



Working to see what Christ will do in Scotland tomorrow.

**Stornoway
Reformed Presbyterian
Church of Scotland**

part of a global church with a glorious heritage



July 2018 Newsletter



WELCOME

LORD'S DAY

Morning Worship—11.00am

Evening Worship—6.30pm

PRAYER MEETING

Thursday—7.30pm

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WORD FROM THE MANSE

Dear congregation,

Perhaps you have noticed that many companies have embraced the rainbow during the past month. June has often been celebrated as LGBT Pride month to mark the Stonewall riots of June 1969. In recent years the Democrat Presidents, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, have made a proclamation for observing LGBT Pride month. President Obama's 2016 statement ended:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2016 as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month. I call upon the people of the United States to eliminate prejudice everywhere it exists, and to celebrate the great diversity of the American people.

There has been a rush for businesses to show their support for this cause, this year more than ever. Some companies have changed their logos or websites to include the rainbow symbol of solidarity. Others have produced rainbow merchandise, some of which donate a portion of the proceeds to LGBT charities. For example, the coffee chain Costa sold rainbow cups in certain locations. The managing director of Costa said, "Our all-new rainbow cups are a fun way to celebrate Pride and reflect Costa Coffee's values of equality, and diversity," For some companies, Pride month was an opportunity to make a political statement. Royal Mail adopted a rainbow truck in Northern Ireland to support the LGBT cause in a country where same-sex marriage is still illegal. The betting shop Paddy Power pledged to donate £10,000 for every goal that Russia scored in the World Cup, a political statement against Russia's more restrictive stance on homosexuality.

What a sad state of affairs! The whole society is being forced more and more to bow to the idol of "diversity". If Christians do not bow, then shall we not be thrown into a "fiery furnace"? Just consider the increasing tarnishing of Biblical views as hate speech. It will not be long before each Christian will have to take a firm stand. Are we willing to face persecution and prosecution?

Tragically, not all in the church are willing to stand firm. Of course, we know that the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church have both denied Christ in these matters. But how long before the Reformed Church catches up? In America a congregation in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) has organised the Revoice Conference, with its purpose of "Supporting, encouraging, and empowering gay, lesbian, same-sex-attracted, and other LGBT Christians so they can flourish while observing the historic, Christian doctrine of marriage and sexuality." While this conference does uphold the Biblical Christian stance on marriage, it fails by buying into the controversial error of accepting homosexuality as part of a person's identity, co-equal with a Christian identity, i.e. a gay Christian. That, however, is a contradiction in terms. For although a Christian may struggle with unnatural same-sex desires, he must see those desires as sinful and seek to mortify such sins.

How are we to deal with these demanding pressures in our world today? We should remember first of all that the LGBT agenda is an attack against God. The rainbow is paraded as a symbol of pride when it actually is God's symbol of patience with a world of sin.

2 "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." (Genesis 9:12-16)

The rainbow is God's voluntary symbol to bring to His own mind that covenant of forbearance. It is not a symbol to celebrate what is good in sinful man, rather a symbol that shows the goodness of a longsuffering God. The LGBT agenda is a direct attack against God. Christians are sometimes accused of being homophobic, and perhaps sometimes some are. Some Christians make ill-advised jokes or slurs against LGBT people who have been made in the likeness of God. Some Christians see the LGBT movement as an attack upon our values and culture. Should we not rather see it as an attack upon God? John Bunyan defined sin as, "the dare of God's justice, the rape of His mercy, the jeer of His patience, the slight of His power, and the contempt of His love." When the rainbow flag is flown it is a statement to God primarily, one that laughs at his forbearance by refusing to repent, one that continues to sin before His face, unafraid of His justice. Today's rainbow flag mocks God.

What should our response be? Should we not be grieved for these poor lost souls that are directly attacking God? As Paul prayed for Israel, ought we not to pray, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God...is that they may be saved" (Romans 10:1)?

In Christ,
Stephen

NEWS & EVENTS

EVANGELISTIC SERVICES



On Sabbath 24th June we held evangelistic services as we sought to reach out to those around us in need of the Gospel. In the week leading up to the services, our Mission Team joined members of the congregation in knocking doors to personally invite people to come along. "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." (Luke 14:23) At the doors we had some good conversations and were able to testify of Christ. Some people promised to come along but didn't; others were invited but declined. We pray that at some other time the Lord will bring them in. We were thankful to have a few visitors along.

We know that "the gospel of Christ...is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16).

The theme of the morning service was "Two ways to think about ourselves," taken from the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. One man trusted in himself; the other cast himself upon the mercy of Christ. We were challenged to think accurately about ourselves, indeed as we will be seen before the judgement seat of Christ.

The evening service looked at "Two ways to think about Jesus" as we considered the two robbers crucified next to Jesus. We were challenged to think about the fact that we shall all die. How we die is important, whether we have trusted in Jesus or not. Both robbers were close to Jesus, yet only one closed with him, and so only one heard, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43)

RP MISSION TEAM

Greetings! It is truly a delight to be writing to you about our week in Stornoway, Scotland, a unique and special island town. The Reformed Presbyterian congregation there is relatively small and new in comparison with other local churches, but it certainly does not lack for kind brothers and sisters in Christ, or a dedicated minister either! We had a much slower pace in Stornoway, which was a nice relief from the busyness of much of this trip. The congregation distributed about 700 leaflets door-to-door with us this past week. In Stranraer and Edinburgh, we just slipped leaflets through people's letter slots; in Stornoway, we actually knocked the doors and invited the folks personally. The Isle of Lewis is determinedly bilingual, and in most of the smaller communities, Gaelic still takes precedence over English, so for leafleting, I teamed



up with a local church member who speaks Gaelic as his first language. It really helped “break the ice,” and I enjoyed picking up on a few simple phrases here and there! We got some mixed responses to our invitations. The Western Isles, and the Isle of Lewis in particular, have a strong reputation for being very religious. They have, in fact, experienced many amazing revivals, but the environment is now lukewarm at best in many homes. While, in the rest of Scotland, it may have been 4 generations since some the average person's family were serious, church-going believers, here in Stornoway it's more like 1 or 2 generations. This actually makes it much harder in a way— a common refrain we heard as we knocked on people's doors was, “Oh, I've already done my time in church.” We invited local folks to come to evangelistic services held this past Sunday. To the surprise of some (and the delight of all!), there were visitors at both the morning and evening church services, where they heard solid, Biblical preaching! Please pray that God will be pleased to change their hearts by the power of His Word. We enjoyed fellowship with the congregation, and were treated to several scenic drives around the island. We also had opportunities to serve hands-on, doing practical work at the minister's home, cleaning at the YMCA where the church meets, painting and varnishing at a local Christian school, and helping to do some organising at a charity shop that supports a Christian school in Gambia.

The previous Sunday, we were blessed to worship with the Reformed Presbyterian church in Glasgow. It is always a real treat to fellowship with the saints there and hear their gifted minister, Kenneth Stewart, open up God's Word.

The Americans on our team are travelling back to the USA this Wednesday, Lord willing. Please pray for safe travels for us. Please also pray for the visitors who were at the evangelistic services at Stornoway RP church this Sunday. As well, please continue praying for myself and my teammates. God doesn't do things without reason, and we would all appreciate your prayers that those lessons God has shown us or brought us through would not be lost on us, but that rather, because of this trip, we would grow in our faith, our boldness, our love for the Lord, our delight in serving His church, our submissiveness to His will, and our understanding of His Word.

Many blessings to you, **Matthew Latuche**

A close-up photograph of a globe. A black arrow is positioned as if it is about to land on the globe, pointing towards the right. The globe shows the continents of Europe and Africa. The text is overlaid on the image.

GO INTO ALL THE WORLD,
and preach the gospel
to EVERY CREATURE.

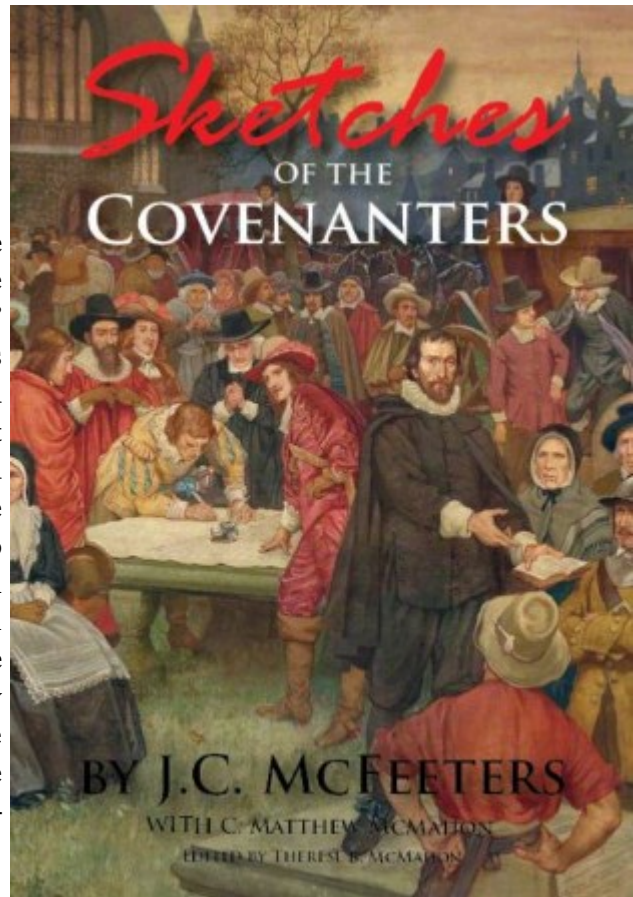
mark 16:15

PURITAN PUBLICATIONS

SKETCHES OF THE COVENANTERS

The covenanters were some of the most abused Christians in the history of the church. Their lives and deaths are a telling account of God's faithfulness to them and their unwavering faithfulness to Christ's Crown and Covenant.

This work concerns the covenant-keeping history of the able men and women of Scotland who gave their lives to the service, "FOR CHRIST'S CROWN AND COVENANT." Suffering at the hands of tyrants and kings who were pawns of the Devil, the Covenanters demonstrate a tearful but God-glorifying journey in the Scottish Presbyterian movement of the 17th century. The Covenanters of old were concerned with keeping their lives and doctrine pure in accordance with the God's revealed will in the Scriptures, and to worship Christ freely being bound together by the National Covenant of Scotland. They would have rather died than deny Jesus Christ; as the Apostle says, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us." And as the author of this work states (which was the sentiment of the Scottish Covenanters and many of the members of the Westminster Assembly), "Covenant-breaking is, possibly, the most dangerous sin."



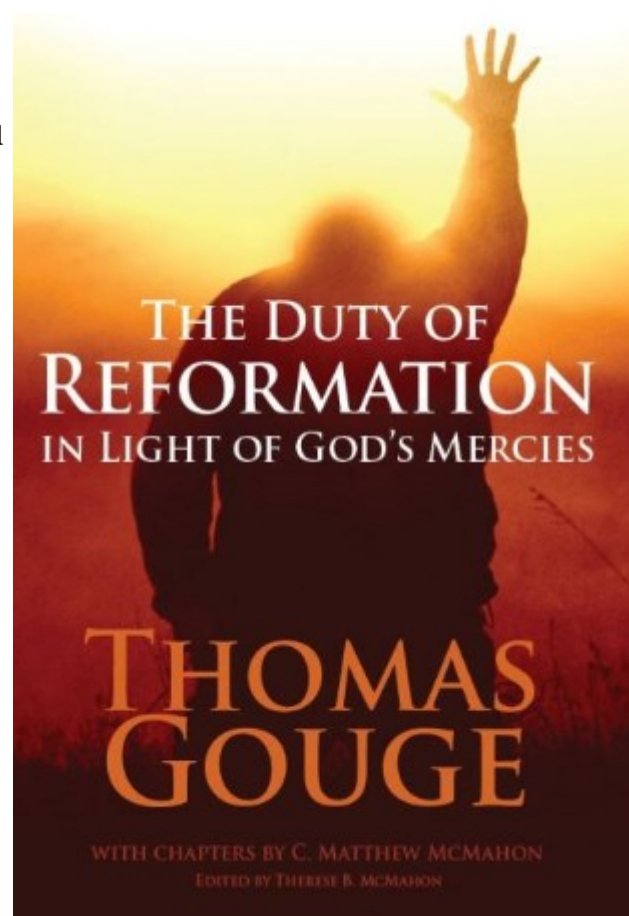
THE DUTY OF REFORMATION

Do you long for reformation and spiritual revival? Even though God has given Christians blessing upon blessing, and mercy piled onto mercy, if Christians answer God's abundant blessing by sinning against him, what then should they expect?

This treatise is about reformation. It is set within the framework of being more holy, because reformation means "reformation of life" in light of Jesus Christ's saving benefits and God's abundant saving mercies.

What makes this treatise so excellent is not only its theological and practical depth (and it is deep), but its vivid directness. Gouge, uncompromisingly from Ezra 9:13-14, is going to tell Christians (not just sinners) that if they sin, expect judgment. And, if Christians sin collectively (as a Christian nation), expect collective judgment. Gouge says, "When Christians will not reform their ways, God replies, they have not minded my mercies, I will not mind their miseries."

Christians around the world need true biblical and spiritual reformation. Even though God has given Christians blessing upon blessing, and mercy piled onto mercy, if Christians answer God's abundant blessing by sinning against him, what then should they expect? As Gouge shows, "If reformation can only be regarded as a suitable compensation to God's mercies to us, we are without it." In other words, Christians must be about the work of reformation post-haste.



Both books are available at www.puritanpublications.com

GLEANINGS BY BILL LUCAS

GROWTH IN GRACE

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen." 2 Peter 3:18

Growth in grace is evidenced by a more habitual vigilance against besetting sins and temptations, and by greater self-denial in regard to personal indulgence. A growing conscientiousness in regard to what may be called minor Christian duties is also a good sign. (The counterfeit of this is an over-scrupulous conscience, which sometimes haggles at the most innocent gratifications, and has led some to hesitate about taking their daily food.)

Increasing spiritual-mindedness is a sure evidence of progress in piety; and this will always be accompanied by increasing deadness to the world.

Continued aspirations for God, indicate the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, by whose agency all progress in sanctification is made.

Increasing solicitude for the salvation of men, sorrow on account of their sinful and miserable condition, and a disposition tenderly to warn sinners of their danger, evince a growing state of piety.

It is also a strong evidence of growth in grace, when you can bear injuries and provocations with meekness, and when you can from the heart desire the temporal and eternal welfare of your bitterest enemies.

An entire and confident reliance on the promises and providence of God, however dark may be your horizon, or however many difficulties environ you, is a sign that you have learned to live by faith.

Humble contentment with your condition, though it is one of poverty and obscurity, shows that you have profited by sitting at the feet of Jesus.

Diligence in the duties of our secular calling, with a view to the glory of God, is an evidence not to be despised.

Indeed, there is no surer standard of spiritual growth than a habit of aiming at the glory of God in everything.

Increasing love to the brethren is a sure sign of growth; for as brotherly love is a proof of the existence of grace, so is the exercise of such love a proof of vigour in the divine life.

A victory over besetting sins by which the person was frequently led away, shows an increased vigour in grace.

6

Sometimes the children of God grow faster when in the fiery furnace than elsewhere. As metals are purified by being cast into the fire, so saints have their dross consumed and their graces brightened by being cast into the furnace of affliction.

(Archibald Alexander, "Growth in Grace" 1844)

THE MODEL PRAYER

“After this manner therefore pray ye” (Matt.6:9)

Our Lord Jesus, in these words, gave to his disciples and to us a directory for prayer. The ten commandments are the rule of our life, the creed is the sum of our faith, and the Lord's prayer is the pattern of our prayer. As God prescribed Moses a pattern of the tabernacle (Exod. 25:9) so Christ has here prescribed us a pattern of prayer. "After this manner therefore pray ye"; etc. The meaning is, let this be the rule and model according to which you frame your prayers ... Not that we are tied to the words of the Lord's prayer. Christ does not say "After these words, pray ye"; but "After this manner" that is, let all your petitions agree and harmonize with the things contained in the Lord's prayer; and well may we make all our prayers consonant and agreeable to this prayer ...

A piece of work has commendation from its creator, and this prayer has commendation from its author; it is the Lord's Prayer. As the moral law was written with finger of God, so this prayer was dropped from the lips of the Son of God ... As Solomon's Song, for its excellence is called the "Song of Songs", so this may well be called the "Prayer of Prayers". There is a double benefit arising from framing our petitions according to this prayer.

1. Error in prayer is prevented. It is not easy to write wrong after this copy; we cannot easily err when we have our pattern before us.

2. Mercies requested are obtained; for the apostle assures us that God will hear us when we pray "according to His will" (1 John 5:14). And we certainly pray according to His will when we pray according to the pattern He has sent us.

Thomas Watson (The Lord's Prayer)

FOCUSING ON CHRIST

.... Remember that age and habit are no security against apostasy. There must be the continual keeping and anointing of the Holy Spirit. I beseech you, and here I do beseech myself also, let us watch against the beginnings of backsliding.

Let us take care of the little sins, O let us watch against the little coolnesses of heart. Brethren, no man backslides all at once. Few men who profess to be saints become outward sinners by one step; it is usually by little and by little. I pray you do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together. Wake up from your coldness in private prayer if this has come over you.

If your love to Christ has grown cold stay not in this state of danger, but pray to the Master to inflame your heart again. If any of you have in any respect whatever fallen from your first love; if that old enthusiasm which was in us as a Church has departed from any of you, pray to God to give it you back. If any of you are not bringing forth such fruit unto God as you used to do, O be suspicious of yourselves. Carnal security may be the heaven of fools, but it is the bane of believers.

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit

UNITY

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1)

“Let each esteem other better than themselves.” (Philippians 2:3)

At the Commonwealth Observance Ceremony in London in 2016 a guest recited a poem she had composed to fit in with the theme for the service -- inclusiveness. Her poem had the line in it: "There is a 'u' and an 'i' in unity." Such a simple pithy line but what a truth -- applicable to any setting where there is interaction between people. It behoves every believer to endeavour to function in harmony with others so that we bear a good testimony for the Lord.

7 VISIBLE SIGNS OF OUR LOVE TO GOD

Before all else let us remember, our love to God is a sign of his love to us. 'We love him because he first loved us.' I John 4: 19. By nature we have no love to God; we have hearts of stone. Ezek 36: 26. And how can any love be in hearts of stone? Our loving him is from his loving us. If the glass burn, it is because the sun has shone on it; so if our hearts burn in love, it is a sign the Sun of Righteousness has shone upon us.

The First Sign. If we love God, our desire will be after him. 'The desire of our soul is to thy name.' Isa 26: 8. He who loves God, breathes after communion with him. 'My soul thirsteth for the living God.' Psa 42: 2. Persons in love desire to be often conferring together. He who loves God, desires to be much in his presence; he loves the ordinances: they are the glass where the glory of God is resplendent; in the ordinances we meet with him whom our souls love; we have God's smiles and whispers, and some foretastes of heaven. Such as have no desire after ordinances, have no love to God.

The second visible sign is, that he who loves God cannot find contentment in any thing without him. Give a hypocrite who pretends to love God corn and wine, and he can be content without God; but a soul fired with love to God, cannot be without him. Lovers faint away if they have not a sight of the object loved. A gracious soul can do without health, but cannot do without God, who is the health of his countenance. Psa 43: 5. If God should say to a soul that entirely loves him, 'Take thy ease, swim in pleasure, solace thyself in the delights of the world; but thou shalt not enjoy my presence:' this would not content it. Nay, if God should say, 'I will let thee be taken up to heaven, but I will retire into another room, and thou shalt not see my face;' it would not content the soul. It is hell to be without God. The philosopher says there can be no gold without the influence of the sun; certainly there can be no golden joy in the soul without God's sweet presence and influence.

The third visible sign is that he who loves God, hates that which would separate between him and God, and that is sin. Sin makes God hide his face; it is like an incendiary, which parts chief friends; therefore, the keenness of a Christian's hatred is set against it. 'I hate every false way.' Psa 119: 128. Antipathies can never be reconciled; one cannot love health but he must hate poison; so we cannot love God but we must hate sin, which would destroy our communion with him.

The fourth visible sign is sympathy. Friends that love, grieve for the evils which befall each other. Homer, describing Agamemnon's grief, when he was forced to sacrifice his daughter, brings in all his friends weeping with him, and accompanying him to the sacrifice, in mourning. Lovers grieve together. If we have true love in our heart to God, we cannot but grieve for those things which grieve him; we shall lay to heart his dishonours; the luxury, drunkenness, contempt of God and religion. 'Rivers of waters run down mine eyes,' &c. Psa 119: 136. Some speak of the sins of others, and laugh at them; but they surely have no love to God who can laugh at that which grieves his Spirit! Does he love his father who can laugh to hear him reproached?

The fifth visible sign is, that he who loves God, labours to render him lovely to others. He not only admires God, but speaks in his praises, that he may allure and draw others to be in love with him. She that is in love will commend her lover. The lovesick spouse extols Christ, she makes a panegyric oration of his worth, that she might persuade others to be in love with him. 'His head is as the most fine gold.' Cant 5: 11. True love to God cannot be silent, it will be eloquent in setting forth his renown. There is no better sign of loving God than to make him appear lovely, and to draw proselytes to him.

The sixth visible sign is, that he who loves God, weeps bitterly for his absence. Mary comes weeping, 'They have taken away my Lord.' John 20: 13. One cries, 'My health is gone!' another, 'My estate is gone!' but he who is a lover of God, cries out, 'My God is gone! I cannot enjoy him whom I love.' What can all worldly comforts do, when once God is absent? It is like a funeral banquet, where there is much meat, but no cheer. 'I went mourning without the sun.' Job 30: 28. If Rachel mourned greatly for the loss of her children, what vail or pencil can shadow

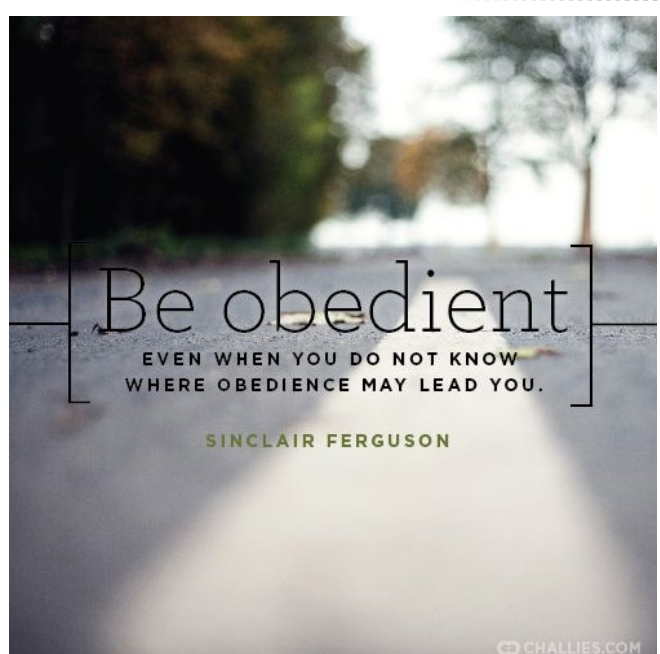
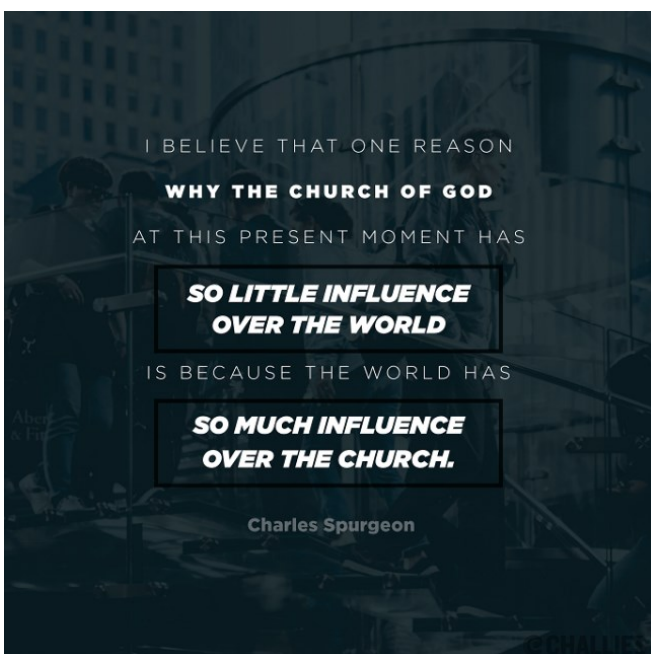
out the sorrow of that Christian who has lost God's sweet presence? Such a soul pours forth floods of tears; and while it is lamenting, seems to say thus to God, 'Lord, thou art in heaven, hearing the melodious songs and triumph of angels; but I sit here in the valley of tears, weeping because thou art gone. Oh, when wilt thou come to me, and revive me with the light of thy countenance! Or, Lord, if thou wilt not come to me, let me come to thee, where I shall have a perpetual smile of thy face in heaven and shall never more complain, 'My beloved has withdrawn himself.'"

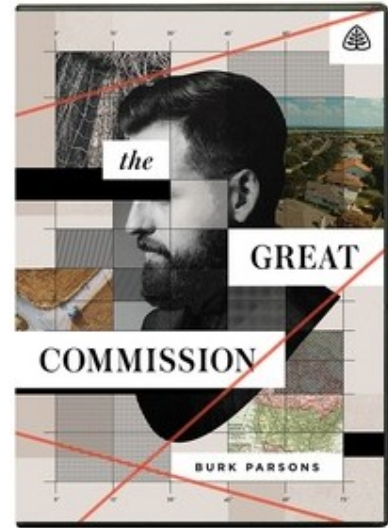
The seventh visible sign is, that he who loves God is willing to do and suffer for him. He subscribes to God's commands, he submits to his will. He subscribes to his commands. If God bids him mortify sin, love his enemies, be crucified to the world, he obeys. It is a vain thing for a man to say he loves God, and slight his commands. He submits to his will. If God would have him suffer for him, he does not dispute, but obeys. 'Love endureth all things.' 1 Cor 13: 7. Love made Christ suffer for us, and love will make us suffer for him. It is true that every Christian is not a martyr but he has a spirit of martyrdom in him; he has a disposition of mind to suffer, if God call him to it. 'I am ready to be offered.' 2 Tim 4: 6. Not only the sufferings were ready for Paul, but he was ready for the sufferings. Origin chose rather to live despised in Alexandria, than with Plotinus to deny the faith, and be great in the prince's favour. Rev 12: 11. Many say they love God, but will not suffer the loss of anything for him. If Christ should have said to us, 'I love you well, you are dear to me, but I cannot suffer for you, I cannot lay down my life for you,' we should have questioned his love very much; and may not the Lord question ours, when we pretend love to him, but will endure nothing for his sake?

Use one. What shall we say to those who have not a drachm of love in their hearts to God? They have their life from him, yet do not love him. He spreads their table every day, yet they do not love him. Sinners dread God as a judge, but do not love him as a father. All the strength in the angels cannot make the heart love God; judgements will not do it; omnipotent grace only can make a stony heart melt in love. How sad is it to be void of love to God. When the body is cold, and has no heat, it is a sign of death; so he is spiritually dead who has no heat of love in his heart to God. Shall such live with God that do not love him? Will God lay an enemy in his bosom? They shall be bound in chains of darkness who will not be drawn with cords of love.

Use two. Let us be persuaded to love God with all our heart and might. O let us take our love off from other things, and place it upon God. Love is the heart of religion, the fat of the offering; it is the grace which Christ inquires most after. 'Simon lovest thou me?' John 21: 15. Love makes all our services acceptable, it is the musk that perfumes them. It is not so much duty, as love to duty, God delights in; therefore serving and loving God are put together. Isa 56: 6. It is better to love him than to serve him; obedience without love, is like wine without the spirit. O then, be persuaded to love God with all your heart and might.

Adapted from The Ten Commandments by Thomas Watson





Our Lord Jesus Christ gave His people the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations. This is a significant task, yet it is one that the Holy Spirit enables us to accomplish as we rest in the authority of Christ over all things. In this series, Dr. Burk Parsons walks us through every phrase of the Great Commission, carefully examining how Christ calls us to fulfill the Great Commission in our homes, our churches, our communities, and to the ends of the earth.

Available via Ligonier.org

GOD'S METRICS

God's metrics are not our metrics. The way in which we seek to measure fruitfulness and faithfulness is often quite skewed. No one understood the issue of faithfulness and fruitfulness so well as the great Apostle Paul. In 1 Corinthians 3, he first explained the nature of a fruitful Gospel ministry by drawing off of the farming metaphor:

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor" (1 Cor. 3:6-8).

The fruitfulness of a Gospel ministry is never observed in total in the here and now. The one who waters the seed of God's word in men and women's lives may see the increase, while the one who sowed the seed may not. The one who planted and the one who watered may never see the increase, but a future generation may see it. God may chose to delay fruit until some later period in an individual's life. The fruit may appear on a deathbed—rare though deathbed conversions may be—when those things that faithful ministers taught and proclaimed come rushing into an individual's mind and heart by the working of the Spirit in their last moments of life. The increase is entirely the work of God and entirely dependent on God's timing.

While the fruit may not always be evident in the here and now, Paul insisted that there is a day coming when "each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor." What ought a faithful ministry look like? Paul moved on to the illustration of a builder to capture this point:

"As a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire" (1 Cor. 3:10-15).

I built homes for a number of years after I was converted. On one occasion, the company for which I was working was building a large cabin on the top of a mountain. Another construction company happened to be building another cabin on the same property on which we were building. We had begun

our work quite a while before this other construction company had begun theirs. Both cabins were going to be essentially the same size. We sought to be meticulous in our craftsmanship. However, I started noticing that the other construction company was building much faster than we were. The owner of the cabin we were building started complaining that we were not timely enough in our work. I asked my boss why the other construction company was finishing much more quickly than we were. He walked me over to their cabin and reached up under one of the eaves. When he pulled back the trim, I quickly realized that there was no frame behind it. The construction company was (literally) cutting corners to finish more quickly and to be able to boast about their timing. This, it seems to me, helps illustrate just what the Apostle is getting at in 1 Corinthians 3. Anyone can build something quickly using wood, hay and stubble. These are not costly materials. Gold, silver and precious stones, by way of contrast, are costly and take a great deal of time to refine and shape before they can be used for building.

In the same way, men may build what appears to be a thriving ministry with money, gimmicks, entertainment, comedy, personality, legalism, aesthetics, social engagement, etc. However, those who are faithful will build with the persistent preaching of Christ crucified, sound doctrine, prayer, the sacraments, church discipline, a loving and holy Christian community and biblical worship and evangelism. A truly biblical ministry will often grow at a much slower rate, but it will last into all of eternity. It's easy for those laboring faithfully to become discouraged when they look over at other churches and see how much more quickly they seem to have grown. It is much more difficult for them to remember that everything is merely scaffolding; and, one day God will reveal what sort of materials were used in the building. The fruit of a faithful ministry will last into eternity, the seeming fruit of an unfaithful ministry will disintegrate in due time.



A friend of mine recently reminded me that one of the greatest encouragements for faithful ministers of the Gospel is the truth that we will forever be in glory with those to whom we faithfully ministered God's word and the Gospel. He said, "I like to think that there will be a reunion of all those people who were fed under a faithful ministry in glory—everyone rejoicing in what God did by sending faithful ministers to plant and water the seed of His word." This, it seems to me, was the great hope and anticipation of the Apostle, who wrote to the members of the church in Thessalonica and said, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" (1 Thessalonians 2:19).

Rev Nicholas Batzig,
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Children's Corner

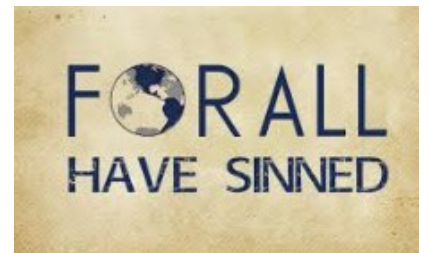


Dear Children

You are on holiday this month. I hope you have a wonderful time wherever you are and whatever you are doing but I also hope that you have been working hard in school. It is there that you learn so many useful things that you are going to need when you grow up. One of the things you will have learnt is the alphabet. Do you know how many letters there are in the alphabet? Count them. Can you repeat them in the right order? Learning the alphabet is very important because it not only helps you to read and spell but it also helps you to find words in a dictionary for these come in alphabetical order. You will know the first three letters – A B C.

Now I thought that we might explore the Bible and find texts for each letter of the alphabet. Let's see how we get on. This month we shall look at the first three letters – A B C.

- A All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.
- B Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
- C Come unto Me all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.



Let's see what these three texts are teaching us.

Firstly, we are taught that every individual who has ever come into the world is a sinner. Why? The very first person, Adam, was created by God as our representative. That means that when he was tempted by Satan he was standing in our room and place. When he gave in to Satan's temptation and sinned then **ALL** his descendants sinned as well. We are sinners because of Adam's first sin. But we are also sinners because of our own sin for "we sin daily in thought, word and deed."

The second text teaches us how we can be rid of sin. We are to look to the Lamb of God who is the Lord Jesus Christ. He came into the world to take away sin by dying on the cross. He is the Saviour from sin. How wonderful that God has provided us with a Saviour! He could have left us in sin but He chose to provide salvation for us.

Our last text tells us what we are to do when our sins burden us and concern us. We are to come to Him i.e. to the Lord Jesus. Coming to Him means to put our trust in Him that He will take these sins away and give us forgiveness. Because it is against God we have sinned only God can forgive us and Jesus is God.

My dear children, think of what these three texts are saying to you. Accept that you are sinners who have sinned against God. Believe that Jesus has come to take away sin and come to Him, put your trust in Him for "none perish who trust in Him."

The Lord bless you all. With my love

Granny M

Come unto Me
AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST

Activity: Fill in the blanks below and learn these verses.

1. All have _____ and come _____ of the _____ of _____.

2. Behold the _____ of _____ who takes away the _____ of the _____.

3. Come unto _____ all you who _____ and are heavy _____ and I will give you _____.