



**STORNOWAY**  
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CHRIST JESUS CAME INTO  
THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS  
(1 TIMOTHY 1:15)

# April 2019 Newsletter



## WELCOME

### LORD'S DAY

Morning Worship—11.00am

Evening Worship—6.30pm

### PRAYER MEETING

Thursday—7.30pm

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#### CONTACT DETAILS

Stornoway RPCS  
 Bridge Community Centre  
 Bayhead Embankment  
 Stornoway, Isle of Lewis,  
 Scotland, HS1 2EB

[www.stornowayrpcs.org](http://www.stornowayrpcs.org)  
[info@stornowayrpcs.org](mailto:info@stornowayrpcs.org)  
 Scottish Charity No: SC043043

## WORD FROM THE MANSE

Dear congregation,

There seems to be even more hypocrisy at Westminster than usual. Many MPs have been elected on a manifesto platform and yet fail to act on their promises, even voting opposed to their manifesto. But one action that really goes over and beyond is the actions of the Brexit Secretary, Stephen Barclay. Barclay spent time at the dispatch box arguing for the Government's policy on a slight extension to get a deal with the EU, stating, "It is time for this House to act in the national interest, it's time to put forward an extension that is realistic." Minutes later, however, Barclay voted against that for which he had argued. Is there any other word for that but hypocrisy?

The Bible has a lot to say against hypocrisy, and yet perhaps it is surprising that it seems that some of the biggest hypocrites are professing Christians. Whether fairly or not, those who are antagonistic to Christianity often dismiss the faith because "Christians are such hypocrites." Is this a valid argument against Christianity? Are Christians inherently hypocrites? Is this a reason to stay away from the church? I suspect that on our island there are many who would believe, even if they don't vocalise it, that the church is full of hypocrites.

At the end of the month, we will host another special service to explore this question (28<sup>th</sup> April at 6.30pm). Again, we will give an opportunity after the service for anyone to ask follow-up questions. Let me encourage you to invite along any that may find it helpful. Remember that faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God, and let us seek not to be ashamed of the Gospel which is the power of God to salvation.

*"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ..."* (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

In Christ,  
Stephen

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## NEWS & EVENTS

### UPCOMING SPECIAL SERVICE

Sabbath 28th April 6.30pm—Why are Christians such Hypocrites?

### STILLWATER REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Stillwater Reformed Presbyterian Church is moving forward with prayers and plans to plant a church in Oklahoma City. In God's providence, we have five households that are in the metro area who are currently members of SRPC and travel to Stillwater each week for worship. They are a great group, demonstrating much character in the areas of evangelism, commitment to the RPCNA, willingness to be part of a church plant, and financially involved. That group has also had contact with others who show interest in such a work. Please join us in praying for Christ's Kingdom to be advanced through the establishment of a congregation in OKC. To keep in touch you can follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/OKCRP/>

Stornoway RP Church invites you to a special service. All welcome

Why Are Christians  
Such Hypocrites?

Sunday  
28th April

6.30 PM

STORNOWAY  
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Stephen McCollum  
☎ 07549 089189

📍 Bridge Centre  
Bayhead  
Stornoway

🌐 [www.stornowayrpcs.org](http://www.stornowayrpcs.org)



## INDUCTION OF REV. ANDREW MCMILLAN

On the 9th March 2019 the Airdrie RP Church was packed with over 130 people for the induction of Rev. Andrew McMillan as the minister of the congregation. In addition to the Presbytery and the Airdrie congregation, each of the four other Scottish RP churches had people there as well as friends and family of Rev. Andrew and Mrs Brenda McMillan from Inverness, the Falkirk area, and beyond.



*Rev Andrew & Brenda McMillan*

After almost 24 years as minister of the Airdrie congregation, Dr. Andrew Quigley accepted a call to be the minister of the Ottawa RPCNA at the end of February 2018. The congregation was officially declared vacant, and the pastoral tie was dissolved on the 12th August 2018. The congregation met on the 18th November and called Rev. Andrew McMillan to be their minister, and he accepted this call on the 30th December.

Rev. Andrew McMillan and his wife, Brenda, are from the Falkirk area. Prior to his conversion he was in the Royal Marines and was converted during his service with them. Leaving the Royal Marines, he was a police officer in the Airdrie and Coatbridge area before training for the ministry at New College. He was then minister of a Church of Scotland congregation in the Inverness area before leading that congregation out of the Church of Scotland and into the Free Church. He applied to join the RPCS and was received into the Scottish Presbytery at the June 2018 meeting.

It has been a joy to see the Lord's provision and care through this whole process and that joy was reflected in the induction service. Rev. Stephen McCollum, the moderator of Presbytery, preached on Ezra chapter 7. He spoke of how Ezra set his heart on the Lord through the studying of the Law of God, the doing of the law, and the teaching of the law. He made application both to Rev. McMillan in his responsibilities as a minister to set himself to study, do, and teach the Word of God, but also made application to the congregation and their responsibility to study the Word of God and do it under the ministry of Rev. McMillan.

After the worship service, Mr Ian Shaw, elder in the Airdrie congregation, thanked Rev. Peter Loughridge for his work as interim moderator and presented him with a gift from the congregation. He then welcomed Rev. Andrew and Mrs Brenda McMillan and they were presented with gifts from the congregation. Rev. Andrew McMillan then spoke a few words thanking those present, the Airdrie congregation, the Presbytery, but especially commending his wife for her faithful and loving support. Rev. Paul Gibson from Perth Free Church and Rev. Kenneth Stewart from Glasgow RPC both made speeches commending Rev. Andrew McMillan to the congregation. We then enjoyed a lovely lunch and further time of fellowship. We thank the Lord for all He has done for the Airdrie congregation, and we look forward to what He will do in future. [www.rpscotland.org](http://www.rpscotland.org)

## VISITOR FROM NEW MEXICO

Our brother from New Mexico, Alejandro Moreno Morrison, paid us a flying visit in March during a brief visit to Scotland. After calling in at Glasgow he arrived in Stornoway to continue his search for the Lewis roots by heading for Ness. He entertained a few for dinner before attending the PM in the Gospel Hall. Then the following day it was off to Ireland to attend the RP weekend conference in Newcastle where the speaker was Professor Robert McCollum.

**Bill Lucas**



*Alejandro Moreno Morrison*

## GLEANINGS BY BILL LUCAS

### ABIDE IN ME (JOHN 15:4)

Communion with Christ is a certain cure for every ill. Whether it be the wormwood of woe, or the cloying surfeit of earthly delight, close fellowship with the Lord Jesus will take bitterness from the one, and satiety from the other.

Live near to Jesus, Christian, and it is matter of secondary importance whether thou livest on the mountain of honour or in the valley of humiliation. Living near to Jesus, thou art covered with the wings of God, and underneath thee are the everlasting arms. Let nothing keep thee from that hallowed intercourse, which is the choice privilege of a soul wedded to THE WELL-BELOVED. Be not content with an interview now and then, but seek always to retain His company, for only in His presence hast thou either comfort or safety.

Jesus should not be unto us a friend who calls upon us now and then, but one with whom we walk evermore. Thou hast a difficult road before thee: see, O traveller to heaven, that thou go not without thy guide. Thou hast to pass through the fiery furnace; enter it not unless, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, thou hast the Son of God to be thy companion.

Thou hast to storm the Jericho of thine own corruptions: attempt not the warfare until, like Joshua, thou hast seen the Captain of the Lord's host, with His sword drawn in His hand.

Thou art to meet the Esau of thy many temptations: meet him not until at Jabbok's brook thou hast laid hold upon the angel, and prevailed.

In every case, in every condition, thou wilt need Jesus; but most of all, when the iron gates of death shall open to thee. Keep thou close to thy soul's Husband, lean thy head upon His bosom, ask to be refreshed with the spiced wine of His pomegranate, and thou shalt be found of Him at the last, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Seeing thou hast lived with Him, and lived in Him here, thou shalt abide with Him for ever.

**CHS**

### THE ROCK

From the end of the earth will I cry unto Thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the Rock that is higher than I. (Psalm 61: 2)

Every wave of trouble for Christ's sake lifts the soul higher upon the Rock. Every arrow of bitterness shot after the believer makes him hide farther back in the clefts of Jesus. Be content dear friend, to bear these troubles which make you cling closer to your Beloved.

**Robert Murray M'Cheyne**

### MANY MANSIONS

"Let not your heart be troubled|: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house re many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there you may be also. (John 14: 1 - 3).

We have, first, in this passage a precious remedy against an old disease. That disease is trouble of heart. That remedy is faith. Heart trouble is the commonest thing in the world. No rank, or class, or condition is exempt from it. No bars, or bolts, or locks can keep it out. Partly from inward causes and partly from

outward, partly from the body and partly from the mind, partly from what we love and partly from what we fear, the journey of life is full of trouble. Even the best of Christians may have bitter cups to drink between grace and glory. Even the holiest of saints find the world a vale of tears. Faith in the Lord Jesus is the only sure medicine for troubled hearts.

To believe more thoroughly, trust more entirely, rest more unreservedly, lay hold more firmly, lean back more completely -- this is the prescription which our Master urges on the attention of all His disciples.

**J C Ryle (Heaven)**

#### A SERIOUS SITUATION

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love (Rev. 2: 4)

There are times when, like Ephesus, many of God's children lose their first love. Iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold. Believers lose their close and tender walking with God. They go out of the holiest, and pray at a distance with a curtain between. They lost their fervency, sweetness, and fullness in secret prayer. They do not pour out their hearts to God.

They have lost their clear discovery of Christ. They see Him but dimly. They have lost sight of His beauty -- the savour of His good ointment - the hold of His garment. They seek Him, but find Him not. They cannot stir up the heart to lay hold on Christ.

The Spirit dwells scantily in their soul. The living water seems almost dried up within them. The soul is dry and barren. Corruptions are strong: grace is very weak.

Love to the brethren fades. United prayer is forsaken. The little assembly no more appears beautiful. Compassion for the unconverted is low and cold. Sin is unrebuked, though committed under their eye. Christ is not confessed before men. Perhaps the soul falls into sin, and is afraid to return; it stays far off from God, and lodges in the wilderness.

Ah! this is the case, I fear, with many. It is a fearfully dangerous time. Nothing but a visit of the free Spirit to your soul can persuade you to return.

**Robert Murray M'Cheyne**

#### FORSAKEN

My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Why art Thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? (Psalm 22 1)

Here we stand on holy ground. The Lord Jesus was completing the work that the Father had given Him to do on the Cross. The Creator dies for the creature. The Son dies for sinners. The King dies to regain the Kingdom. The Holy dies for the unholy. The Immortal dies for the mortal. The Light of the world is shrouded in darkness that we might be saved from the "blackness of darkness forever" (Jude 13). But at what a cost to Himself. The eternal Son of God, the Son of His love, forsaken by His God.

W H Burnett

#### WAIT PATIENTLY

Heavenly Father, I know that all things are working together for my good; but help me to wait patiently and work diligently, though the waiting be long and the toil hard.

**F B Meyer (Daily Prayers)**

## WHAT IS THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH? —PART TWO

In the first article of this series we began to look at important historical points relating to the origins of the RP Church. We examined the First Reformation, seeing particularly that Scotland, as a nation, covenanted with God in the King's Confession (1581). This covenant pledged the nation to maintain the Reformation and resist any return to Roman Catholic practices. Unfortunately, James VI who had signed the covenant violated it, believing that Episcopacy was essential to a stable throne.

For the Reformed church this crisis had to be dealt with in order to honour their vows before God and to preserve what God had graciously brought about in the Reformation. There was a need for subsequent or Second Reformation.

In 1625, James VI of Scotland (James I of England) died and his son Charles I came to the throne. Known as a tyrant, Charles would lose the English Civil War and be executed for high treason in 1649. His relationship with the Scottish Church was no better, especially as he considered himself to be supreme over the Church. In 1637, he forced the English *Book of Common Prayer* on the Scottish church without its consent. This book contained Roman Catholic practices, expressly against the King's Confession and the Word of God.

### NATIONAL COVENANT (1638)

Uniting together in resistance to this degeneration, the Scottish people signed the National Covenant in February 1638 in Greyfriars, Edinburgh, and then later throughout Scotland. As it was signed by "Noblemen, Barons, Gentlemen, Burgesses, Ministers, and Commons," it was truly a national covenant. This Covenant had three sections:

- (i) A renewal of the King's Confession (1581) verbatim.
- (ii) A lengthy legal section, written by Archibald Johnston of Wariston, listing Acts of Parliament that opposed Roman Catholicism and supported the Reformation.
- (iii) A practical application to the present need. This section was written by Rev. Alexander Henderson, and is reproduced at the end of this article.

The National Covenant was not an act of rebellion against the King; rather it showcased the legal basis for the Reformed faith and worship and pledged the people to maintain it. The National Covenant maintained Christ's Kingship over the Church, free from tyranny.

In 1640, the General Assembly stated that any who had signed the National Covenant and later spoken against it would be disciplined for perjury. The following year, the Scottish Parliament made signing the National Covenant required in order to take one's seat in Parliament. There can be no doubt that Scotland was a Covenanted people in both Church and State.

### SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT (1643)

When civil war broke out in England the Parliamentarians looked to Scotland for support. The Scottish promised help on the basis of a religious Covenant, known as the Solemn League and Covenant (SL&C).

This Covenant promised to preserve the Reformation in Scotland and to further it in England and Ireland. It aimed to bring about the closest conformity of doctrine and worship between the three nations. It was publicly sworn and signed by the House of Commons, the Westminster Assembly, the Commission of the Scottish General Assembly, and the Convention of Estates of the Parliament of Scotland. It would later be signed by common people. Like the National Covenant of 1638, the signing of the SL&C produced a Covenanted people in both Church and State, however, now it included England and Ireland too. The work of the Westminster Assembly was one part of seeking to unite together the nations around Biblical doctrine and worship.

It is worth noting that King Charles II, when crowned at Scone in 1651, swore as part of his oath his “allowance and approbation” of both the National and Solemn League and Covenants and that he would “prosecute the ends thereof.” Scottish defeat by Cromwell’s army led to Charles II fleeing abroad. After the death of Cromwell, Charles II was brought back to the throne, known as the Restoration, 1660. Charles broke his vows and thus, began the persecution of the Covenanters.

#### THE RECISSORY ACT (1661)

This Royal Act abolished all the Acts of Parliament since 1640, including many Reformed laws. In effect it was a return to Episcopacy at the stroke of the pen. Despite the fact that Charles II’s had signed the Covenants in 1651, he declared the Covenants unlawful and had them publicly burned.

The difficulty of the situation must be understood. Ministers who had sworn the Covenants now had the choice between breaking their vows (and continuing in their parishes) or remaining true to the Covenants, being ejected from their churches, and facing persecution. The members of Parliament who had sworn the Covenant now had the choice between breaking the Covenants by the requirement to swear allegiance to Charles II “over all persons and in all causes” (i.e. Church and State), or persecution. The common people who had signed the Covenants now had the choice between an easier life through renouncing the Covenants or a life of uncertainty and danger by following the Covenanted cause.

It is very difficult for us to say what we would have done, but I hope it is clear to us what should be done. Many Covenanters suffered terrible persecution from this time right up to the Revolution Settlement of 1688. The last portion, under James VII (James II of England) from 1685-1688 is known as “the Killing Times” due to its brutality. It would be a false impression to think that all the Church remained faithful during this time. Many compromised and turned back. But others were ushered to a martyr’s crown because of their adherence to the Covenants.

We began this article with the need for a Second Reformation, and now as we end there is a need for peace. William of Orange would bring an end to the persecution, but what will happen to the Covenants? We’ll see that next time, God willing.

**Rev. Stephen McCollum**

#### EXTRACT FROM THE NATIONAL COVENANT (1638)

We Noblemen, Barons, Gentlemen, Burgesses, Ministers, and Commons under-subscribing, considering divers times before, and especially at this time, the danger of the true reformed religion, of the King's honour, and of the publick peace of the kingdom, by the manifold innovations and evils, generally contained, and particularly mentioned in our late supplications, complaints, and protestations; do hereby profess, and before God, his angels, and the world, solemnly declare, That with our whole heart we agree, and resolve all the days of our life constantly to adhere unto and to defend the foresaid true religion, and (forbearing the practice of all innovations already introduced in the matters of the worship of God, or approbation of the corruptions of the publick government of the kirk, or civil places and power of kirkmen, till they be tried and allowed in free Assemblies and in Parliament) to labour, by all means lawful, to recover the purity and liberty of the Gospel, as it was established and professed before the foresaid novations. And because, after due examination, we plainly perceive, and undoubtedly believe, that the innovations and evils contained in our supplications, complaints, and protestations, have no warrant of the word of God, are contrary to the articles of the foresaid Confession, to the intention and meaning of the blessed reformers of religion in this land, to the above-written acts of Parliament; and do sensibly tend to the re-establishing of the Popish religion and tyranny, and to the subversion and ruin of the true reformed religion, and of our liberties, laws, and estates; we also declare, That the foresaid Confessions are to be interpreted, and ought to be understood of the foresaid novations and evils, no less than if every one of them had been expressed in the foresaid Confessions; and that we are obliged to detest and abhor them, amongst other particular heads of Papistry abjured therein. And therefore, from the knowledge and conscience of our duty to God, to our King and country, without any worldly respect or inducement, so far as human infirmity will suffer,

wishing a further measure of the grace of God for this effect; we promise and swear, by the GREAT NAME OF THE LORD OUR GOD, to continue in the profession and obedience of the foresaid religion; and that we shall defend the same, and resist all these contrary errors and corruptions, according to our vocation, and to the uttermost of that power that God hath put in our hands, all the days of our life.

And in like manner, with the same heart, we declare before God and men, That we have no intention nor desire to attempt anything that may turn to the dishonour of God, or to the diminution of the King's greatness and authority; but, on the contrary, we promise and swear, That we shall, to the uttermost of our power, with our means and lives, stand to the defence of our dread sovereign the King's Majesty, his person and authority, in the defence and preservation of the foresaid true religion, liberties, and laws of the kingdom; as also to the mutual defence and assistance every one of us of another, in the same cause of maintaining the true religion, and his Majesty's authority, with our best counsel, our bodies, means, and whole power, against all sorts of persons whatsoever; so that whatsoever shall be done to the least of us for that cause, shall be taken as done to us all in general, and to every one of us in particular. And that we shall neither directly nor indirectly suffer ourselves to be divided or withdrawn, by whatsoever suggestion, combination, allurements, or terror, from this blessed and loyal conjunction; nor shall cast in any let or impediment that may stay or hinder any such resolution as by common consent shall be found to conduce for so good ends; but, on the contrary, shall by all lawful means labour to further and promote the same: and if any such dangerous and divisive motion be made to us by word or writ, we, and every one of us, shall either suppress it, or, if need be, shall incontinent make the same known, that it may be timeously obviated. Neither do we fear the foul aspersions of rebellion, combination, or what else our adversaries, from their craft and malice, would put upon us; seeing what we do is so well warranted, and ariseth from an unfeigned desire to maintain the true worship of God, the majesty of our King, and the peace of the kingdom, for the common happiness of ourselves and our posterity.

And because we cannot look for a blessing from God upon our proceedings, except with our profession and subscription we join such a life and conversation as beseemeth Christians who have renewed their covenant with God; we therefore faithfully promise for ourselves, our followers, and all others under us, both in publick, and in our particular families, and personal carriage, to endeavour to keep ourselves within the bounds of Christian liberty, and to be good examples to others of all godliness, soberness, and righteousness, and of every duty we owe to God and man. And, that this our union and conjunction may be observed without violation, we call the LIVING GOD, THE SEARCHER OF OUR HEARTS, to witness, who knoweth this to be our sincere desire and unfeigned resolution, as we shall answer to JESUS CHRIST in the great day, and under the pain of God's everlasting wrath, and of infamy and loss of all honour and respect in this world: most humbly beseeching the LORD to strengthen us by his HOLY SPIRIT for this end, and to bless our desires and proceedings with a happy success; that religion and righteousness may flourish in the land, to the glory of GOD, the honour of our King, and peace and comfort of us all. In witness whereof, we have subscribed with our hands all the premises.

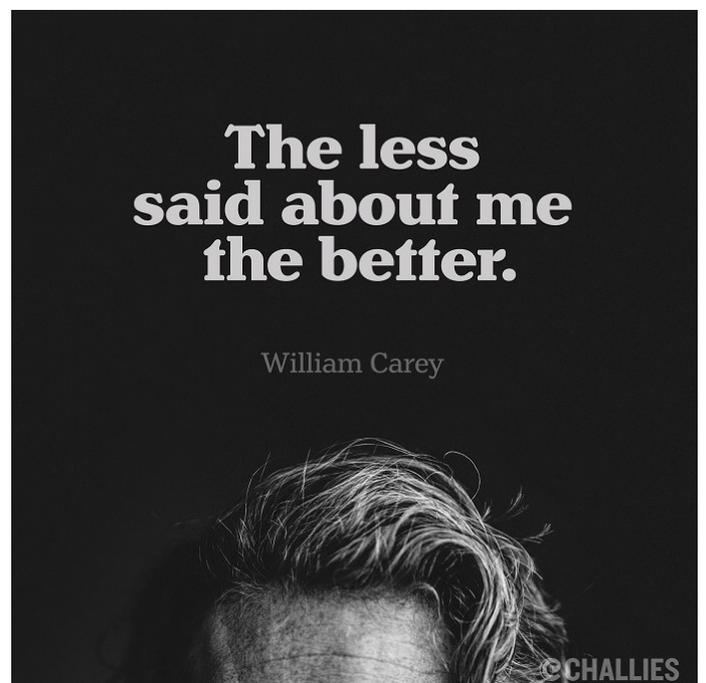
The riches of His free grace  
**CAUSE ME DAILY TO TRIUMPH OVER ALL**  
the temptations of the wicked one,  
**WHO IS VERY VIGILANT, AND SEEKS ALL**  
occasions to disturb me.

**GEORGE WHITEFIELD**



**The less  
said about me  
the better.**

William Carey



## THE SCANDAL AND SWEETNESS OF JOHN 3:16



John 3:16 has become so familiar that we no longer find its words astonishing. But this remarkable verse reveals amazing truth that should delight us every time we hear it.

### A REMARKABLE CLAIM

Jesus boldly asserts that God loves the world. God, the maker of heaven and earth, is self-sufficient and needs nothing outside of Himself. He is the Holy One whose pure eyes cannot look upon sin ([Hab. 1:13](#)). His desires are always upright, His love completely pure, and His affection never misplaced. How can such a God love the broken, sin-marred world?

In the broadest sense, the world represents the universe that God created. God loves the creation that He spoke into being. His love for the sin-corrupted world is bound up in His plan to totally restore heaven and earth ([Acts 3:21](#)).

More specifically, the world represents the human inhabitants of the earth, a race of rebels, traitors, and idolaters—objects far from deserving God’s love. Because man sinned, God would have done no injustice by letting everyone perish ([Rom. 3:19](#)). Instead, God chose to love.

### THE REACH OF GOD’S LOVE

Christ uses the word *world* to show the mystery and fullness of God’s love, which is not limited to any race, region, or time. Jesus is not suggesting a universal atonement. He died for those whom God chose to believe in Him ([John 6:37](#)) and in whom He works saving faith as a gift of grace ([Eph. 2:8](#)). Still, God loves sinners and has provided a way of salvation for a vast host of fallen people ([Gen. 15:5](#)).

### THE REALITY OF GOD’S LOVE

God’s love for the world seems incongruous and far-fetched—even impossible. To believe in this love, we need irrefutable evidence. Jesus’ coming to the world is the irrefutable evidence of the Father’s love for it. People can talk about their love for others, but the proof of love is action, not words ([1 John 3:18](#)). “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” ([Rom. 5:8](#)).

God's love is not sentimental but sacrificial. It is *agape*, a committed and costly affection proved through action. According to John, only one event in the history of the world is capable of demonstrating true love. He writes, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" ([1 John 4:10](#)).

God's love for His people can only be understood in relation to His love for His Son. The only begotten Son is the eternal object of the Father's affection. Twice during Christ's public ministry, the Father shattered heaven's silence to affirm His absolute love for His Son ([Matt. 3:17](#); [17:5](#)). Our love for our children is diminished by both our sin and theirs. But the love between God the Father and God the Son is perfect, personal, intimate, deep, eternal, and committed.

Christ came to earth to show us the riches of God's love. This is the good news of Christ's advent. In Jesus Christ, God loves His believing children with this same incomprehensible, infinite, and unchangeable love. Having sacrificed His Son for our salvation is it possible that He will now withhold from us any good thing ([Rom. 8:32](#))? No, for Christ's incarnation confirms that nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" ([Rom. 8:39](#)).

**Rev. William Boekestein, Ligonier Blog**

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## THE WORST SORT OF PRIDE

One of the greatest snares to the souls of men is the snare of measuring ourselves by ourselves and comparing ourselves among ourselves (2 Cor. 10:12). When we allow pride to fester and take root in our hearts, we begin to think, act and speak as if we are more holy than others. When we do so, we make that at which we think we excel our standard of holiness, rather than God's Law with all of its unattainable depths and requirements. Once we begin to do this with regard to spiritual disciplines or biblical principles, we have succumbed to spiritual pride. John Owen once wrote, "spiritual pride is the worst sort of pride." He went on to explain,

"Pride, or carnal confidence in our own wisdom and ability of mind for all the ends of our duty towards God either keeps the souls of men under the bondage of darkness and ignorance, or precipitates them into foolish apprehensions or pernicious errors..."

The more religious a man or woman may be, the more in danger he or she is to succumbing to the temptation to spiritual pride. This was the error of Pharisaism. Pharisaism was a biblical holiness movement. Pharisaism was fueled by a legal zeal for holiness and biblical justice. Owen, quite intuitively, noted that men and women who profess the grace of God in Christ can equally fall into the snare of spiritual pride and begin to measure their holiness or sanctification against that of others. He wrote,

"Known holiness is apt to degenerate into self-righteousness. What God gives us on the account of sanctification we are ready enough to reckon on the score of justification...We have so much of the Pharisee in us by nature,

that it is sometimes well that our good is hid from us. We are ready to take our corn and wine and bestow them on other lovers. Were there not in our hearts a spiritually sensible principle of corruption, and in our duties a discernible mixture of self, it would be impossible we should walk so humbly as is required of them who hold communion with God in a covenant of grace and pardoning mercy. It is a good life which is attended with a faith of righteousness and a sense of corruption. While I know Christ's righteousness, I shall the less care to know my own holiness. To *be holy* is necessary; to *know it*, sometimes a temptation."

We can begin to identify spiritual pride in our lives by considering what sorts of things we talk about respecting spiritual disciplines. As Jesus explained, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." A couple believes that they have excelled at parenting and so they speak often about the failure of parenting and education in the Christian church. One tithes faithfully, so he frequently speaks about the widespread lack of giving in the church at large. One serves in various capacities in a local congregation and so he begins to complain about how others are not serving to the same degree. When we speak in these ways, we can be sure that we have taken our eyes off of Christ—and our need for His blood and perfect righteousness—and have placed them on our performance, our knowledge or our achievements.

It is hard for our souls to come off of spiritual pride. Sometimes, God allows a believer to fall into some particular sin for a time in order to humble him and to bring him back to a place of humility and dependence. As the Westminster Confession of Faith states,

"The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave, for a season, his own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and, to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends" (WCF 5.5).

At other times, God allows us to fixate on our failures, our natural depravity and our uncleanness so that any of the goodness He is working in us is hidden from us. As Owen explained, "We have so much of the Pharisee in us by nature, that it is sometimes well that our good is hid from us."

However we come to terms with the spiritual pride that ever seeks to gain control of our hearts and minds, we must turn to the crucified Savior in brokenness and humility, crying out for him to cleanse us from this evil. There is no room for pride at the foot of the cross. When we see that Christ was crucified for my spiritual pride, no less than for our lusts, we will want to mortify it as quickly as possible. And, we can be sure that until we are in glory, spiritual pride will most rear its ugly head again and again the moment we allow ourselves to think that we are excelling in holiness. Don't be deceived, "spiritual pride is the worst sort of pride."

1. John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, vol. 4 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, n.d.).

# Children's Corner



Dear Children

This month I have a poem for you. It was written by a friend of mine many years ago for each one of her grandchildren. I came across it recently and thought that it would be good to share it with you. It is full of good advice.

## Advice to a Child

Search for the Pearl of great price  
To sinners offered free  
“For those who early seekers are  
Shall early finders be”.

In Wisdom’s ways direct your steps  
So shall your joys increase  
“Her ways are ways of pleasantness  
And all her paths are peace”.

Shun evil now, lest it give cause  
In after days to weep  
“For whatso’er a man doth sow  
That shall he also reap”.

Choose the altogether lovely One  
From whom all blessing flows  
“He’s the lily of the valley  
And Sharon’s fragrant rose”.

His influence sweet within your heart  
Shall in your life be seen  
And others then shall notice take  
“You have with Jesus been”.

Whilst you your daily lessons learn  
Whilst you your daily lessons learn  
Be diligent to “learn of Him  
Who meek and lowly is.”

Life’s way has many pitfalls, child  
And many a hidden snare  
Pray the Good Shepherd keep you now  
And ever in His care.

O, never turn aside with those  
His holy name who mock  
But ever seek to “follow in  
The footsteps of the flock”.

When troubles come, as come they shall  
(Of these you’ll have your share)  
Whatever cross He lays on you  
The heavy end He’ll bear.

Through death’s dark vale He’ll be your guide  
Your comfort, staff and stay  
Till the “eternal morning breaks  
And shadows flee away”.



I do pray, my dear children, that you will take the advice in this poem to heart. Read it often and ask the Lord to help you trust in this Saviour for “none perish that Him trust”.

May God bless you in your young years and make you His children.

With my love and prayers, Granny M

As you can see from the quotation marks, she is quoting texts from the Bible. I’ll give you the references and see if you can match them up. They may not be exactly as they are in your Bible but I’m sure you will recognise them.

Galatians chapter 6, verse 7 .....

Acts chapter 4, verse 13 .....

Proverbs chapter 8, verse 17 .....

Matthew chapter 11, verse 29 .....

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Song of Solomon chapter 2, verse 1 .....

Proverbs chapter 3, verse 17. ....