant. His

life's work would never have achieved the level it did without his wife.

Music

When the Reformers left the Catholic Church, they had no hymns for their services. For Luther a worship service without songs was unthinkable, for he considered music of great importance for the salvation of the people, because it "is capable of something that only theology otherwise gives; namely, peace and a happy mind."⁴ There are 36 hymns by Luther still known, the most famous of which is "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," based on Psalm 46.

Luther's theological heritage—the Bible and prayer

"'All that the Lutherans have said is true, and we cannot deny it,' declared a papist bishop. 'Can you by sound reasons refute the Confession made by the elector and his allies?' asked another, of Doctor Eck. 'Not with the writings of the apostles and prophets,' was the reply; 'but with the Fathers and councils I can.' 'I understand, then,' responded the questioner, 'that the Lutherans are entrenched in the Scriptures, and we are only outside.'" —*The Great Controversy*, p. 208.

The complete Christian message is found in the Bible. It needs no interpretation, because it interprets itself. The Reformation principle was, is, and remains: "The Bible, and the Bible only, as the rule of faith and duty" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 204)—*Sola Scriptura*. Martin Luther's work began with the Bible. He found in it the loving God. "We love Him, because He first loved us." 1 John 4:19. In God's word he found justification and the forgiveness of sins. "... The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17)—*Sola Fide*. All of this happens not through their own efforts: "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace" (Romans 11:6)—*Sola Gratia*. "From the secret place of prayer came the power that shook the world in the Great Reformation." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 209.

The Advent pioneers also began their work with the study of the Bible

and in prayer. The work of God will end with those people who have the Holy Scriptures as the eternal and sole foundation of their faith and maintain prayer as the constant connection with Heaven. In the words of Martin Luther, "'We cannot attain to the understanding of Scripture either by study or by strength of intellect. Therefore your first duty must be to begin with prayer. Entreat the Lord to deign to grant you, in His rich mercy, rightly to understand His Word. There is no other interpreter of the word but the Author of that word Himself. Even as He has said, 'They shall all be taught of God.' Hope nothing from your study and the strength of your intellect; but simply put your trust in God, and in the guidance of his Spirit.'" —*The Great Controversy*, p. 132. Amen! ■

The Great Controversy, 1888 edition.

¹ Dt. Reichstag files, Younger series, vol. II, no. 80, pp. 581, 582.

² *The Reformation Doctrine, Introduction to Early Modern Times*, University of Münster.

³ *Ecumenical Holy Lexicon*, www.heiligenlexikon.de.

⁴ Karin Bornkamm, Gerhard Ebeling (ed.): *Martin Luther: Selected Writings*, vol. 6, Insel Verlag, 1982, p. 134.



Martin Luther's cell at Erfurt monastery, which still exists, although it was damaged in an air raid in World War II. The cell Luther occupied is open to the public, and his personal Bibles—complete with his handwritten notes in the margins—are on display. See more pictures and information at: <http://www.hcplive.com/physicians-money-digest/your-life/martin-luther-ii#sthash.JtpcnqQ.dpuf>.

Light in the Darkness through Casiodoro de Reina

By Humberto Avellaneda, Colombia



In the Proverbs, speaking of the blessings of wisdom, the wise Solomon, said: "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Proverbs 4:18. And the apostle to the Gentiles warned that the enemy of souls would seek to blind the understanding of unbelievers so the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ would not shine upon them; but he also affirmed that "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Corinthians 4: 6.

In His infinite love for the fallen race, God has always been willing for the light to shine in darkness and for poor humanity, steeped in sin, to be enlightened through the glory of His presence and His word, for He does not want the sinner to die but to repent and live.

"Satan well knew that the Holy Scriptures would enable men to discern his deceptions and withstand his power.... To maintain his sway over men, and establish the authority of the

papal usurper, he must keep them in ignorance of the Scriptures. The Bible would exalt God and place finite men in their true position; therefore its sacred truths must be concealed and suppressed. This logic was adopted by the Roman Church. For hundreds of years the circulation of the Bible was prohibited.... Thus the pope came to be almost universally acknowledged as the vicegerent of God on earth, endowed with authority over church and state.

"The detector of error having been removed, Satan worked according to his will." –*The Great Controversy*, p. 51.

It is in this context that we will place today's Reading. After five hundred years of the enemy's attacks for the purpose of extinguishing the truth through persecution and martyrdom, we can see clearly that light has always shone in the darkness, for which we glorify God for the faithful torchbearers who risked their very lives so the Holy Spirit could use them to give the light of the gospel to us who live at the edge of the end times.

Let us follow the inspired pen as it recounts the history of that deadly war between truth and error: "Amid the gloom that settled upon the earth during the long period of papal supremacy, the light of truth could not be wholly extinguished. In every age there were witnesses for God—men who cherished faith in Christ as the only mediator between God and man, who held the Bible as the only rule of life, and who hallowed the true Sabbath. How much the world owes to these men, posterity will never know.... They stood firm, and from age to age maintained their faith in its purity, as a sacred heritage for the generations to come." –*The Great Controversy*, p. 61.

Only Heaven recorded all the horror and persecution that God-fearing people suffered through the ages to honor their Redeemer and safeguard His word. "Scattered over many lands, they planted the seeds of the Reformation that began in the time of Wycliffe, grew broad and deep in the days of Luther, and is to be carried forward to the close of time by those who also are willing to suffer all things for 'the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.' Revelation 1:9." –*The Great Controversy*, p. 78.

The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century, as already seen in previous Readings, was a light in the darkness. It began with great proponents such as Martin Luther in Germany, Ulrich Zwingli in Switzerland, and others whose way had been prepared by the first Reformers.

"When persecution was kindled against the teachers of the truth, they gave heed to the words of Christ: 'When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another.' Matthew 10:23. The light penetrated everywhere.... The truth ... spread with irresistible power....

"Persecution served only to extend the truth, and the fanaticism which Satan endeavored to unite with it resulted in making more clear the contrast between the work of Satan and the work of God." –*The Great Controversy*, p. 196.

Despite the opposition of some, sponsored by the papal power, the torch of truth—the open Bible—managed to enter almost all the countries of Europe as a heavenly messenger; and Spain was no exception. "With the invention of the printing press, the Bible spread to the homes of the people; and as many learned to read the word of God for themselves, the light of truth

dispelled the darkness of superstition as if by a new revelation....

"Thus in Spain a movement spread that was analogous to the religious revolution that developed in other countries." *—El conflicto de los siglos* (The Great Controversy), pp. 252, 254.

The light of truth enters Spain

In the awakening in Spain, "the teachings of the Holy Scriptures quietly made their way into the hearts of men such as the scholar Alfonso Valdés, secretary of Charles V; his brother, Juan de Valdés, secretary of the viceroy of Naples; and the eloquent Constantino Ponce de la Fuente, chaplain and confessor of Charles V.... Beyond that, the influence of the Holy Scriptures penetrated the rich monastery of San Isidro del Campo, where almost all the monks joyfully received the word of God as a lamp to their feet and a light to their path. Even Archbishop Carranza, after being promoted to this high office, was forced for nearly twenty years to fight for his life within the walls of the Inquisition, because he defended the doctrines of the Bible....

"These exhibitions of the liberty of the gospel could not fail to attract attention in a country where the love of freedom was so ingrained. Tracts and pamphlets passed from hand to hand. Friends of the Protestant movement in Switzerland, Germany, and the Netherlands followed by sending a large number of publications to Spain. It was not easy for the believers to avoid the vigilance of the henchmen of the Inquisition, who did everything they could to stop the reform doctrines and counter the wave of literature that was flooding the country....

"The power of the Holy Spirit accompanied the Reformers in the task of presenting the truths of the word of God at the great diets convened from time to time by Charles V and made a great impression on the minds of the nobles and dignitaries of the church in Spain who attended those gatherings. Even though some of them, like Archbishop Carranza, were considered for many years among the staunchest supporters of Roman Catholicism, many were convicted that it was truly God who directed and taught those intrepid

defenders of truth who with the Bible advocated a return to primitive Christianity and the freedom of the gospel." *—El conflicto de los siglos* (The Great Controversy), pp. 255, 258, 261.

Help to spread the gospel

"But it was in 'the Hieronymite convent of San Isidro del Campo, one of the most famous monasteries in Spain,' located about two kilometers from Seville, that the light of divine truth shone most brightly. One of the monks, Garcia de Arias, commonly called Dr. White, cautiously taught his brothers '... that they should read and carefully meditate on the Holy Scriptures, and that only thus could they obtain the true knowledge of God and His will.' This teaching was skillfully presented by another monk, Casiodoro de Reyna, 'who later became famous for translating the Bible into the language of his country.' The instruction given by such notable personalities paved the way for 'radical change' in 1557 that was introduced 'in the internal affairs of the monastery.' " *—El conflicto de los siglos* (The Great Controversy), pp. 268, 269.

The contribution of Casiodoro de Reyna in Spain was significant for the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century, and its meaning and scope are very important today for Spanish-speaking people, as we celebrate five hundred years of existence of the Protestant Reformation and a few less of having the translation of the Bible in our own language.

In speaking about the life of Casiodoro de Reyna, first of all, we must say that we do not have very much information concerning his life, and therefore we cannot be certain about where he came from. It is said that Reyna was probably born in 1520 to a family of converted Muslims and that he studied at the University of Salamanca, although others say it was Seville.

What is absolutely certain is that, as is known to all, Reyna was a monk at the monastery of San Isidro de Seville, a convent touched by Protestantism, including the works of Calvin or Luther. There he became a supporter of the Reformation, being persecuted by the Inquisition, partly for secretly distributing the translation of the New Testament by Juan Pérez de Pineda.

It is significant that when the convent was placed in the crosshairs of the Inquisition, all the monks who fled Spain invariably took the road to Geneva, condemned to live in exile until death, since Spain was the only European country that had a national institution dedicated to eradicating heresy. But because of some drawbacks, Reyna decided to move to Frankfurt in 1558, but not before beginning the translation of the Old Testament into Spanish.

Casiodoro de Reyna outside of Spain

The ascension to the throne of England of Elizabeth I on January 19, 1559, attracted not only the English Protestant exiles but also foreign Protestants. In London, new possibilities for the Reformation were opened under the auspices of a queen who had the title of Supreme Governor of the Church.

That is where Reyna sought support for his project to translate the complete Bible into Spanish, a project to which the ex-monk, despite his poverty, devoted himself from the very beginning of his flight from Spain. The fruit of that work, and not without facing opposition for some years, was a Spanish Reformed congregation in London, which grew to the point where it met three times a week. This favorable situation did not last for very long. First, Reyna married, which brought upon him the ire of Queen Elizabeth I, who rejected married clergy. Second, the Spanish church in London and Reyna himself drew the attention—how could it be otherwise?—of the Spanish ambassador to London, Álvaro de la Cuadra. The intention of the King of Spain, Philip II, could be easily figured out, for he asked the ambassador by letter to see that Reyna would leave England. Thus, in the fall of 1563, a serious scandal erupted: Reyna was accused by Spanish agents (provocateurs) of moral offenses ranging from sodomy to adultery, and also of heresy. The Bishop of London, Edmund Grindal, a friend of Reyna, then opened an investigation to have the confession of faith be studied in detail and promptly closed.

Faced with these attacks, Reyna's reaction was totally unexpected; he suddenly left England with his wife disguised as a sailor. He needed to

continue the translation of the Bible in a quiet place in one of the castles of the kingdom of Navarre, and nothing could stop him from his true mission.

The truth comes to light

His original plan was to translate the Old Testament and to connect it with the New Testament translation done by Juan Pérez that had been published eight years earlier. Finally, after 12 years of hard work, Reina completed the translation, his friend Pérez having died, leaving sufficient funds for joint publication of the two translations.

However, Reina could not use the New Testament of Juan Pérez, because the copies that were being printed in Paris were confiscated and destroyed, forcing him to prepare his own translation of the New Testament. This delayed the printing that was taking place in Basel, Switzerland, where he decided to travel to manage the distribution; and furthermore he became seriously ill on the way. Then, when he arrived, he was surprised to find that the printer, to whom he had given a significant advance, had gone bankrupt.

By the mercy of God, his friends came to his aid. Finally, on September 28, 1569, the complete project was finished, containing the following dedication: "For the glory of God and the good of the Church of Spain." Immediately four large containers of copies of the Bible in Castilian, which were to be delivered to Spain via Flanders, were prepared.

Although other translators can be mentioned as preceding Reina, their work had little significance. But the translation and printing of 2,600 copies of the complete Bible in Spanish by Reina in Basel, known as the Bible of the Bear, was the first major production. The name comes from the first edition, which had the cover illustration of a bear standing on its hind legs, leaning against a tree trunk, and trying to get honey from a hive at the top of the tree. This was to illustrate the sweetness desired from the message of God's word. It was the first complete translation of the Bible into Spanish, derived from the original Hebrew and Greek languages. It reflected the literary beauty of the so-called Golden Age of Spanish literature.

It was revised in 1602 by an illustrious Spanish Reformer, Cipriano de Valera, who published the revision in Amsterdam, Netherlands, that year. That is why this version is nicknamed the *Reina-Valera*, being one of the Bibles most widely read and studied still today.

Concerning the first version, historian Manuel de León wrote: "The Bear Bible was a major milestone not only because it was the first Spanish version of the Bible, but because it also established linguistic canons supported by the majority of the Reformers in exile in the Sixteenth Century." In addition, its release date was immortalized in Spanish-speaking countries, which celebrate Bible Month in September of each year.

Today, the *Reina-Valera* version is still alive. Almost all of the most popular applications for reading the Bible include this version in its options as the default and free. This is the case of the Bible application, which allows free access to two Bibles in Spanish, including the 1960 *Reina-Valera* and the most recent edition, being undoubtedly the most widespread version among multiple applications offered on various platforms.

The life of Casiodoro de Reina, like those of other defenders of truth, was one of struggle and danger, always running from one place to another, as the Master explained would be the lot of His disciples. His hard work, especially the translation of the Bible into Spanish, was a blessing for him and his contemporaries; to this very day we are grateful for all the work and sacrifice of all the Reformers of the Sixteenth Century, who put everything on the line, even their very lives, so we can have in our hands the written word and the sweet taste of honey.

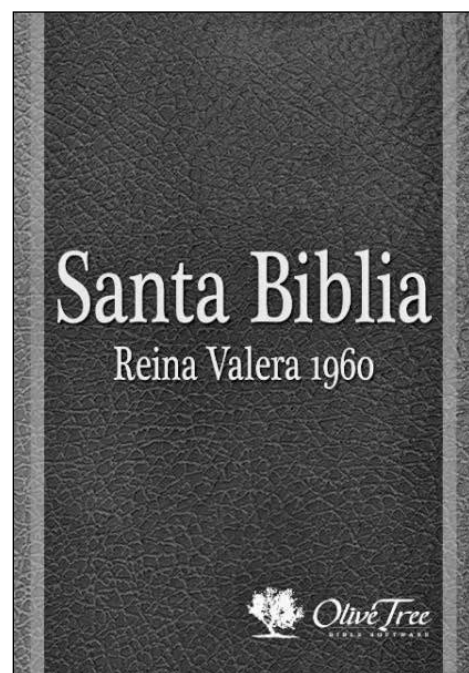
This hero of the faith, who died in exile in Frankfurt in 1594, having been excommunicated by the Inquisition but always remembered and cherished, reminds us of a costly lesson: No path to the word of God is opened without suffering. This is the reality of what we as God's people will have to suffer at the hands of the enemy of God if we really want to defend Biblical principles and tell the world of the soon coming of the Saviour. Like those before us, we are witnessing the results of the papal pow-

er united with the civil power (USA), and there will be retaliation against new "heretics"; but, like Zwingli, Luther, and Casiodoro de Reina, we have the promise of the final reward. "For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." 2 Corinthians 4:11.

"Through the centuries, these testimonies highlight the constancy of those who obey God rather than men; and today there are still those who inspire others to remain firm in the hour of trial, in defense of the truths of God's word, and through perseverance and unwavering faith are living witnesses of the transforming power of redeeming grace." —*El conflicto de los siglos* (The Great Controversy), p. 277. Therefore, God and all Heaven are watching and helping us today to be the Reformers that the world needs in the Twenty-first Century.

The Lord can bless and encourage the Reformers of the last days. The Almighty will help us to stand firm on the platform of truth, to want to return to the purity and simplicity that characterized the early church, to carry the faith of Jesus even unto death, and to stand when our Saviour comes.

Let us give thanks to God for the light of His word that continues to shine in our hearts today. Maranatha—Christ is coming. Let us be ready. Amen! ■



The Anabaptists— Second Front of the Reformation

By Larry Watts, U.S.A.



It was 1517. A lot was going on in early Sixteenth Century Europe. As we are about to enter 2017, we live exactly half a millennium after those times. The coming year will be marked by various commemorations of Martin Luther's defiant act in nailing to the door of the Wittenberg chapel his 95 theses against Catholic practices. That spark ignited a blaze that burned across the whole of Western Europe for a century and a half. In one place, Catholics martyred Protestants, who in turn killed Catholics in another. Unbelievably horrible examples were the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of Protestants in Paris, France, on August 24, 1572, and the prolonged Thirty Years' War between Protestants and Catholics (1618-1648).

Standing apart (theologically speaking) from both the Catholics and the Protestants was a smaller contingent of Christians called Anabaptists. The German term is "Wiedertäufer" ("Again-Baptists" or "Anabaptists," from the Greek *ana*, meaning "again"). The most distinguishing requirement of the Anabaptists was that individuals should join the church from free will. This also included a rejection of infant baptism, a rite, up to that time, that was performed for almost everyone born in Western Europe.

A natural outgrowth of "freewill" church membership is pacifism. Since the sword is an instrument of force, the Christian's only sword should be the sword of the Spirit. Besides being called "Anabaptists," some of the believers in this group were also known in their own time as "Radical Reformers," because they had not yet come to the conclusion that taking up arms is unbiblical and contrary to the understanding of salvation through freewill choice. While all of the Anabaptists differed with such prominent leaders of the Reformation as Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli on the need for believer baptism, they themselves were divided on the issue of meeting force with force. The leaders among them who took up the sword against their opponents eventually paid dearly. All who took up the sword perished by the sword.

The story of that turn in thought is an interesting one, which we will address here. The remnant of those early believers are known as Mennonites after their most prominent and outspoken Dutch leader, Menno Simons (1496-1561). While he joined the movement twelve years after it began, he became its most outspoken defender; and it was he who most forcefully championed non-violence. —Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*, Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964, p. 103.

The beginning

Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Huldrych Zwingli of Switzerland, along with other Reformers, believed in infant baptism and what is called the proto-free tradition of church and state. However, some of the followers of Zwingli's Reformed church were inspired by his own preaching and came

to question the idea that church membership begins at birth (and infant baptism to wash away "original sin"). This, they said, is inconsistent with New Testament Christianity. The Scriptures clearly teach that we are saved by grace and justified by faith in Jesus Christ. The fruit of finding and accepting Jesus will be seen in repentance, public confession of faith in Jesus Christ, and separation from immorality and vice of all kinds. Infants cannot experience conversion and therefore cannot be candidates for baptism. True conversion will also be seen and evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit in the Christian's life.

Love—something we don't have until we give it away.

Joy—true joy is obtained only by true sacrifice.

Peace—yes, one can sell it, but he can never buy it.

Longsuffering—what the diligent obtain.

Gentleness—with humility, gentleness comes from a truly forgiving spirit.

Goodness—evidence of an unselfish, humble life.

Faith—one should guard carefully the fruit that the devil loves most to steal.

Meekness—a strong characteristic of the noble character.

Temperance—the tree on which grows the patience of the saints.

And so, in a meeting in Zurich on January 21, 1525, Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and George Blaurock, along with twelve others, baptized each other in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Historians consider this meeting as the beginning of what became the Anabaptist movement. Those who took part in this action understood that they were thus making themselves outlaws of the church and society. And the purge started almost immediately.

Spread of the early Anabaptists, 1525-1550

Shortly after that January 21st meeting. Zwingli, in a letter to a friend, expressed the opinion that the struggle with the Catholic party was “but child’s play” when compared with the erupting division among Reformers. Both Protestants and Roman Catholics considered the Anabaptists dangerous and fought the movement from its inception with banishment, torture, burnings, drowning, and beheadings. In just five years, by 1530, most of the founding leaders had been killed for refusing to renounce their beliefs. The pacifist branches often had to flee to neutral cities or nations. While this helped to spread the message, it was also very risky, for a sudden change in alliances or an invasion would signal resumed persecution.

Other groups of Anabaptists were willing to stand and face their persecutors in combat, whether they were Catholic or Protestant forces. But all those who did this ended their lives in defeat on the battlefield. The most famous and last of these violent Anabaptists clashes was the Münster Rebellion of 1535. This and similar events played a large part in the development of the Anabaptist adherence to nonviolence.

Menno Simons

During the early days of the Anabaptist movement, Menno Simons was serving as a Catholic priest in the Netherlands. “Educated a Roman Catholic, and ordained to the priesthood, he was wholly ignorant of the Bible, and he would not read it, for fear of being beguiled into heresy. When a doubt concerning the doctrine of transubstantiation forced itself upon him, he regarded it as a temptation from Satan, and by prayer and confession sought to free himself from it; but in vain.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 238.

Ten years after the Anabaptist movement began, in 1535, Menno’s brother Pieter was among a group of Anabaptists who were killed near Bolsward when they attempted to overrun a Catholic monastery known as the Oldeklooster (or Bloemkamp Abbey).

After the death of his brother Pieter, Menno experienced a spiritual and

mental crisis. He said he “prayed to God with sighs and tears that He would give to me, a sorrowing sinner, the gift of His grace, create within me a clean heart, and graciously through the merits of the crimson blood of Christ forgive my unclean walk and unprofitable life....” —*Menno Simons’ Renunciation of the Church of Rome*,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menno_Simons.

The turning point

Little is known of this leader’s early life except that he was born in Witmarsum, Friesland, Holland. It was there that he was first assigned as a newly ordained parish priest in March 1524, at the age of 28. Seven years later, in 1531, he became the priest in his home village of Witmarsum. At this time, an anti-sacramental movement was growing in the Netherlands, probably due to the writings of Luther, Zwingli, and others. It is not surprising, then, that Menno Simons began to question the idea that Christ was actually in the bread and wine of the Eucharist. As already mentioned, at first he refused to even read the Bible for fear of following in the steps of the “heretical” Reformers; but, overcoming his fears, he began to study it. There he found answers to his questions; and, as he suspected, he found himself agreeing with the Reformers that Biblical authority ought to be the primary force in the believer’s life. By 1528, he was known as an evangelical parish priest.

For another seven years, up until 1535, he remained a member of the Catholic Church, but two things happened that caused him to reconsider his acquired station in life. The first was the death of his brother already mentioned. Then he “witnessed in a neighboring village the beheading of a man who was put to death for having been re-baptized. This led him to study the Bible in regard to infant baptism. He could find no evidence for it in the Scriptures, but saw that repentance and faith are everywhere required as the condition of receiving baptism.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 238, 239.

These and other events caused him to rethink his Catholic faith, but he was reluctant to leave the Catholic Church. He later wrote of his experience in

these words: “I saw that these zealous children, although in error, willingly gave their lives and their estates for their doctrine and faith,... but I myself continued in my comfortable life and acknowledged abominations simply in order that I might enjoy comfort and escape the cross of Christ.

“Pondering these things, my conscience tormented me so that I could no longer endure it.... If I through bodily fear do not lay bare the foundation of the truth, nor use all my powers to direct the wandering flock who would gladly do their duty, if they knew it, to the true pastures of Christ—oh, how shall their shed blood, shed in the midst of transgression, rise against me at the judgment of the Almighty and pronounce sentence against my poor, miserable soul!”

The realization of the true condition of his soul led to an emotional, tearful cry to God for forgiveness. For nine months after that, he essentially preached Anabaptist doctrine from his Catholic pulpit. Some months later, at the age of 40, Simons withdrew from the Roman communion to fellowship with others who, like himself, had been greatly influenced by the writings of Luther.

Challenging times

It was a challenging time for Menno, as well as for the Reformation in Europe. With his love for truth, his newfound understanding of Scripture, and his own personal experiences, he soon became the commanding voice of the non-violent Anabaptist movement. He believed that God had called him to bring order out of those chaotic times. Having made peace with his Lord, he spent a year in hiding to find the direction of his new calling. During that time, he wrote works that seemed to echo his own experience: “The Spiritual Resurrection,” “The New Birth,” and “Meditation on the Twenty-Fifth Psalm.” In late 1535 or early 1536, he received the believer’s baptism and was ordained by Obbe Philips, founder of the movement. He soon married and emerged from his solitude with sure confidence in God and the sword of the Spirit to take up the battle with zeal on three fronts: unbiblical Catholic Church traditions, enforced Reformation religion, and vi-

olent Anabaptist fanatics. There was no love lost between Anabaptists and other Protestant Reformers, not to mention the Catholics. Luther and Calvin called them “fanatics,” “scatterbrains,” “asses,” and just as bad as the papists.

For the rest of his life, the earthly sword followed him. He was a marked man, and those who were discovered to have sheltered him were executed. One of the first of these Anabaptist believers was Taard Renicx of Leeuwarden. In 1539, he gave his life for giving Menno a place to sleep for one night. In 1542, Charles V offered a 100-guilder reward for Menno’s arrest (about \$28,000 USD in today’s money).

“In both Germany and the Netherlands a class of fanatics had risen, advocating absurd and seditious doctrines, outraging order and decency, and proceeding to violence and insurrection. Menno saw the horrible results to which these movements would inevitably lead, and he strenuously opposed the erroneous teachings and wild schemes of the fanatics. There were many, however, who had earlier been misled by these fanatics but who had renounced their pernicious doctrines; and there were still remaining many descendants of the ancient Christians, the fruits of the Waldensian teaching. Among these classes Menno labored with great zeal and success.

“For twenty-five years he traveled, with his wife and children, enduring great hardships and privations, and frequently in peril of his life. He traversed the Netherlands and Northern Germany, laboring chiefly among the humbler classes, but exerting a widespread influence. Naturally eloquent, though possessing a limited education, he was a man of unwavering integrity, of humble spirit and gentle manners, and of sincere and earnest piety, exemplifying in his own life the precepts which he taught, and he commanded the confidence of the people. His followers were scattered and oppressed. They suffered greatly from being confounded with the fanatical Munsterites. Yet great numbers were converted under his labors.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 239.

A common faith

While we may pass over this man and give more attention to those like Luther

and Calvin, Menno Simons was closer to what Adventist Reformers are today than many who are better known. We also stand before three foes: The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. And the life he lived was also lived and suffered by many of our forefathers in the faith. His was an example of what the remnant will face at the end of time. He reminds us that “if the Head had to suffer such torture, anguish, misery, and pain, how shall His servants, children, and members expect peace and freedom as to their flesh?”

Like Menno, we seek first to take the Bible in its most direct and literal meaning, unless it is clearly symbolic, allegorical, or prophetic. At the same time, we need to be careful not to be so dogmatically literal in our interpretation that we become legalistic, as he sometimes was. In a similar way we also defend the doctrine of the divinity of Christ and the person of the Holy Spirit. Like him, we do not use the term “trinity” because it is not found in Scripture. Like Menno, we teach separation of church from the state and believe, “It is forbidden to us to fight with physical weapons.... This only would I learn of you whether you are baptized on the sword or on the Cross.”

As Menno Simons believed, we realize that the gospel is a message of emancipation from human traditions. In many of his writings (more than 40 survive), he would often begin with the Biblical principle, “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 3:11. Despite being hunted and having a price on his head for a very long time, Menno died of natural causes in 1561 at the age 66, 25 years and one day after he renounced the Catholic faith—and proof that God takes care of His own.

His voice has been echoed and re-echoed over the past 500 years. One hundred years after Menno, Roger Williams (c. 1603-c. 1683) voiced similar ideas that laid the foundation for the Declaration of Independence (1776), the Constitution of the United States (1787), and Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation (1863).

Quotes from Menno Simons

“True *evangelical* faith cannot lie dormant. It clothes the naked, it feeds the

hungry, it comforts the sorrowful, it shelters the destitute, it serves those that harm it, it binds up that which is wounded, it has become all things to all people.”

“The regenerated do not go to war, nor engage in strife. They are children of peace who have beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning forks, and know no war....

“Our weapons are not weapons with which cities and countries may be destroyed, walls and gates broken down, and human blood shed in torrents like water. But they are weapons with which the spiritual kingdom of the devil is destroyed....

“Christ is our fortress; patience our weapon of defense; the Word of God our sword.... Iron and metal spears and swords we leave to those who, alas, regard human blood and swine’s blood of well-nigh equal value.”

“We who were formerly no people at all, and who knew of no peace, are now called to be ... a church ... of peace. True Christians do not know vengeance. They are the children of peace. Their hearts overflow with peace. Their mouths speak peace, and they walk in the way of peace.”

If it can be said of anyone, it can be said of Menno Simons: “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” Revelation 14:13. May this Reformer’s desire and ours be one, as expressed in his words: “I seek and desire from my heart nothing [this He knows, who knows all things] but that the glorious name, the divine will, and the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ may be made known throughout the world.”

May God help us to be actuated by the spirit of the Reformers. Let us “fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life,” and “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” 1 Timothy 6:12; Jude 3. Let your light shine. From this day forward, dedicate your time and your very best talents to the progress of God’s cause. Maranatha! ■

John Knox and the Reformation in Scotland

By Pablo Hunger, Austria/U.S.A.



Refuge for Christians in the first centuries

Scotland was one of the first refuges for sincere Christians in the early centuries. The persecution perpetrated by the pagan emperors led a great number to seek refuge in far-off countries. Many of them fled to England; and once persecution arrived there, they continued fleeing to more remote places in Scotland and Ireland.

One of the first Reformers to arise in Europe was Colomba. Born in Ireland in 521 but later expelled from Ireland for his firmness in sharing copies of Bible manuscripts that he had copied by hand, he journeyed to Iona, an island in Scotland, where he founded one of the first Christian missionary schools. The work of Colomba spread light to Scotland and the surrounding areas in the Sixth Century not only through his preaching but also through his twelve disciples and the many students who graduated from the missionary school.

“For hundreds of years after the churches of England submitted to Rome, those of Scotland maintained their freedom. In the twelfth century, however, popery became established here, and in no country did it exercise a more absolute sway. Nowhere was the darkness deeper. Still there came rays

of light to pierce the gloom, and give promise of the coming day. The Lollards, coming from England with the Bible and the teachings of Wycliffe, did much to preserve the knowledge of the gospel, and every century had its witnesses and martyrs.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 249.

Two of the nobility who had contact with the writings of the Reformers and decided to lift their voices against the false doctrines of Rome, especially against the veneration of Mary, were Patrick Hamilton and George Wishart. Although they were silenced by the stake, their messages awoke Scotland. John Knox would rise to continue to push forward the Reformation and exert an influence that would affect all of Europe.

A preacher from Scotland

John Knox was born in about 1513 in Haddington, a small town south of Edinburgh, Scotland. His humble beginnings facilitated contact with the majority of the people, and his high education helped him to reach the high classes of society. He lost his parents when he was just a child.

Knox studied Latin in school in Haddington. In 1529, he began his theological studies at the University of Saint Andrews. He was ordained as a priest in 1536 but was not employed in this capacity due to the fact that Scotland already had too many priests.

In 1540, the Scottish authorities abandoned the Protestant faith and began to persecute the preachers. George Wishart did not fear the time of test and traveled from village to village to proclaim the Bible truths. Knox, inspired by Wishart’s message, decided

to accompany him as his bodyguard, armed with two swords to defend the preacher against the threats of the prelates. For five weeks, he accompanied Wishart in his preaching until the authorities decided to silence the noble’s voice by putting him in prison. Knox was determined to join him and support him, but Wishart persuaded him to return home, saying: “Nay, return to your bairns [children], and God bless you. One is sufficient for a sacrifice.” – Jasper Ridley, *John Knox*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968, p. 43. Knox returned to teach the children of the nobility.

Henry Balnaves, one of the nobles, was impressed by the Reformer’s teaching talents and joined the preacher John Rough in inviting Knox to become the chaplain and pastor of the congregation of the castle of Saint Andrews. Knox refused the invitation, saying that they did not have the authority to make this call and returned to his room in tears. A few weeks later, he attended a service in which the Exhibitor defended the Roman church as the bride of Christ. Knox could not be silent and argued that the Roman church was not the bride of Christ but a whore. The congregation requested that his statement be examined the following Sunday. So, seven days later, he presented Daniel 7, comparing the papacy with the antichrist, a prophetic interpretation that was later inherited by Adventism. Knox acknowledged the Scriptures as the sole authority for establishing doctrine and confirmed the importance of justification by faith alone, elements that remained characteristic of his message for the rest of his life. Days later, he also presented a thesis against the mass, purgatory, and prayers for the dead.

Thus began the public career of John Knox, who became one of the most powerful preachers of the Protestant era.

From slave to chaplain in the king's service

A group of sixteen nobles, followers of the martyr Wishart, enraged with Cardinal David Beaton for killing the preacher, killed the cardinal at his residence two months later and moved into the castle of Saint Andrews, a Protestant center where Knox took up residence a year later.

Because of this rebellion, the Catholic Queen Regent Mary of Guise decided to seek the aid of Henry II, King of France, who sent a fleet of ships and attacked the fortress of the castle of Saint Andrews. On July 31, 1547, the Reformers in the fortress surrendered to the French navy and were taken captive. Among them was John Knox, who was now chained to benches in a ship's galley without room to move or change position. Along with other prisoners of war and convicts guilty of various offenses, Knox was forced to paddle and row, with an officer on one side ready to whip the slaves who did not follow orders in doing the hard work.

In the galleys, the slaves were forced to participate in the mass and give the sign of veneration for the virgin, or suffer torture. Knox refused. When the picture was pushed into his face so he would kiss it, he seized the picture and threw it into the sea, saying, "Let our Lady now save herself: she is light enough; let her learn to swim." –W. Stanford Reid, *Trumpeter of God*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974, pág. 57.

After several months and facing the harsh winter in the galleys, Knox's health rapidly deteriorated. Despite being sick, he comforted his companions in suffering, confident that they would be released and would carry forward the mission of proclaiming the Bible truth. Nineteen months of intense suffering, torment, and affliction passed before he was finally released in February 1549, possibly at the request of King Edward VI of England, who was Protestant-minded.

On April 7, 1549, Knox was called to minister as a preacher in the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, under the Church of England. At the end of 1550, he was transferred as a preacher for Saint Nicholas' Church in Newcastle upon Tyne; and then in 1551, he was appointed Chaplain of the King along with five others, receiving the opportunity to preach before royalty. During this time, he was opposed to the practice of receiving the communion while kneeling as well as to the doctrine of transubstantiation—the belief that the actual body of Christ was contained in the elements of the sacrament.

Knox met Elizabeth Bowes, a very active Protestant believer and scholar of the Scriptures, whom he came to consider a spiritual mentor, and Margery Bowes, one of her daughters, to whom he proposed marriage in 1553 and married shortly afterward.

A year later found him in Geneva, Switzerland, having fled from England when Mary Tudor came to the throne and re-established Roman Catholicism in England. Knox published a flyer attacking the queen for her Catholic positions, the bishops who influenced her assumption to the throne, and the Roman Emperor, Charles V, calling him "no less enemy of Christ than was Nero." –Geddes MacGregor, *The Thundering Scot*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957, p. 70.

Preaching in Frankfurt

Shortly after arriving in Switzerland, Knox received a letter inviting him to pastor a church of English exiles in Frankfurt, Germany, to which he agreed. In Frankfurt, a new problem arose: The liturgy in the religious service. Opinions were divided with the arrival of new refugees. Some supported a new liturgical system promoted by Knox and others, a strict monitoring of the book of liturgies of the Catholic Church. Through the counsel of Calvin, Knox achieved an agreement; but with the arrival of even more refugees, the pressure increased to such an extent that the opponents filed an accusation before the authorities in Frankfurt, and he was asked to leave. Consequentially, Knox returned to Geneva, Switzerland.

New effort in Scotland

In Scotland, despite the supremacy of Rome, some nobles made the decision to establish the word of God as the basis of their congregations, rejected Catholicism, and made Protestantism the official religion of the country. Some of them invited Knox to return to Scotland to inspire the Protestant movement. After repeated invitations, Knox decided to return to Scotland. For nine months he devoted himself intensely to the preaching of the reformed doctrines and the new liturgy in different churches in Scotland.

His return to Scotland and its renewed popularity alarmed the Catholic bishops, who summoned him to appear in Edinburgh on May 15, 1556, considering him a threat to the authority of the church. Knox was accompanied to the meeting by many influential nobles, and the bishops decided to cancel the legal proceedings. Knox was now free to preach the Protestant principles openly.

Third mission in Geneva

Suddenly Knox decided to return to Switzerland, and he arrived in Geneva on September 13, 1556, along with his wife, Margery Bowes, and his mother-in-law, Elizabeth Bowes. These were the happiest years for Knox, despite his hard work as a pastor in the English church in Geneva, which gathered in the *Église de Notre Dame la Neuve* (New Church of Our Lady), now known as the Auditorium of Calvin. In Geneva, his two sons were born, Nathaniel and Eleazar.

Knox recommended Geneva to all his friends in England as the best place of asylum for Protestants. In one of his letters he wrote: "I neither fear nor eschame to say, [Geneva] is the most perfect school of Christ that ever was in the earth since the days of the apostles. In other places I confess Christ to be truly preached; but manners and religion so sincerely reformed, I have not yet seen in any other place..." –Reid, p. 132.

In 1558, he wrote in Geneva one of his most famous pamphlets, titled "The First Sound of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women." Knox referred to the Catholic queens

Mary I of England and Mary of Guise of Scotland as persecuting Protestants and said that they should be removed from authority. This brochure was published anonymously and without consultation with Calvin. It was officially banned in England and even in Geneva by Calvin, who rejected it outright. Knox himself acknowledged that this booklet completed his drifting away from his friends in England. Elizabeth Tudor, who became queen a few months later, was deeply offended by the pamphlet and never forgave Knox.

An opening for the Protestant Reformation in Scotland

When a queen favoring Protestantism, Elizabeth Tudor, came to the throne in England, the English refugees in Geneva decided to return to their country. Knox decided to return to Scotland. Before his departure, the Geneva authorities gave him an honorable mention for his Protestant contributions.

In Scotland, the situation had become very tense between Queen Regent Mary of Guise and the Protestant uprising. Within days after his arrival in Scotland, Knox preached an eloquent sermon in the city of Perth against Catholic idolatry. As soon as he finished, a riot arose against the Catholic Church, resulting in the destruction of images, altars, and temples; and the walled city of Perth was dug into. Mary of Guise reacted by sending local troops to surround the city. Finally an agreement was negotiated by the Protestant militias to avoid a war with French troops allied to Mary of Guise. But once the city was entered, the queen regent filled it with her Scottish soldiers financed by France. This was taken as a betrayal on the part of some nobles who had supported the agreement between the Protestants and the supporters of Mary of Guise, so they decided to change their position and support the Protestant Reformation.

Because of the problems in Perth, Knox went to Saint Andrews, where again he preached a fiery sermon that brought about the same consequences as in Perth—an uprising with vandalism of the Catholic Church property. Protestant militias armed and took control

of several cities in Scotland, supported by the dynamic Knox's preaching. The Protestant nobles, with the help of the militia, again occupied Edinburgh, Scotland's main city. On July 25, 1559, the Articles of Leith were signed, after which the leading Protestant nobles, called Lords of the Congregation, withdrew from the occupation of Edinburgh and the Queen Regent of Scotland, Mary of Guise, promised freedom of conscience.

But the Queen regent had other plans. She requested support from French troops. As soon as they arrived at the port of Leith, the Protestants took back the city of Edinburgh and formally deposed Mary of Guise from the Regency of Scotland. Some nobles managed to convince England to send soldiers to assist the Protestant militia.

The sudden death of Queen Regent Mary of Guise on June 10, 1560, paved the way for a peaceful solution. On July 6 of that year, the Treaty of Edinburgh was signed, under which the French Navy and the English would withdraw from Scotland, strengthening the Protestant cause. On July 19, Knox held a service of gratitude at the national level in the Chapel of Saint Gilles in Edinburgh.

Beginning August 1, 1560, the Parliament met to give new direction to the official religion of Scotland. Knox, with the help of other ministers, prepared a new confession of faith that was approved by Parliament and formally initiated the Protestant Reformation in the country:

- The jurisdiction of the Pope in Scotland was abolished.
- All doctrines and practices contrary to the Protestant faith were condemned.
- The worship of Mary was rejected.
- The mass in Latin was abolished.
- Catholic holidays were done away with.
- Prayers for the dead were banned.
- The belief in purgatory was condemned.
- Crucifixes were condemned.
- The celebration of the mass was forbidden.
- It was confirmed that the Eucharist is only a symbol, in opposition to the doctrine of transubstantiation.

- Respect was confirmed for the authorities whenever they recognized God as the Supreme Authority and the Ten Commandments.

In addition, Parliament commissioned Knox and other ministers to prepare the new organization of the reformed church in Scotland and the "Book of Discipline." New religious services shifted the emphasis from being centered on priests to a partnership of all believers, with Bible studies, sermons, prayers, reading of Psalms, and congregational singing.

New difficulties

In December 1560, Knox received a serious blow when his wife Margery died, leaving to his care two small children, two and three years of age.

Not long afterward, on August 19, 1561, the sound of cannons was heard in the port of Leith, announcing the arrival of the young Queen Mary, daughter of the deceased Mary of Guise, who had been a refugee in France. It was declared that there would be no change in religious matters and that nothing should trouble her Catholic servants. Several nobles, who were interested in politics, decided to give their support to the new queen, but not John Knox, who raised his voice, preaching against the Catholic positions of the queen.

Queen Mary summoned Knox two weeks after her arrival in Scotland, accusing him of rebellion and writing against her authority.

"When brought face to face with the queen of Scotland, in whose presence the zeal of many a leader of the Protestants had abated, John Knox bore unswerving witness for the truth. He was not to be won by caresses; he quailed not before threats. The queen charged him with heresy. He had taught the people to receive a religion prohibited by the State, she declared, and had thus transgressed God's command enjoining subjects to obey their princes....

"'You shall believe God, who plainly speaketh in His Word,' answered the Reformer; 'and farther than the Word teaches you, ye shall believe neither the one nor the other. The Word of God is plain in itself, and if in any one place there be obscurity, the Holy Ghost,

who never is contrary to Himself, explains the same more clearly in other places, so that there can remain no doubt but unto such as are obstinately ignorant.' " –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 250, 251.

Knox was summoned to trial on several occasions by the queen, but the Reformer always responded with firm principles and managed to remain free due to his great influence and the support of the Protestant nobles. He reminded the queen that she should conform to the laws of Scotland and that the mass was forbidden. While the young queen had support from the nobles in politics and wished to reinstall the mass, Knox did not fear to defend his Protestant principles, continuing to influence decisions.

On March 26, 1564, Knox, being a widower and 50 years of age, decided to marry again, and did so with the young Margaret of Stewart, with whom he had three daughters—Martha, Margaret, and Elizabeth.

Knox did not silence his voice. In 1565, he preached, as he had done so many times, with conviction and fervor, against the marriage of Queen Mary to the Catholic Henry Stuart. This marriage did not last long, for Stuart was murdered. Queen Mary married again, this time to the main suspect in the murder of Stuart. Because of these suspicions, the authorities of Scotland forced the resignation of Queen Mary, and she was imprisoned in Loch Leven Castle but managed to escape on May 2, 1568.

The last years of John Knox

Scotland became embroiled in a civil war between those who supported the deposed Queen Mary and the Protestants. In 1571, the controller of Edinburgh Castle, which again supported Queen Mary, expelled the Protestants from the city. Knox retired to the castle of Saint Andrew but returned in 1572, already very weak physically because of his age but, as always, firm in his principles to disseminate the word in the chapel of Saint Gilles, to introduce his successor, pastor Lawson of Aberdeen.

Knox returned to his home for the last time and died on November 24,

1572, comforted by his young wife and surrounded by several of the Protestant nobles. His last wish was to hear the reading of God's word. His remains were buried in the Church of Saint Gilles with the words of the new Regent of Scotland, James Douglas: "Here lies one who never feared anyone." –Reid, p. 283.

"This truehearted Reformer feared not the face of man. The fires of martyrdom, blazing around him, served only to quicken his zeal to greater intensity. With the tyrant's ax held menacingly over his head, he stood his ground, striking sturdy blows on the right hand and on the left to demolish idolatry." –*The Great Controversy*, p. 250. Knox lived believing that "A man who is with God is always in the majority."

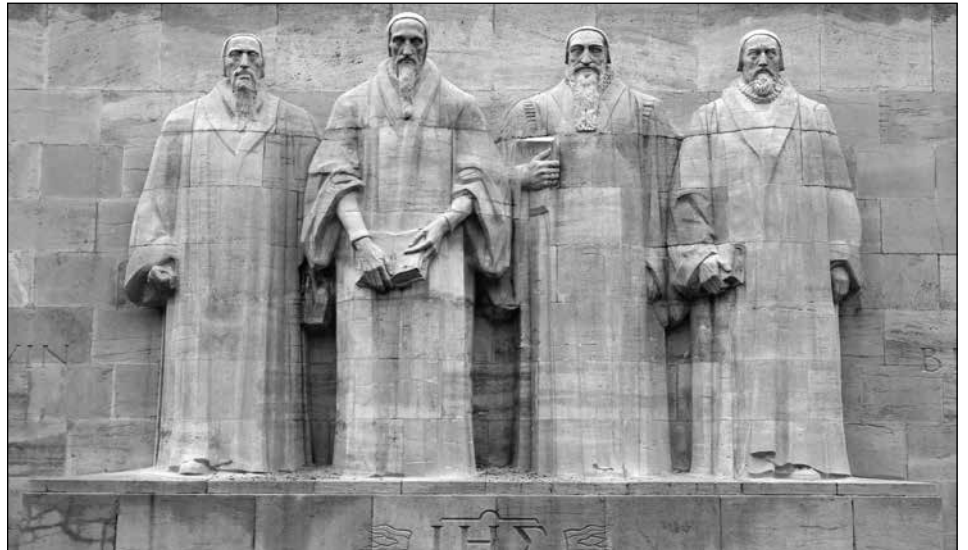
He remained true to his mission and to God's truth, waging the battles of the Lord until Scotland received its freedom. The Presbyterian Church

considers John Knox one of its founders.

Wrestle with God for souls

"If we have the interest that John Knox had when he pleaded before God for Scotland, we shall have success. He cried, 'Give me Scotland, Lord, or I die.' And when we take hold of the work and wrestle with God, saying, 'I must have souls; I will never give up the struggle,' we shall find that God will look upon our efforts with favor." –*Evangelism*, p. 217.

Dear brothers and sisters, there is a great work to do to enlighten the world with the truth and prepare for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is on our side; He wants to give us the same fervor that John Knox had for the defense of the truth. May God grant us the grace to be today's Reformers, wrestling for the salvation of souls. Amen. ■



"No message that ever fell from the lips of Christ was to be lost. Every word He spoke placed a new responsibility upon those who heard it. Ministers who are giving the last message of mercy to the world, who are presenting the truth in sincerity, who are relying upon God for strength, need never fear that their efforts are in vain. No one can say that the arrow of truth has not sped to the mark, and pierced the souls of those who are listening. Although no human eye could see the flight of the arrow of truth, although no human ear heard the cry of the wounded soul, yet the truth has silently cut its way to the heart." –*Signs of the Times*, February 6, 1896.

William Tyndale, Greatest of English Reformers

By Parmenas Shirima, Tanzania



"And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Hebrews 11:36-40.

The way of the Reformers

The way and life of reformers in all ages have been marked by starvation, suffering, affliction, torture, persecution, and loss of life for the sake of their faith in Jesus Christ. As we study about the great Reformers of the Sixteenth Century during this Week of Prayer, let us pray earnestly that God will give us perception and the spirit of these men of God, who "loved not their lives unto the death." Revelation 12:11. We also pray that our personal lives, actions, and examples as Reformers will bless and save souls for the kingdom of God.

"When Jesus revealed to His disciples the fate of Jerusalem and the scenes of the second advent, He foretold also the experience of His people from the time when He should be taken from them, to His return in power and glory for their deliverance. From Olivet the Saviour beheld the storms about to fall upon the apostolic church; and penetrating deeper into the future, His eye discerned the fierce, wasting tempests that were to beat upon His followers in the coming ages of darkness and persecution. In a few brief utterances of awful significance He foretold the portion which the rulers of this world would mete out to the church of God. Matthew 24:9, 21, 22. The followers of Christ must tread the same path of humiliation, reproach, and suffering which their Master trod....

"Wherever they sought refuge, the followers of Christ were hunted like beasts of prey. They were forced to seek concealment in desolate and solitary places. 'Destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.' Hebrews 11:37, 38....

"Under the fiercest persecution these witnesses for Jesus kept their faith unsullied. Though deprived of every comfort, shut away from the light of the sun, making their home in the dark but friendly bosom of the earth, they uttered no complaint. With words of faith, patience, and hope they encouraged one another to endure privation and distress. The loss of every earthly blessing could not force them to renounce their belief in Christ. Trials and persecution were but steps bringing them nearer their rest and their reward....

"In vain were Satan's efforts to destroy the church of Christ by violence. The great controversy in which the disciples of Jesus yielded up their lives did not cease when these faithful standard-bearers fell at their post. By defeat they conquered. God's workmen were slain, but His work went steadily forward. The gospel continued to spread and the number of its adherents to increase." –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 39-41.

William Tyndale, champion of reform in England

"William Tyndale (c. 1490-1536), greatest of the English Reformers, eminent linguist, and first translator of the New Testament from Greek into English, was recognized as one of the finest classical scholars of his time. Trained at both Oxford and Cambridge, he was thus linked to both universities. He entered Oxford, from which he received his B.A. and M.A. degrees, with a yearning for spiritual things and a bent toward languages. There he became a master in Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, and skilled in Spanish, French, and English. At Oxford he was influenced by John Colet's lectures in New Testament Greek, which broke with tradition and revolutionized Bible study.

"Tyndale then went on to Cambridge in 1516. There Tyndale, Frith, and Bilney all studied the Scripture-revealed provisions of regeneration. And there the Book spoke to Tyndale's heart, and he found God in its pages. It was a time of new beginnings, when his inward convictions began to find outward expression. Groups of students gathered to read the Greek and Latin Gospels of Erasmus. Having

taken priest's orders in 1521, Tyndale became tutor-chaplain to Sir John and Lady Walsh, of Old Sodbury. There he preached to eager listeners who filled the sanctuary, also in surrounding villages and towns, and at Bristol on the college green. His preaching stirred great interest, but the hostility of the priests was aroused and numerous disputes resulted in which Tyndale used the Greek text with telling effect." –Le Roy Froom, *The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers*, vol. 2, pp. 88, 89.

"A diligent student and an earnest seeker for truth, he [William Tyndale] had received the gospel from the Greek Testament of Erasmus. He fearlessly preached his convictions, urging that all doctrines be tested by the Scriptures. To the papist claim that the church had given the Bible, and the church alone could explain it, Tyndale responded: 'Do you know who taught the eagles to find their prey? Well, that same God teaches His hungry children to find their Father in His word. Far from having given us the Scriptures, it is you who have hidden them from us; it is you who burn those who teach them, and if you could, you would burn the Scriptures themselves.' – Merle D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, b. 18, ch. 4.

"Tyndale's preaching excited great interest; many accepted the truth. But the priests were on the alert, and no sooner had he left the field than they by their threats and misrepresentations endeavored to destroy his work. Too often they succeeded. 'What is to be done?' he exclaimed. 'While I am sowing in one place, the enemy ravages the field I have just left. I cannot be everywhere. Oh! if Christians possessed the Holy Scriptures in their own tongue, they could of themselves withstand these sophists. Without the Bible it is impossible to establish the laity in the truth.' –Ibid., b. 18, ch. 4." –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 245, 246.

Tyndale's plan

"A new purpose now took possession of his mind. 'It was in the language of Israel,' said he, 'that the psalms were sung in the temple of Jehovah; and shall not the gospel speak the language of England among us?... Ought the

church to have less light at noonday than at the dawn?... Christians must read the New Testament in their mother tongue.' The doctors and teachers of the church disagreed among themselves. Only by the Bible could men arrive at the truth. 'One holdeth this doctor, another that.... Now each of these authors contradicts the other. How then can we distinguish him who says right from him who says wrong?... How?... Verily by God's word.' –Ibid., b. 18, ch. 4.

"It was not long after that a learned Catholic doctor, engaging in controversy with him, exclaimed: 'We were better to be without God's laws than the pope's.' Tyndale replied: 'I defy the pope and all his laws; and if God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plow to know more of the Scripture than you do.' – Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, p. 19." –*The Great Controversy*, p. 246.

"While Luther was opening a closed Bible to the people of Germany, Tyndale was impelled by the Spirit of God to do the same for England. Wycliffe's Bible had been translated from the Latin text, which contained many errors. It had never been printed, and the cost of manuscript copies was so great that few but wealthy men or nobles could procure it; and, furthermore, being strictly proscribed by the church, it had had a comparatively narrow circulation. In 1516, a year before the appearance of Luther's theses, Erasmus had published his Greek and Latin version of the New Testament. Now for the first time the word of God was printed in the original tongue. In this work many errors of former versions were corrected, and the sense was more clearly rendered. It led many among the educated classes to a better knowledge of the truth, and gave a new impetus to the work of reform. But the common people were still, to a great extent, debarred from God's word. Tyndale was to complete the work of Wycliffe in giving the Bible to his countrymen." –*The Great Controversy*, p. 245.

Crisis for teaching and circulating the holy word

"The purpose which he had begun to cherish, of giving to the people the New Testament Scriptures in their own

language, was now confirmed, and he immediately applied himself to the work. Driven from his home by persecution, he went to London, and there he pursued his labors undisturbed. But again the violence of the papists forced him to flee." –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 246, 247.

"He was soon denounced by the priests and dignitaries. Quickly the storm broke into the open, and a real struggle was on. The chancellor convoked a conference of the clergy, and Tyndale was severely reprimanded for his growing 'heresies.' The crisis had come. His course was clear, as arrest and condemnation faced him. He must seek asylum on the Continent.

"Rome was then at the pinnacle of its power in Britain, and a pall of midnight darkness, corruption, and superstition covered the land. This Tyndale felt had been brought about by taking away the Key of Knowledge—the Holy Word. There was only one hope for Britain and the world, and that was to restore the Key. Distressed by the ignorance of the priests and monks, he determined to provide the remedy by translating the New Testament into English vernacular, thus lighting a torch in the midst of the spiritual darkness. From thenceforth he made this noble resolve his life mission. He rebelled against the common concept that the pope's laws were above God's,..." –*The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers*, vol. 2, p. 89.

"All England seemed closed against him, and he resolved to seek shelter in Germany. Here he began the printing of the English New Testament. Twice the work was stopped; but when forbidden to print in one city, he went to another. At last he made his way to Worms, where, a few years before, Luther had defended the gospel before the Diet. In that ancient city were many friends of the Reformation, and Tyndale there prosecuted his work without further hindrance. Three thousand copies of the New Testament were soon finished, and another edition followed in the same year.

"With great earnestness and perseverance he continued his labors. Notwithstanding the English authorities had guarded their ports with the strictest vigilance, the word of God was in

various ways secretly conveyed to London and thence circulated throughout the country. The papists attempted to suppress the truth, but in vain. The bishop of Durham at one time bought of a bookseller who was a friend of Tyndale his whole stock of Bibles, for the purpose of destroying them, supposing that this would greatly hinder the work. But, on the contrary, the money thus furnished, purchased material for a new and better edition, which, but for this, could not have been published. When Tyndale was afterward made a prisoner, his liberty was offered him on condition that he would reveal the names of those who had helped him meet the expense of printing his Bibles. He replied that the bishop of Durham had done more than any other person; for by paying a large price for the books left on hand, he had enabled him to go on with good courage." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 247.

His works and struggles in exile

"Arriving in Hamburg, he unpacked his previous Greek text and resumed his task. Later he went to Cologne, where he began to print the Gospels of Matthew and Mark first. Interruptions forced him to complete the task at Worms, where Luther made his brilliant defense before the Diet, and then at Antwerp. For twelve years he was hounded and hunted. Forbidden in one city, he fled to another—Wittenberg, Cologne, Hamburg, Worms, Strasbourg, Marburg, and Antwerp—to evade his oppressors. In 1524 he reached Wittenberg in Saxony, where the Reformation had made great progress. There he met Luther and was inspired by his strong faith and dynamic action. Under such environment he joyfully entered upon the completion of his great task. His translation was ready within a year.

"Again a London merchant furnished the funds to secure a printer, and six thousand copies were struck off. But an interdict was issued to prevent copies from entering Britain under pain of excommunication. Although the English ports were guarded, thousands of copies were smuggled into England, concealed in bales and boxes of merchandise, and were quickly circulated everywhere. Church officials seized

and burned many, and the bishop of London and Sir Thomas More fought and exposed the translation. But Tyndale brought out a revised edition, and there were seven more printings in the next ten years, all speedily sold. Cardinal Wolsey, who had sought to prevent copies from entering England, ordered Luther's and Tyndale's books burned. And a great bonfire, kindled outside St. Paul's, consumed all the Tyndale Testaments that could be gathered up. But other editions replaced those that were burned, and many were sold on the Continent, as well." —*The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers*, vol. 2, p. 90.

Other works

Tyndale made a lot of corrections to older Bible versions, and this displeased the Catholic authorities. "Common errors were corrected. But bishops were incensed, for Tyndale used 'repentance' for 'penance,' 'acknowledge,' for 'confess,' 'image,' for 'idol,' 'congregation,' for 'church,' and 'love,' for 'charity'—basing his translation on Erasmus' Greek text and borrowing from Luther's arrangement. Wyclif's Bible was largely obsolete and inaccessible, and had been taken from the faulty Latin Vulgate. Tyndale's was a simple, honest, straightforward translation, shunning the ornate, euphemistic style of the times. The Bible was now available to all and exerted a powerful influence on the English Reformation, as well as setting the pattern upon which most later revisers worked. Indeed, 90 percent of the Authorized Version of 1611 [*King James Version*] is attributable to Tyndale. His great learning had been made to serve a great cause. He is thus rightfully established among the literary immortals of England—his style characterized by tenderness, simplicity, and grandeur of phrasing. Indeed, the persistence of Tyndale's work has been called the 'miracle of English letter.'

"In 1528 Tyndale wrote on Justification by Faith, under the *Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, with several editions following. With him there was one uniform principle—the infallible authority of Holy Scripture as the rule of faith and practice and the test of all teaching. This he set forth in *The Obedience of Christian Man*, in which he sought

to restore Holy Scripture to its proper place in the hearts of men, holding that the true sense of the Bible—contrary to the scholastic emphasis of the day—is its literal meaning. His view was therefore much more in accord with the views of our day than with that of his own time. Thus the two great principles of the Reformation were brought sharply to the forefront. So while Luther had opened a closed Bible in Germany, Tyndale had done the same for Britain. And his *The Practice of Prelates* was an unsparing indictment of the Roman hierarchy.

"In 1529 Tyndale repaired to the Low Countries to translate the Pentateuch [first 5 books of the Old Testament]. In this he was assisted by Miles Coverdale, who virtually completed the translation. By this time Tyndale had rejected both Catholicism's transubstantiation and Luther's consubstantiation, regarding the celebration of the Lord's Supper as purely commemorative and symbolic." —*The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers*, pp. 90, 91.

Martyrdom

In 1527, Sir Thomas More, became Lord Chancellor of England; he championed the Roman Catholic doctrines, engaging in a literary war against Tyndale. "In 1529 More produced his *Dialogue of Sir Thomas More*, attacking the positions of Luther and Tyndale, and defending Rome." We may compare him with Tetzels in Germany, who was the pope's agent and the bitter opposer of Martin Luther. More's book "dealt with the doctrines that divided Christendom—Tyndale championing the Scripture, and More, the church. This Tyndale answered in 1531 with satiric force. More soon issued *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answers*. The exchange became the classic controversy of the English Reformation.

"The bishops had burned Tyndale's books. Now they resolved that he too must burn at the stake. This Tyndale had anticipated. Meantime, Cromwell had become privy councilor, and Tyndale was invited to return to England from the Continent, under safe-conduct. But this he felt to be unsafe because of high ecclesiastical resentment. Then Henry VIII [the King of England]

turned against him, denounced his writings, and sought to bring him to trial. He asked Charles V [King of Germany] to deliver him, but the emperor refused to do so.

“Tyndale had found refuge in the home of an English merchant in Antwerp, and thought he was safe. But he was lured from home by an English acquaintance, actually an agent for his enemies in England. Decoyed into another jurisdiction, he was seized by the authorities of Brussels in the name of the emperor, and conveyed to the castle of Vilvorde, near Brussels. Here, under arrest, he languished in prison for about seventeen months through a protracted trial for heresy. Finally, on October 6, 1536, he was taken outside the castle to suffer death at Brussels, in Flanders. Fastened to a stake, he was strangled by the executioner, who then burned his body.

“He had expected just that, and his last words were the prayer, ‘Lord, open the eyes of the King of England.’ Significantly enough, the very next year the public reading of the word of God was authorized by royal decree. And five years later a Bible, allegedly translated by various ‘learned men,’ reached the desk of Henry VIII, who ordered that every church in the kingdom be provided with a copy. Tyndale had triumphed. He had left England an unknown exile, and had lived abroad in poverty, obscurity, and danger; yet before his death his name had become a household word in England and was widely known on the Continent. And the Bible had become known in the common tongue of the people. Truth was established.” —*The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers*, pp. 92, 93.

A light in the darkness

These, in short, are some of the most significant experiences of this faithful servant of God, who spared no sacrifice for the cause of the Lord. They show that while the ministry of the gospel may cost God’s faithful servants very much, the results are far superior to those of any other human endeavor and will surpass our greatest efforts and imagination.

William Tyndale was a man with a mission. While John Wycliffe is said

to have been the morning star of the Reformation, Tyndale could well be called its moon. He gave what he received, and through his dedication English monarchs and mere men rejoiced to have the light of the word of God in their own language. Like Moses, he died without seeing the complete deliverance of his people from slavery, and in this darkening world the light from his funeral pyre still shines brightly for all who will read the word with honest eyes.

Tyndale’s example is worthy of emulation. Therefore, may God bless these Readings to inspire everyone of us to desire and receive the spirit and dedication of past Reformers, prophets, and apostles. As it is written: “Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace.” “... The night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.” Acts 18:9; 23:11. Amen! ■

“How often those who trusted the word of God, though in themselves utterly helpless, have withstood the power of the whole world—Enoch, pure in heart, holy in life, holding fast his faith in the triumph of righteousness against a corrupt and scoffing generation; Noah and his household against the men of his time, men of the greatest physical and mental strength and the most debased in morals; the children of Israel at the Red Sea, a helpless, terrified multitude of slaves, against the mightiest army of the mightiest nation on the globe; David, a shepherd lad, having God’s promise of the throne, against Saul, the established monarch, bent on holding fast his power; Shadrach and his companions in the fire, and Nebuchadnezzar on the throne; Daniel among the lions, his enemies in the high places of the kingdom; Jesus on the cross, and the Jewish priests and rulers forcing even the Roman governor to work their will; Paul in chains led to a criminal’s death, Nero the despot of a world empire.

“Such examples are not found in the Bible only. They abound in every record of human progress. The Vaudois and the Huguenots, Wycliffe and Huss, Jerome and Luther, Tyndale and Knox, Zinzendorf and Wesley, with multitudes of others, have witnessed to the power of God’s word against human power and policy in support of evil. These are the world’s true nobility. This is its royal line. In this line the youth of today are called to take their places.

“Faith is needed in the smaller no less than in the greater affairs of life. In all our daily interests and occupations the sustaining strength of God becomes real to us through an abiding trust.

“Viewed from its human side, life is to all an untried path. It is a path in which, as regards our deeper experiences, we each walk alone. Into our inner life no other human being can fully enter. As the little child sets forth on that journey in which, sooner or later, he must choose his own course, himself deciding life’s issues for eternity, how earnest should be the effort to direct his trust to the sure Guide and Helper!” —*Education*, pp. 254, 255.

John Calvin, the French Reformer

By Idel Suarez, Jr., U.S.A.



"And they that understand among the people shall instruct many:... Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help." Daniel 11:33, 34.

As the prophet Daniel predicted, when darkness and tribulation pervaded the world, God raised up men and women of understanding, in both university circles and palaces, to "instruct many." This "little help" came through the great Reformation of the Sixteenth Century, which restored many Bible truths to the world. Throughout Europe God aroused the consciences of scholars to search His holy word. Germany gave birth to Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon; France, to John Calvin and Theodore Beza. "... Under God's blessing and the labors of those noble men whom He had raised to succeed Luther, Protestantism was not overthrown."¹

Calvin was a "careful thinker who bound the various Protestant doctrines into a cohesive whole." He did not allow justification by faith to "eclipse the rest of the Christian" gospel, and so "was able to pay more attention to" what Luther did not emphasize so much; namely, the "doctrine of sanctification."²

Family background and conversion

John Calvin was born in Noyon, in Picardie, France, on July 10, 1509.³ "Calvin's mother was Jeanne le Franc of Cambri," a strict, pious woman. "She died early."⁴ John's father, Gerard, died after being excommunicated from the Catholic Church. Two of three brothers accepted the truths of the Reformation.⁵

Two events changed Calvin's life in Paris. First, his cousin Pierre Robert Olivetan became a Reformer and witnessed to Calvin. (Olivetan later translated the Old Testament from Hebrew into French.⁶) He told Calvin, "There are but two religions in the world.... The one ... which men have invented, in ... which man saves himself by ceremonies and good works; the other is ... revealed in the Bible, and ... teaches man to look for salvation solely from the free grace of God."⁷

Calvin, at the time a member of the Catholic clergy, replied to his Protestant cousin, "I will have none of your new doctrines.... Think you that I have lived in error all my days?"⁸ Yet Olivetan's words continued to haunt Calvin, that "The mediation of saints, good works, the ceremonies of the church, all were powerless to atone for sin. He could see before him nothing but the blackness of eternal despair."⁹

The second event that transformed Calvin was the burning of a heretic in a public square in Paris. Calvin "was filled with wonder at the expression of peace which rested upon the martyr's countenance. Amid the tortures of that dreadful death, and under the more terrible condemnation of the church, [the martyr] manifested a faith and courage which the young student painfully contrasted with his own despair and darkness, while living in strictest

obedience to the church. Upon the Bible, he knew, the heretics rested their faith. He determined to study it, and discover, if he could, the secret of their joy. In the Bible he found Christ."¹⁰

Education

Calvin "did not receive consecration, nor did he fulfill the duties of a priest, but he became a member of the clergy."¹¹ By 1527, he had obtained a Theology Licentiate in Arts from the University of Paris.¹² "In 1528, he received a Masters of Arts."¹³ At his father's prompting, Calvin abandoned his theological studies and pursued a law degree in Orleans. There, "he was presented with a Doctor's degree."¹⁴ Then Calvin enrolled in the Academy of Bourges and received a Licentiate in Law.¹⁵ Yet he really yearned "to devote his life to the gospel."¹⁶ After his father died, Calvin returned to Paris for a short time for classical and Biblical studies¹⁷ but had to flee south because of his Protestant faith.

Princess Margaret of Navarre, Calvin's protector

Luther had been safeguarded by Frederick the Wise, and Calvin would be protected by another wise member of royalty. Margaret of Navarre, the sister of the French King Francis I,¹⁸ had accepted the Reformation message and invited Calvin to join her court. She became the great patroness of the French Reformers.¹⁹

Calvin's gospel ministry "began with the people at their homes.... Those who heard the message carried the good news to others, and soon the teacher passed beyond the city to the outlying towns and hamlets. To both the castle and the cabin he found entrance, and he went forward, laying

the foundation of churches that were to yield fearless witnesses for the truth."²⁰

But the tide turned, and Protestant church services were outlawed. Protestants were again persecuted, imprisoned, and murdered. In 1534, King Francis I had "thirty-two martyrs ... burned alive."²¹

Calvin returned to Paris. "He had no thought of danger, when friends came hurrying to his room with the news that officers were on their way to arrest him.... Some of his friends detained the officers at the door, while others assisted the Reformer to let himself down from a window, and he rapidly made his way to the outskirts of the city.... Traveling southward, he again found refuge in the dominions of Margaret."²²

Travel in Switzerland

Calvin later returned to Paris but found every door closed to the gospel, so he went to Basel, Switzerland, where he published his most famous work, *The Institutes of Christian Religion*, in 1536.

Providence led him to pass through Geneva on his way to Strasburg. In 1536, William Farel, who had helped convert Geneva from a Catholic city-state to a Protestant stronghold, interviewed young John Calvin. Unable to convince Calvin to stay in Geneva, Farel said: "You are following only your own wishes, and I declare, in the name of God Almighty, that if you do not assist us in this work of the Lord, the Lord will punish you for seeking your own interest rather than His."

These words struck Calvin so hard that he later wrote: "William Farel's ... dreadful imprecation ... I felt to be as if God had from heaven laid His mighty hand upon me to arrest me.... I was so stricken with terror that I desisted from [my] journey."²³

Ironically, both Farel and Calvin were expelled after two years, in 1538, by the new elected Council of Geneva. The council included "secret Catholics," who worked to banish these two ministers who refused to give the Lord's Supper to members living in sin or at variance with other citizens.²⁴

The Strasburg sojourn (1538-1541)

In 1540, Calvin married Idelette de Bure, a poor Anabaptist widow with several children.²⁵ She died in 1549.²⁶ Calvin never remarried but wrote tenderly of his deceased wife.

Calvin wrote a treatise against a Cardinal James Sadolet of the city of Carpentras, who had enticed Geneva to return to Catholicism.²⁷ This treatise reached Martin Luther at Wittenberg University. "I rejoice that God raises up men," wrote Luther, "who will ... finish the war against Antichrist which I began."²⁸

Meanwhile, the four men who expelled Calvin from Geneva were found to be immoral. "One had to be condemned to death for murder, another for forgery, a third for treason, and the fourth died while trying to escape arrest."²⁹

So, on May 1, 1541, the Council of Geneva "annulled the ... banishment, and pronounced Farel and Calvin to be honorable men," eventually persuading "Calvin to resume his pastorate at Geneva."³⁰

The principles of reformation taught in Geneva

Geneva would become the city of Calvin, where he addressed many issues regarding sanctification, ten of which are summarized here.

1. Morality and purity of life. "For nearly thirty years Calvin labored at Geneva ... to establish there a church adhering to the morality of the Bible.... He was instrumental in promulgating truths that were of special importance in his time, in maintaining the principles of Protestantism against the fast-returning tide of popery, and in promoting in the reformed churches simplicity and purity of life."³¹

Bernardino Ochino, an Italian Protestant who found refuge in Geneva, wrote: "Cursing and swearing, unchastity, sacrilege, adultery, and impure living, such as prevail in many places where I have lived, are here unknown. There are no pimps and harlots.... Benevolence is so great that the poor need not beg ... nor is there any simony, murder, or party spirit, but only peace and charity."³²

2. The sanctity of marriage. Calvin wrote clearly against divorce and remarriage. He spoke of "the sacred and indissoluble bond of marriage."³³ As a lawyer, he argued for lifelong marriage from fixed natural law and perpetual law viewpoints. According to natural law, "God joined the male to the female, so that the two made an entire man; and therefore he who divorces his wife tears from him, as it were, the half of himself. But nature does not allow any man to tear in pieces his own body" and remain alive.³⁴ Calvin considered the "connection of marriage" as more binding than the natural bond of a son "to his father and mother." Hence, "marriage is not dissolved by divorces," because "it is an agreement that is consecrated by the name of God."³⁵ "Unrestrained liberty in divorcing wives," he argued, was a sort of "polygamy."³⁶ God established marriage as a "perpetual law, which ought to remain in force till the end of the world."³⁷ "He is an adulterer who rejects his wife and takes another."³⁸

3. Closed communion. Calvin believed that those judged to be living in open sin could not participate in the Lord's Supper. Such should be "excluded from [the Lord's Supper] by the prohibitions of the Lord."³⁹ When challenged to change this position, Calvin repeated the words of Chrysostom, an early ecclesiastical writer: "I will die sooner than this hand shall stretch forth the sacred things of the Lord to those who have been judged despisers."⁴⁰

4. Strong work ethic. Although small and timid, Calvin worked long hours. Thus, by example, he promoted a strong work ethic.

"He labored 12 to 18 hours a day as a preacher, administrator, professor of theology, superintendent of churches and schools, adviser to municipal councils, and regulator of public morals and church liturgy; meanwhile he kept enlarging the Institutes, wrote commentaries on the Bible, and maintained a [busy] correspondence.... He slept little, ate little, fasted frequently."⁴¹ "He refused increases in salary, but labored to raise funds for the relief of the poor."⁴²

5. Church Manual. In 1541, Calvin published a reformation church manu-

al, *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*.⁴³ In it he detailed the roles of pastors, elders, teachers, and deacons. He advocated for a presbytery to govern the church. This means that a committee that included the pastor, elders, and laity would decide on church matters, not the bishop or pastor exclusively. The manual dealt even with modesty in dress.⁴⁴

6. Principles of Faith. Like Luther, Calvin wrote a *Catechism of the Church of Geneva* for children. In 1562, he wrote an enlarged, 60-principle version, *The Confession of Faith in the Name of the Reformed Churches of France*.⁴⁵

7. Personal Bible studies. Starting in France, Calvin made “his way from house to house, opening the Bible to the people, and speaking to them of Christ and Him crucified.”⁴⁶ Later in Geneva, a minister with an elder “visited every house and family annually” to instruct them in reformation doctrine.⁴⁷

8. Canvassing and publishing. “From Geneva, publications and teachers went out to spread the reformed doctrines. To this point the persecuted of all lands looked for instruction, counsel and encouragement.”⁴⁸ “Literature printed at Geneva flooded into Europe, carried by indefatigable colporteurs” setting all Europe on fire.⁴⁹

9. Higher education. In 1559, Calvin founded the Geneva Academy “under the direction of Theodore Beza.”⁵⁰ This educational institution trained French and foreign pastors. Its most illustrious graduate was John Knox, who established Protestantism in Scotland.

10. Social work. “The city of Calvin became a refuge for the hunted Reformers of all Western Europe. Fleeing ... fugitives came to ... Geneva. Starving, wounded, bereft of home and kindred, they were warmly welcomed and tenderly cared for; and ... they blessed the city of their adoption by their skill, their learning, and their piety.”⁵¹ “Six thousand came into a city where the number of people was normally thirteen thousands. Calvin nearly killed himself looking after them.”⁵²

Calvin's errors

As with that of other Reformers, Calvin's “course as a public leader was not faultless, nor were his doctrines

free from error.”⁵³ At times his temper, political view, and doctrines were not correct.

Temperament. Calvin had an anger problem, which he regretted. Like Elijah, Calvin was encompassed by “passions.” James 5:17.

On his deathbed, Calvin called for the principal statesmen and preachers of Geneva and asked for forgiveness. He said, “I am highly indebted to you [for] your having borne patiently with my vehemence, which was sometimes carried to excess; my sins, in this respect, I trust, have been pardoned by God also.”⁵⁴

“God did not select the Reformers because they were overbearing, passionate men. He accepted them as they were, notwithstanding these traits of character; but He would have placed tenfold greater responsibilities upon them had they been of humble mind, having their spirits under control of reason.”⁵⁵

Politics. Regretfully, he condoned the capital punishment of religious dissidents. Religious liberty was not tolerated in Geneva. From 1542 to 1564, 58 persons were put to death and 76 were banished for violating the rules in Geneva.⁵⁶ In one year alone, 14 women were burned at the stake for the crime of witchcraft and for supposedly bringing the plague to Geneva.⁵⁷

In a letter to Sulzer, Calvin justified his reasoning for burning at the stake Michael Servetus, a religious dissident. He asserted that if the papists were “so bitter and bold” on behalf of their “superstitions” so as to “shed the blood of the innocent, it should shame Christian magistrates” not to exercise the same penalties to protect “certain truths.”⁵⁸

Election. Calvin believed in unconditional election and predestination. He thought that God arbitrarily condemns some to hell and chooses eternal life for others. Like Calvin, we also believe in God's sovereignty, predestination, and election; but election is conditional. Calvin believed that only the elect are called.⁵⁹ But God calls all men and women to repentance, but He chooses only those who answer His call. Those who choose Him are the chosen ones. He gives everyone a “measure of faith” (Romans 12:3) and desires “all to be

saved” (1 Timothy 2:4), but only a few respond. Those who choose to respond will be saved. Those who reject His pleadings choose to be lost.

Peter encourages us to “make our election sure” (2 Peter 1:10) by faith and obedience. God's love is unconditional, but His salvation is not. We believe that election is conditional.

“There is no such thing in the word of God as unconditional election—once in grace, always in grace. In the second chapter of Second Peter the subject is made plain and distinct.... By faithful obedience to the truth they are to make their calling and election sure.”⁶⁰

“There is the election of God on the condition of practice, and there is no other election in the Bible. Election is within our reach. ‘If ye do these things, ye shall never fall.’”⁶¹

Calvin's last words

As he sensed death nearing, Calvin called for a lawyer. Calvin's last will shows that he did not see himself as infallible or sinless but claimed the grace and blood of Christ as his only hope of salvation in the coming judgment. He declared: “With my whole soul I embrace the mercy which He has exercised toward me through Jesus Christ, atoning for my sins with the merits of His death and passion, that in this way He might satisfy for all my crimes and faults, and blot them from his remembrance.... I beg Him that He may be pleased so to wash and purify me in the blood which my Sovereign Redeemer has shed for the sins of the human race, that under His shadow I may be able to stand at the judgment seat.”⁶²

Calvin died on May 27, 1564, at the age of 55.⁶³ His influence extended from the French Huguenots to America's Pilgrim fathers. Even today's Seventh-day Adventist Church, Reform Movement, owes much to the work and teachings of John Calvin. May we, by God's grace, adopt his virtues. Amen. ■

¹ Ellen G. White, “The French Reformation,” *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950), pp. 235, 236.

² Julio L. Gonzalez, “John Calvin,” *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 2 (New York: Harper Collins, 1985), p. 61.

³ Ibid.

- ⁴ Theodore Huggenvik, "The Reformation in France and Switzerland," *An Outline of Church History* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1939), p. 197.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Theodore Beza, "Life of John Calvin," in *John Calvin: Tracts and Letters*, vol. I; Tracts, Part I, ed. Henry Beveridge (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), p. 22.
- ⁷ Ellen G. White, "The French Reformation," *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950), p. 220.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 220, 221.
- ¹¹ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 221.
- ¹² Theodore Huggenvik, "The Reformation in France and French Switzerland," p. 198.
- ¹³ Justo L. Gonzalez, "John Calvin," p. 62.
- ¹⁴ Theodore Beza, "Life of John Calvin," p. 23.
- ¹⁵ Theodore Huggenvik, "The Reformation in France and French Switzerland," p. 198. Will Durant, "John Calvin," p. 460.
- ¹⁶ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 221.
- ¹⁷ A.G. Dickens, "Calvin and Geneva," *Reformation and Society in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1966), p. 151.
- ¹⁸ Will Durant, "John Calvin," *The Story of Civilization*, Part VI: The Reformation (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), p. 460.
- ¹⁹ Theodore Beza, "The Life of John Calvin," p. 25.
- ²⁰ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 221, 222.
- ²¹ Theodore Beza, "The Life of John Calvin," p. 26.
- ²² Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 223, 224.
- ²³ John Calvin, "The Author's Preface," *The Commentary on the Psalms* in Calvin's Commentary, vol. X (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), p. 43.
- ²⁴ Will Durant, "John Calvin," p. 469. Theodore Beza, "The Life of John Calvin," p. 32.
- ²⁵ Will Durant, "John Calvin," p. 470.
- ²⁶ Theodore Huggenvik, "The Reformation in France," p. 200.
- ²⁷ Theodore Beza, "The Life of John Calvin," p. 32.
- ²⁸ Will Durant, "John Calvin," p. 471.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 236.
- ³² Will Durant, "John Calvin," p. 476.
- ³³ John Calvin, *Commentary on the Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, vol. 1, in *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. 16, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), p. 378.
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, in *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. 20, trans. John Pringle (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), p. 239.
- ³⁶ John Calvin, *Commentary on the Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, vol. 1, p. 380.
- ³⁷ Ibid., p. 381.
- ³⁸ Ibid., p. 382.
- ³⁹ John Calvin, *Institutes of Christian Religion*, book iv, xvii, 43, in *A Compend of the Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. Hugh Thomson Kerr (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1939), p. 200.
- ⁴⁰ Theodore Beza, "The Life of John Calvin," p. 63.
- ⁴¹ Will Durant, "John Calvin," p. 472.
- ⁴² Ibid., p. 477.
- ⁴³ Martin I. Klauber, "Reformation on the Run," *Christian History*, vol. XX, no. 3, p. 21.
- ⁴⁴ Vivian H.H. Green, "The Protestant Reformation," *A New History of Christianity*, rev. ed. (Phoenix Mill, Great Britain: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1998), pp. 135-136.
- ⁴⁵ *John Calvin: Tracts and Letters*, vol. 2, ed. Henry Beveridge (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009).
- ⁴⁶ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 222.
- ⁴⁷ Will Durant, "John Calvin," p. 473.
- ⁴⁸ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 236.
- ⁴⁹ Vivian H.H. Green, "The Protestant Reformation," p. 136.
- ⁵⁰ Justo L. Gonzalez, "John Calvin," *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 2 (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 1985), p. 68.
- ⁵¹ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 236.
- ⁵² Roland H. Bainton, "A Chosen People," *The Church of Our Fathers* (Philadelphia: West Minister Press, 1950), p. 153.
- ⁵³ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 236.
- ⁵⁴ Theodore Beza, "The Life of John Calvin," p. 90.
- ⁵⁵ Ellen G. White, "The Relation of Church Membership," *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), p. 486.
- ⁵⁶ Will Durant, "John Calvin," p. 473.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ John Calvin to Sulzer, Geneva, September 8, 1553, in *John Calvin Tracts and Letters*, ed. Jules Bonnet, and trans. David Constable (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), pp. 427-430.
- ⁵⁹ John Calvin, *Institutes of Christian Religion*, book III, xxiv, p. 1.
- ⁶⁰ Ellen G. White, Manuscript 57, 1900, quoted in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, rev., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), pp. 1114, 1115.
- ⁶¹ Ellen G. White, Manuscript 49, 1894, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), p. 944.
- ⁶² Theodore Beza, "Life of John Calvin," p. 86.
- ⁶³ Theodore Huggenvik, "The Reformation in France and French Switzerland," p. 201.

"The Word of God is the great detector of error; to it we believe everything must be brought. The Bible must be our standard for every doctrine. We must study it reverentially. We are to receive no one's opinion without comparing it with the Scriptures. Here is divine authority, which is supreme in matters of faith.

"It is the word of the living God that is to decide all controversies. It is when people mingle their own human smartness with God's words of truth, in giving sharp thrusts to those who are in controversy with them, that they show that they have not a sacred reverence for God's Inspired word. They mix the human with the divine, the common with the sacred, and they belittle God's word....

"The correct interpretation of the Scriptures is not all that God requires. He enjoins upon us that we should not only know the truth, but that we should practice the truth as it is in Jesus. We are to bring into our practice, in our association with others, the spirit of Him who gave us the truth. We must not only search for the truth as for hidden treasures, but it is a positive necessity, if we are laborers together with God, that we comply with the conditions laid down in His word, and bring the spirit of Christ into our hearts, that our understanding may be strengthened and we become apt teachers to make known to others the truth revealed to us in His word....

"There is no assurance that our doctrine is right and free from all chaff and error unless we are daily doing the will of God. If we do His will, we shall know of the doctrine. We shall see the truth in its sacred beauty. We shall accept it with reverence and godly fear, and then we can present to others that which we know is truth." —(*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, pp. 42-44) *Christ Triumphant*, p. 331.

ILLUSTRATIONS, pages 1, 28: Wartburg Castle, Eisenach, Germany (Shutterstock.com).
Page 28, top to bottom: Imperial Diet in Worms, Martin Luther's room in Wartburg Castle, door of Castle Church in Wittenberg, Martin Luther's handwriting, Martin and Katharina Luther with their children.



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 Danckens wurd 6. Junij 1531
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