



**STORNOWAY**  
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

## August 2020 Newsletter



### WELCOME

### LORD'S DAY

Morning Worship—11.00am

Evening Worship—6.30pm

### PRAYER MEETING

Thursday—7.30pm (Currently meeting via Zoom)

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Scottish Charity No: SC043043

## WORD FROM THE MANSE

Dear congregation,

We are thankful that we have been able to commence public worship again, although we long for the time when even those who are shielding can come too.

What was it we missed on Sabbaths? It wasn't the building itself. The New Testament church does not have real sanctuaries – intrinsically holy places, such as the Tabernacle and the Temple. The reason for this is that the various ceremonial laws have been fulfilled with the coming of Christ and His Spirit, for “the Word became flesh and dwelt [tabernacled, pitched His tent] among us,” (John 1:14) and “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?” (1 Corinthians 6:19). At various times traditionalists in the church have wrongly viewed the building as sacred, rather than as a meeting house convenient for the congregation to assemble within.

Was it the fellowship? Yes, I think partly it was. Technology is a wonderful thing and we ought to be thankful that we were able to continue with prayer meetings, Session and Deacons' meetings, Sabbath fellowships, and book studies all via Zoom. Yet video calls can be more demanding and draining, and closer fellowship is not always possible. We missed the conversations that we could have before or after services, those natural opportunities to ask for prayer, to encourage, to show love for one another by word or by deed.

But what did you miss most of all? Was it not the presence of God? God is everywhere present because He is infinite and cannot be bound (Psalm 139:7-10) and so it is true that He has been with His people throughout the lockdown, indeed He has never left us. But there is a special dynamic to His presence in the gathered congregation. God is not everywhere present in the same way. The subjective experience of the perfected saint in Glory is an eternity apart from that of the reprobate in Hell – yet God is present in both places. So too there is a difference between God's presence with us throughout the course of daily life and that special presence that we enter into for public worship. Yes, the building is not inherently holy, but when we meet for public worship we are on holy ground, within the precincts of Heaven itself. What a privilege! What is man that You are mindful of him? What a responsibility! May He never cease to be in the midst of the seven lampstands (the seven churches)!

Of course, God's kindness has been evident to us in a multitude of ways, despite not being able to assemble. We should pause and reflect on His many mercies to us over these months. Let's also look to the future, praying with renewed earnest that God would bless our assembly week by week and that He would bring in the lost and perishing.

Every blessing,

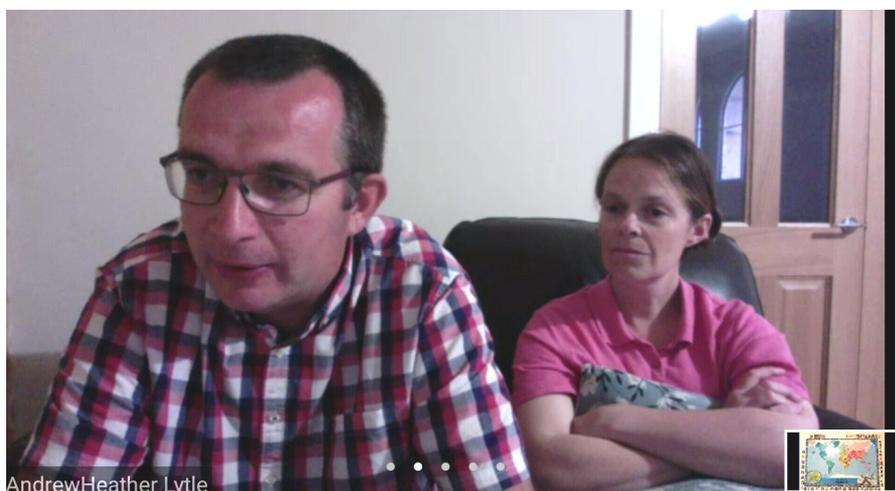
Stephen

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### ZOOM FELLOWSHIP

On Sabbath 5th July we were able to have a Zoom fellowship with the Lytles, missionaries of the RP church serving in France. Andrew and Heather were able to give us a flavour of the work in Nantes and particularly the challenges that face evangelical Christians in that needy country. The Lytles were last with us in person in October 2013 and so it was great to renew fellowship and to hear this update from them.

### NEWS & EVENTS



AndrewHeather Lytle

*Rev. Andrew & Heather Lytle*

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15)

## CHRISTIANS CELEBRATE AS SUDAN ABOLISHES APOSTASY LAW

Christians are celebrating after the new Sudanese Government abolished the country's apostasy law. Until last week, Muslims in Sudan could be sentenced to death for converting to Christianity, and even discussing other religions could lead to arrest.

This greatly limited Christian evangelism, and Christians were routinely persecuted for their beliefs – including having their property seized by the state.

### **'Freedom'**

Sudan has been one of the worst countries in the world for Christian persecution, and is listed as number seven in Open Doors' World Watch List. But campaigners are hoping for greater freedom under the new government.

Paul Robinson, CEO of Christian charity Release International, said: "The direction of travel in Sudan was towards ever-tighter Islamic law and restrictions on religious freedom. Today that direction of travel is being reversed. There is freedom in the air."

An Open Doors expert on sub-Saharan Africa called it "an answer to years of fervent prayer by Christians around the world". "We applaud the government for showing firm intent in ensuring respect for the human rights of all Sudan's citizens no matter faith, gender or ethnicity."

### **Meriam Ibrahim**

Sudan's apostasy law came to international attention in 2014 when a woman was arrested for marrying a Christian man. Despite being raised a Christian herself, Meriam Ibrahim was sentenced to death for turning her back on Islam because her absentee father was a Muslim.

She was also sentenced to 100 lashes for the separate offence of marrying a Christian man. She refused to renounce her faith and gave birth while in prison on death row, but was eventually released and permitted to leave the country.

### **The Christian Institute**



## GLEANINGS BY BILL LUCAS

### THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME (LUKE 22:19)

As the Lord Jesus broke the bread at the first Lord's Supper, He lovingly instructed His disciples "This do in remembrance of me." These words raise the question: Do we know Him? To remember Him, we must first know Him. If He is a stranger to us, we cannot remember Him. We can think about some facts recorded in the Gospels, but that is different from remembering Christ Himself. The Lord's Supper is for those who know Him.

These words direct their focus to the Lord Jesus, the whole focus of the Supper. The Supper is not primarily about your sorrow, but His sorrows; not your desire, but His desire; not your faith, but His faithfulness; not your works, but His works; not your life, but His life; not your love, but His love; not your vows, but His vows; not your joy, but His joy. The supper is about His grace, and His righteousness.

Remember Him who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Remember Him who was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Remember Him who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. Remember Him who went from the Lord's Supper table to Gethsemne, to Gabbatha and to Golgotha, all for the sake of your sin.

Let the scenes of His sufferings pass through your minds and may their substitutionary character fill you with humble awe, amazement, and adoration. Remember Him who entered the grave only to rise again, ascend into heaven, and pour out His Spirit. Remember Him who ever lives to make intercession for them that come unto God by Him. Remember Him who will one day gather His bride to Himself to be at the marriage supper of the Lamb. The bread and the wine point to all these things about Him, who says, "This do in remembrance of me."

Amid all you lack, meditate on what He has! At the Table, He reveals Himself as the fully sufficient and suitable Saviour and calls the weakest in faith to think of and remember Him. There is no end to the riches in the Supper's Lord as they are displayed at the Lord's Supper. Does that make you look forward to the Lord's Supper? When the Supper is administered, may His people have such a remembrance of Him that all else is forgotten and they are left with Him alone!

**David H Kranendonk** (Minister in the Free Reformed Churches of North America)

### THE FEAST

Jesus is the Head of this table.

He who gave Himself for you gives Himself to you.

"Take, eat" -- costly bought, freely given.

Shorter Sayings - **John (Rabbi) Duncan**

### MERCIFUL HIGH PRIEST

Help me, merciful High Priest, to pray for those who have met with accident and sudden sorrow; for those who are passing through fires, that they may not be burned; for those who are wading in deep waters, that they may not be swept down; for those who are surrounded by enemies, that they may not be overpowered; for those who are lonely, and desolate, and forlorn, that they may not lose heart.

## THE MERCY OF GOD (PSALM 52:8)

Meditate a little on this mercy of the Lord. It is tender mercy. With gentle, loving touch, He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He is as gracious in the manner of His mercy as in the matter of it. It is great mercy. There is nothing little in God; His mercy is like Himself, it is infinite. You cannot measure it. His mercy is so great that it forgives great sins to great sinners, after great lengths of time, and then gives great favours and great privileges, and raises us up to great enjoyments in the great heaven of the great God. It is undeserved mercy, as indeed all true mercy must be, for deserved mercy is only a misnomer for justice.

There was no right on the sinner's part to the kind consideration of the Most High; had the rebel been doomed at once to eternal fire he would have richly merited the doom, and if delivered from wrath, sovereign love alone has found a cause, for there was none in the sinner himself. It is rich mercy. Some things are great, but have little efficacy in them, but this mercy is a cordial to your drooping spirits; a golden ointment to your bleeding wounds; a heavenly bandage to your broken bones; a royal chariot for your weary feet; a bosom of love for your trembling heart. It is manifold mercy.

As Bunyan says, "All the flowers in God's garden are double." There is no single mercy. You may think you have but one mercy, but you shall find it to be a whole cluster of mercies. It is abounding mercy. Millions have received it, yet far from its being exhausted; it is as fresh, as full, and as free as ever. It is unfailing mercy. It will never leave thee. If mercy be thy friend, mercy will be with thee in temptation to keep thee from yielding; with thee in trouble to prevent thee from sinking; with thee living to be the light and life of thy countenance; and with thee dying to be the joy of thy soul when earthly comfort is ebbing fast.

### C.H. Spurgeon

#### QUOTES FROM READERS DIGEST

This church is prayer conditioned.

We welcome you with open Psalms.

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Right is right  
THOUGH ALL CONDEMN,  
&  
wrong is wrong  
THOUGH ALL APPROVE.

CHARLES SPURGEON

CHALLIES.COM

A SINNER DOES NOT  
*DECIDE* FOR CHRIST;  
THE SINNER *FLIES* TO  
CHRIST IN UTTER  
HELPLESSNESS  
AND DESPAIR.

- D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

## WHO AM I TO JUDGE?



“Judge not, that you be not judged.” (Matthew 7:1)

In a day and age where the Bible is increasingly dismissed, it is strange to hear so many appealing to Jesus’ words in the Sermon on the Mount. “Judge not, that you be not judged,” is one of the most quoted texts in the whole of the Bible. It is often quoted and misunderstood from within the Church. Likewise, it is frequently cited and misused by those out with the Church.

There are many who have misinterpreted the meaning of these words. For instance, Leo Tolstoy, the Russian novelist, grossly misapplied the verse by stating that Christ is forbidding judgement by law courts, “take no part whatever in the administration of the law.” The common usage within the church today tends to be, “I’m not judging,” or “who am I to judge?” Similarly, out with the church, we are likely to hear “don’t judge me,” or “is that not you judging?” Effectively, when framed as such, the implication is a prohibition against asserting that any specific course of action is wrong, whatever it may be, as that would be “judging someone.” We should never judge, we should never condemn any action, as tolerance is one of the highest of virtues. Is that the correct understanding of these words?

### **The Importance of Context**

Nowadays with social media we are constantly exposed to excerpts of political speeches or brief videos covering controversial incidents. If we are relying on short clips, taken out of context, it is often difficult to get the full feeling of a speech or to understand the circumstances surrounding a particular incident. It is not uncommon for social media or the mainstream media to highlight a brief portion of a speech, which gives an entirely different meaning to the actual message when received in its entirety. Similarly, particularly with the current social justice movement, we regularly see brief videos of incidents, which portray aggressors as victims. If we take the time to investigate a little further, it is usually not difficult to find a fuller account, which may completely change our perspective of the incident.

In the same vein, each verse of the Bible ought to be understood in its context. The fundamental rule in Biblical interpretation is the analogy of faith: let Scripture interpret Scripture. Every Biblical text has a Biblical context. We ought to consider how the verse in question relates to the immediate context of the chapter, along with the wider context of the book. Furthermore, we ought to consider how the verse relates to other passages in Scripture, particularly clearer portions. If we pluck individual verses from their context, without even considering the immediate context of the verse, then we can’t expect to arrive at a sound understanding of that verse. “Judge not, that you be not judged,” has more than any other verse in recent times, been removed from its context and assigned an entirely different meaning than intended.

## Hypocritical Judgement

In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ dealt with all areas of the believer's life, including how we ought to relate to others, in order to equip us to live a kingdom life in a fallen world. As in other areas in the Sermon on the Mount, Christ contrasts His teaching with the view of the Pharisees, the religious leaders of the day. Their religion was based upon an external righteousness, whereas Christ taught a heart righteousness. The Pharisees were blind to their own faults and quick to see the faults of others. However, in response, Christ was not forbidding judging altogether, rather He was forbidding hypocritical and improper judging.

John Calvin said that, "these words of Christ do not contain an absolute prohibition from judging, but are intended to cure a disease, which appears to be natural to us all." We are naturally prone to see the failings of others and to minimise our own failings. We are quick to make hasty, unwarranted and unmerciful judgements, when we don't have the full facts. We are quick to assume the worst about people and to judge someone's motives, when we cannot see their heart. We are to avoid falling into the state of soul where we become critical, spiteful fault finders. This comes very naturally to us, and if we are honest with ourselves, probably all of us have allowed ourselves to fall into such a state at various times.

We ought not to apply standards to others that we do not apply to ourselves. This is why Jesus said, "why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3-4). Similarly we read in Romans: "you who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? You who say, "do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery?" (Romans 2:21-22). "Judge not, that you be not judged," (Matthew 7:1), is not a prohibition against exercising judgement, but a warning against making judgements that are hypocritical and improper, as the word "hypocrite!" in the context of the passage makes clear (Matthew 7:5). When we pass such judgement on others, it invites a similar judgement to us in return, perhaps something we seldom think about. We must carefully heed these words of Christ: "for with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you." (Matthew 7:2).

## Righteous Judgement

However, the idea which is so prevalent today, that we ought to suspend our critical faculties and exercise no judgement at all is not taught in this passage. In fact quite the opposite is true: "first remove the plank from your own eye, and *then* you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:5). The very passage which is appealed to as a means of forbidding judging, in reality teaches us to exercise judgement, to those within the Church. On the one hand, we are to avoid hypocritical and improper judging, by removing the plank from our own eye in order to see clearly, and, on the other hand, we are to engage in judging, by removing the speck from our brothers eye. How are we expected to remove the speck from our brothers eye without exercising some form of judgement that there is a speck there in the first place?

Again, further on in the same passage, we are warned to "beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves" (Matthew 7:15). If we do not exercise judgement then how can we beware of the presence of false prophets in the church? Furthermore -taking into account Christ's teaching elsewhere -He said to the people, "do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment" (John 7:24). In other words, do not judge in a superficial manner, but actively exercise righteous judgement.

The Scripture teaches both that "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23) and that we are to "judge with righteous judgement" (John 7:24). Therefore, the idea that we are not in a position to engage in judging because we ourselves are sinners cannot be sustained. That then raises the question: how do we judge righteously? No earthly judge is perfect, yet we can make judgements, without hypocrisy if we hold others to the same standard of God's Word that we hold ourselves. We must seek to put to death our own sin and be more critical of ourselves than we are of others. Furthermore we can judge righteously if we, in all humility, are motivated by the good of the one whom we are judging, if we, in love, see clearly in order to remove the speck from their eye.

We have a responsibility to rebuke one another in love, and that can only occur in exercising a form of judgement. However, we ought to carefully consider our motive and attitude as we do so. John Chrysostom (347-407) stated that we are to, “correct him who has sinned, but not as a foe, nor as an adversary exacting a penalty, but as a high physician providing medicine.” It is not always a virtue to avoid judging someone else, as is so often asserted today. In fact, there are occasions when it can be very wrong not to judge someone, as we allow them to go on in sin. For instance, we exercise righteous judgement as we seek to bring back one who has erred from the faith: “he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins” (James 5:20). We ought not to divest ourselves of our responsibility to judge righteously - under the cloak of modesty.

As far as the unbelieving world is concerned, we cannot judge, chasten and bring remedial steps to correct them, as we would within the church. The responsibility of the church is to witness the Gospel to the ungodly and included in this is a declaration that all have sinned. This was the pattern the Apostle Paul followed in outlining his Gospel to the Romans. The universality of sin and the judgement and wrath of God preceded the outworking of justification and sanctification. There must be law and judgment before there can be any good news. By implication, the world’s insistence that we are to gloss over and affirm them in their sins as they assert “judge not, that you be not judged” is not a Biblical understanding of these words. There may come a time where our witness to certain individuals must stop for we are not to cast our pearls before swine (Matthew 7:6). That too is a judgement, on our part, on the unbelieving world, to be exercised with great wisdom.

## **Conclusion**

Christ was not forbidding the exercise of discernment and judgement altogether. He was commanding us to exercise great caution in order to avoid improper and hypocritical judging and to engage in righteous judgement, both for the good of our fellow Christians and as we reach out to an unbelieving world. Great wisdom is required and only the Judge of all the earth can endow us with the understanding that is necessary. We will be judged by Christ for our judgements and equally we will be judged for our failures to judge. Who is sufficient for such things?

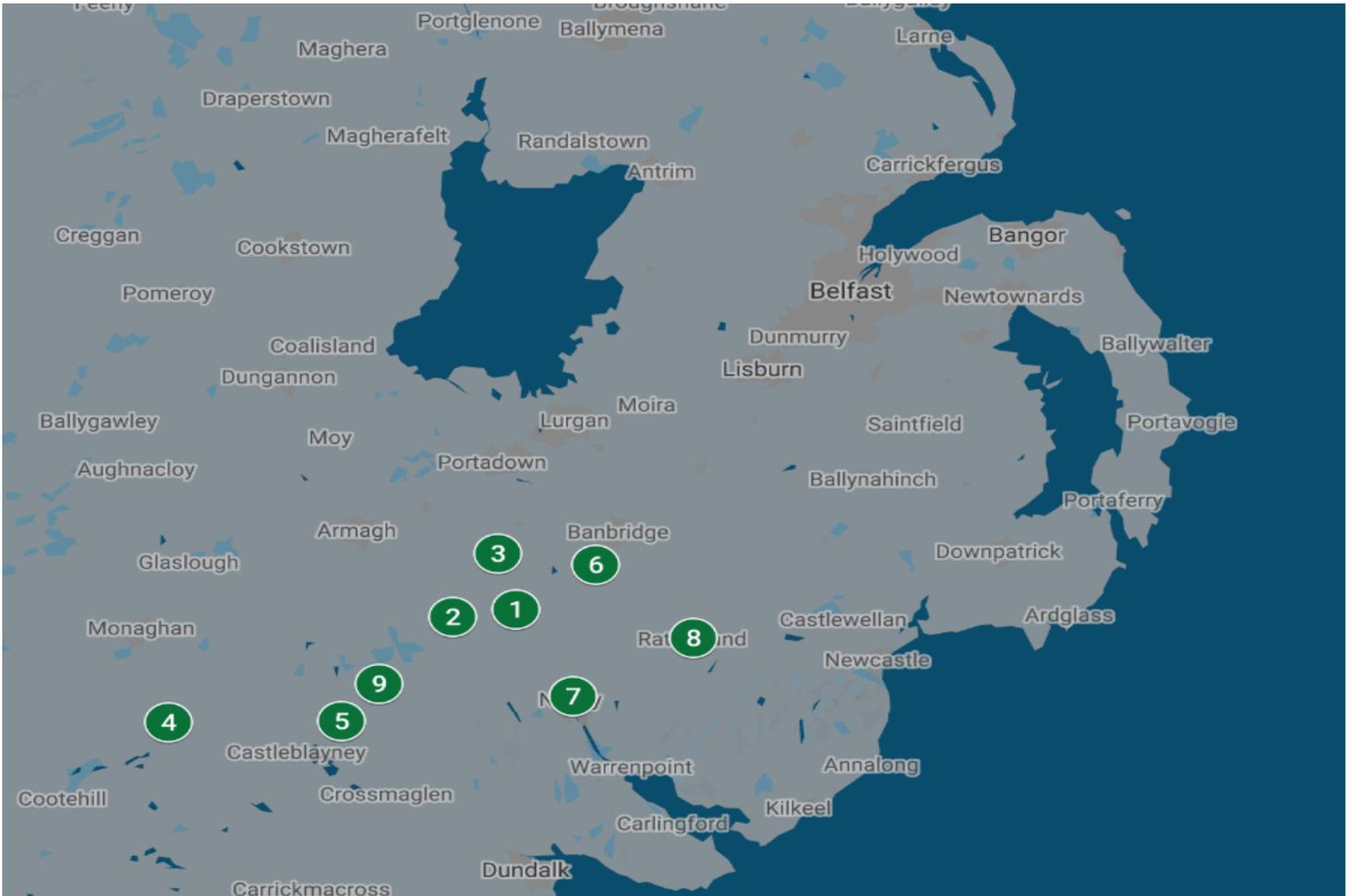
**Scott Maciver**

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## THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND (4)

### SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY

The Southern Presbytery is smaller than the other two presbyteries that we have looked at. The majority of the congregations are in Northern Ireland but two (Fairview and Creevagh) are in County Monaghan in the Republic of Ireland. Interestingly, the congregations of Fairview and Tullvallen make up a joint charge that straddles the border. A joint charge is when two congregations, each with their own sessions, share a minister. Ballenon and Ballylane is another joint charge in the Presbytery but since they have been worshipping together recently (alternating between the separate buildings), I have included them together in the figures below. Loughbrickland and Clare was another joint charge, although due to growth in the Loughbrickland congregation requiring a full-time minister, Rev. David Silversides resigned that part of the charge in 1999. Clare had a long vacancy of almost 20 years until 2018 when Peter Dundee was ordained. As may already be observed from these various joint charges, the Southern Presbytery has been short of manpower and historically has had many vacancies.



*Southern Presbytery*

The Southern Presbytery has been particularly affected by the Troubles. Besides the loss of life of friends and family members, the congregations lived through decades of uncertainty and trial. The Newry meeting house, located next to the courthouse, has been damaged on several occasions by IRA bombs targeting the courthouse. On one of these occasions my family was on holiday in Newry with my dad giving preaching supply. The first week the service was in the church but the second week we had to have the service in the hall due to significant damage. The Tullyvallen manse had windows broken on two occasions by nearby terrorist bombs. We can be thankful to God that this chapter of the history of Northern Ireland has ended and that He has preserved His Church through it.



*Loughbrickland RPC*



*Newry RPC*

A rough idea of the sizes of the congregations is given below from 2019 figures.

1-2.	Ballenon and Ballylane – Rev. Robert Robb	56
3.	Clare – Rev. Peter Dundee	30
4.	Creevagh – Vacant	22
5.	Fairview – Rev. Philip Murphy	37
6.	Loughbrickland – Vacant	62
7.	Newry – Rev. Nigel Agnew	27
8.	Rathfriland – Rev. Barry Galbraith	52
9.	Tullyvallen – Rev. Philip Murphy	25



*Paul Flynn*

The Presbytery has one student under care, Paul Flynn, and one retired minister.

### **Prayer Points**

Give thanks that two men from our Presbytery are considering entering the Theological College in 2021.

Give thanks for the beginning of refurbishment work to the Ballenon meeting house.

Pray for the Loughbrickland congregation as they seek a new pastor.

Ballenon is celebrating 200 years as an RP congregation. Pray for the mission and outreach program that is being organised for October.

Pray for the Dundee family as they prepare to move to the new manse in Clare later this year.

**Rev. Stephen McCollum**

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Your worst days are never so bad  
that you are beyond reach of  
God's grace. And your best  
days are never so good that  
you are beyond the need of  
God's grace.

~ Jerry Bridges

The Discipline of Grace

## BOOK REVIEW

### THE PATH OF TRUE GODLINESS—WILLEM TEELLINCK

Parallel to English Puritanism and the Scottish Second Reformation, there was a movement in the Netherlands called the Dutch Further Reformation (1600-1784). The reformed faith which was newly discovered in the Netherlands in the 1540's and 1550's was already fading by the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, as children began to take their parents and grandparents faith for granted, as a coldness crept into the Church. The Lord raised up a number of ministers, who felt a great burden due to the backsliding of the Dutch church, and were used of the Lord to stir up the people during this period. The Dutch Further Reformation moved the backsliding Reformed Church from mere Doctrine, to applying these truths to a reformation in life and practice.

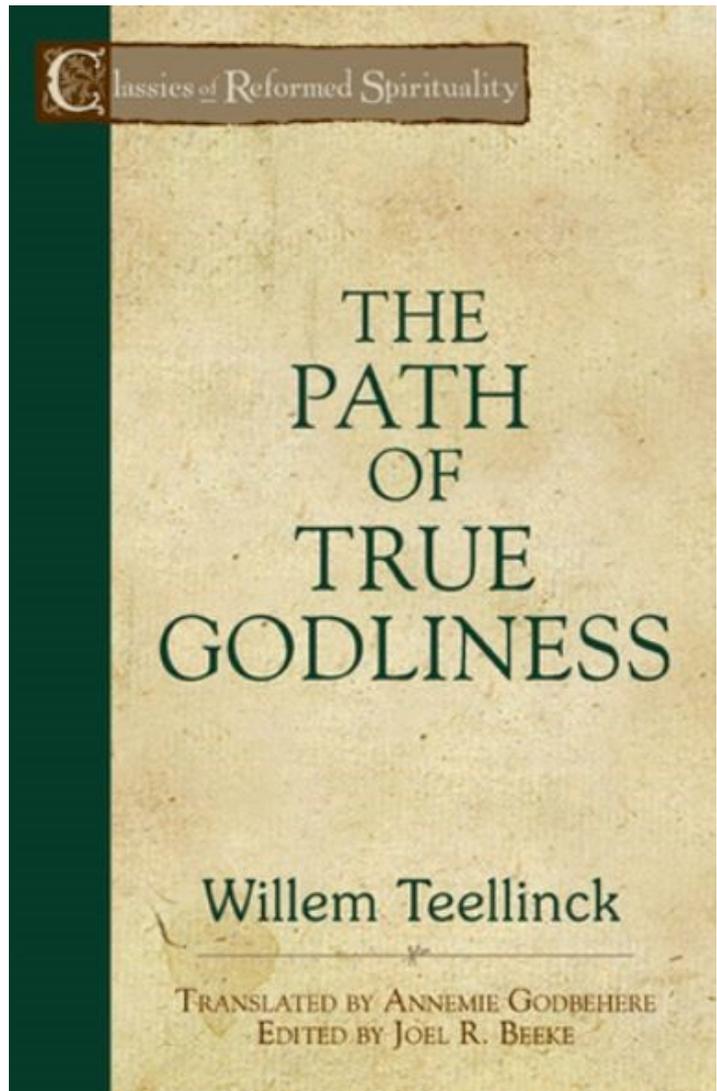
As the years went by, thousands of English books had been translated into Dutch, but it was not until the early 1990's that Dutch Reformation books began to be translated into English. In 2003, Willem Teellinck's *The Path of True Godliness* was published in English. Teellinck is considered to be the father of the Dutch Further Reformation and had a connection with Scotland, as he studied law at St. Andrews.

*The Path of True Godliness*, Teellinck's major work on sanctification, is considered by Joel Beeke to be one of the best books ever written on how to live out the Christian life. Teellinck defines the character of true Godliness, before dealing with the kingdom of darkness opposing the practice of godliness and the kingdom of grace promoting godliness. He then deals at length with both the God given means of practicing godliness and the motives to practicing godliness.

Teellinck brings Scripture to bear in such a practical, challenging and applicable manner, that you would never realise you are reading a book originally published in 1621. For instance, when the enemy comes, Teellinck vividly illustrates the difference between those who do and those who do not practice Godliness, "the courageous and cowardly soldiers may look the same at recruitment, but their true nature is revealed when the enemy comes." He goes on to address the matter of our immediate response to falling into sin, which is something that is seldom, addressed these days, "as soon as we discover that we have been overcome by some sin, we must jump back from it as quickly as if we had fallen into a fire."

Teellinck states that many professing Christians remain weak, as we do not actively practice Godliness. Amongst the many encouraging reasons to practice Godliness, he states, "by practicing Godliness, we are being trained to serve the best master, to do the best work, and to bring forth the best fruits."

Is it any wonder that the church today is so weak when so many of us are worldly and so few of us, by God's grace, seek to practice Godliness? "...godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come" (1 Timothy 4:8).



# Children's Corner



Dear Children

During these months of lockdown what is it that you have missed most? I suppose you have missed meeting up with your friends and being able to play with them. Talking to them on Zoom or Skype is not the same as being with them in person. Perhaps you have also missed school but have you missed gathering with God's people on the Lord's Day? David did in Psalm 42. He was even weeping remembering how he used to go to God's house singing songs of joy and praise. He was cast down but he told himself to trust in God because a time would come when he would still be able to praise Him.

For us, that time has now arrived and we are now able to meet together on the Lord's Day once again. Worship, of course, is not confined to God's house. We can worship God in our own homes and I hope that you were doing that and are continuing to do so. We should worship God every day because we have so many reasons to praise Him and thank Him and also to ask for His help and guidance each day. But there is a special blessing attached to worshipping with God's people in God's house. In Psalm 87 David tells us that God loves the gates of Zion more than the dwelling places of Jacob. The **gates of Zion** is another name for God's house so David is saying that there is a special blessing where God's people meet together. That is something for you to think about .

Now, how does David react to the prospect of going up to God's house? Read Psalm 122. He says there: "I **joyed** when to the house of God Go up, they said to me."

Is that how you reacted to the news that we could meet again as a congregation on the Lord's Day? I hope so. Whilst it is good to worship God at home on our own, it is better still to worship together – to hear God's Word being read and preached, to pray together and to praise Him. You may think that we are not praising God because we are not yet allowed to sing the psalms in church but in fact we don't need actually to sing in order to praise God. We can praise Him in our hearts. Some people are not able to sing but that does not mean they cannot praise God. I do hope, though, when we are able to sing once again in church, that you will sing heartily and that, as a congregation, we will be able to make "a joyful noise" to the Lord as David says in Psalm 95. Singing is a very important part of worship and, if God has given you a singing voice, make sure you use it to sing His praise. He is worthy of our praise. You go through the Book of Psalms and see how often David is praising God and asking you to praise Him too and to praise Him with singing.

My prayer for you is that you too will rejoice and be glad at now being able to join in the worship of God along with His people. Make sure you do not miss out on the special blessing that He promises to give as you worship Him in His house on the Lord's Day.



May God bless each one of you.

With my love

Granny M