

Covenant Protestant Reformed Church Ballymena, NI

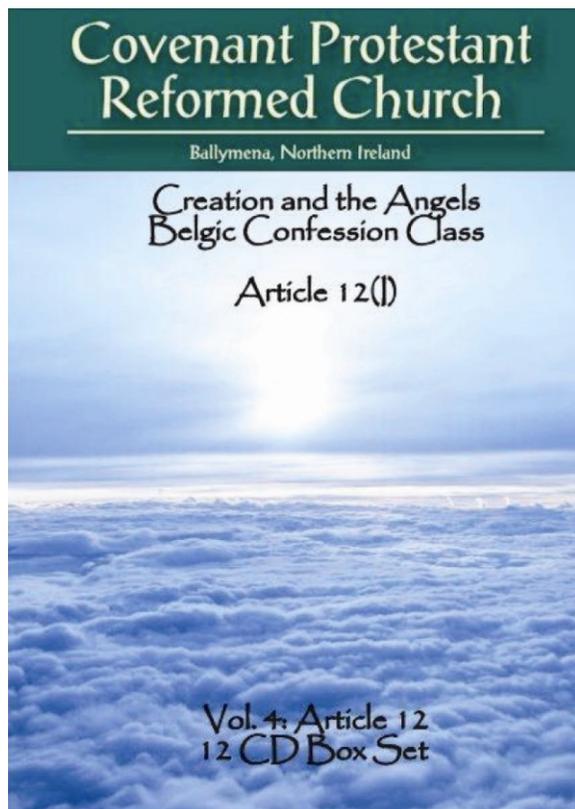
13 January, 2012

Dear saints in the
Protestant Reformed Churches,

Angelic Realm

The elect angels (I Tim. 5:21) are “all ministering spirits sent forth [by the triune God] to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Heb. 1:14). Jehovah uses His angels to help us, His weak and limited people, understand more about Himself, especially His perfections, providence, and covenant presence, as well as the work of Jesus Christ.

After finishing twelve classes on the (good) angels, we advertised them in an article in the *Ballymena Times*: just £5 for an attractive box set of 12 CDs with free postage and packaging (13 December)! I was also asked to write an article for that paper’s churches page in the last issue of 2011, which I entitled “Kept by God (and His Angels)” (27 December).



After concluding the classes on the faithful angels, our Wednesday night class is now studying the wicked angels (www.cprf.co.uk/audio/belgicconfessionclass.htm). So far, we have covered the fall of the devil and his demons—looking at many intriguing chapters and their relevance for us today, noting what the Bible says and does not say about this mysterious event. In the next several weeks, we shall see how the “evil spirits” seek “to ruin the church and every member thereof...by their wicked stratagems” (*Belgic Confession* 12). After all, “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12).

On Christmas day, Rev. McGeown and I swapped pulpits, in order to enable him to spend time with his family. Rev. McGeown preached that Sunday morning in the CPRC on “The Angels’ Chorus at the Saviour’s Birth” (Luke 2:14); Mary and I headed to Limerick for the two services of the Limerick Reformed Fellowship.

Last Lord’s Day, I finished a ten-sermon series on “God’s Glorious Perfections,” on the incommunicable attributes of God, those divine virtues wherein He is most unlike us: His sovereignty, spirituality, simplicity (unity), immutability (unchangeability), eternity, omnipresence, omniscience (knowledge), and omnipotence (power) (www.cprf.co.uk/audio/otherseries.htm). The in-depth study of the blessed Trinity and the angels (*Belgic Confession* 8-12) on Wednesday nights over the last several months greatly helped in preparing these sermons on God’s beautiful perfections. I hope, Lord willing, to preach on God’s communicable attributes (love, holiness, mercy, wisdom, etc.) in the future.

CPRC

Debbie Murray, the daughter of Stephen and Eunice, was baptized (as an adult) on 20 November and so was able to come to her first Lord's Supper (18 December). It is heartening to see the young people in the church become confessing members as God fulfils His covenant promises to us.

But whereas Debbie was joining our membership, Anga Dyck, who moved to us from Germany about eighteen months ago, moved on to Limerick. We had a farewell tea for her after the Sunday evening service of 11 December. She is to marry Sam Watterson of the Limerick Reformed Fellowship on 2 March, and, having been offered a good job in Limerick, she decided to move there before the wedding.



As far as visitors from the PRC goes, we have had Philip Rainey (First PRC), originally from Northern Ireland (25 December), and Kristin and Briana Prins (Trinity PRC), who stayed with Mary and me (27 December–6 January). The two girls brought an amazing amount of books, especially Prof. Engelsma's superb *Covenant and Election*, which we advertised with the last *Covenant Reformed News*. Kristin and Briana really fitted in well here and were kept busy by various people from the congregation—climbing hills, attending church meetings, racing karts, visiting the saints for dinner, braving gale force winds and sea spray at the north coast, etc.

On Friday, 30 December, the CPRC held a lecture on "Scripture Alone!" in our church building. This is a key subject in the evangelical world today, for most (unknown

to themselves) do not hold the Reformed doctrine of *sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone) but fall for the false doctrine of *solo Scriptura*, which disparages creeds, biblical church offices and authority, and good traditions (the faithful exposition and application of God's Word, as per II Thessalonians 2:15). This Anabaptist view of Scripture typically leads to and/or arises out of individualism, disparagement of faithful church institutes, house churchism, etc. We had a fine night of fellowship, including with four brethren from Belfast.

Mary is nearing the end of converting the 5,000 or so pages of the CPRC website (www.cprc.co.uk) to the new format. It has been a long haul and we expect a few glitches when we finally upload it, but it should soon display our web materials properly on all browsers (D.V.).

A new translator from Budapest has sent us the *Belgic Confession* and the *Canons of Dordt* in Hungarian, plus seven of his own translations. These will be put on-line (along with a host of other materials) once our new website is ready.

By God's grace, the CPRC receives a lot of encouragement, not only from our sister churches in the US and Canada, but from other saints in various parts of the world in the form of letters or e-mails; comments about books, audios, pamphlets, videos, etc.; and donations. Recently, a brother in Australia sent us £4,000, and an elderly saint in Scotland gave £1,000, besides many other donations from God's people in the British Isles and further afield. Along with the generous support of the CPRC members, we are enabled to do more than would be expected of a small church like ours. Despite the attacks of the devil and the slanders of the enemies of the biblical and confessional Reformed faith, the gracious Lord is with us, and the work of Jesus Christ who builds His church progresses.

Others

"Christ Alone!" was the title of the

last speech in South Wales (1 December). The attendance and fellowship was very good. In fact, the wide-ranging questions and answer time was, if anything, longer than the speech! Earlier that day, Mary and I went in search of the “holy grail” (as it were), for we visited Glastonbury. This town in South-west England is notable for myths and legends concerning Joseph of Arimathea (the biblical figure who was made into the apostle of Britain, who brought a cup containing Christ’s blood to our shores) and King Arthur (who is said to be buried there with Queen Guinevere).

As many of you will be aware, the booking forms for this year’s British Reformed Fellowship (BRF) Conference in N. Ireland (28 July–4 August) are now available on-line (www.britishreformedfellowship.org.uk). We hope to see many of you there next summer and have had several already speak to us about it. The 1 February issue of the *Standard Bearer* is to carry an article giving more information on the conference on “Ye Shall Be My Witnesses.” Do come!

Mary and I hope shortly to begin readying a new book for publication. It will contain the eight speeches or sermons by Profs. Hanko and Engelsma from the 2010 BRF conference on “The Word of God for Our Generation.” The book will set forth the Reformed world-view, dealing with the use of money, the sexual revolution, post-modernism, the development of sin, the coming one-world government, etc. We are looking for support from a Protestant Reformed evangelism committee or two, whereby they and the CPRC would pay to print a certain number of copies of the new book. This way we can get cheaper printing costs per book. In the past, we have cooperated with Trinity, Faith, and South Holland. So if your evangelism committee has some money in the kitty and is looking for a worthy project, please let us know!

Our thanks to all who sent us cards and family photos. May the Lord be with you and keep us all faithful to Him in this year ahead, with all its trials, hardships, rewards, and rich blessings!

In Christ,
Rev. & Mary Stewart