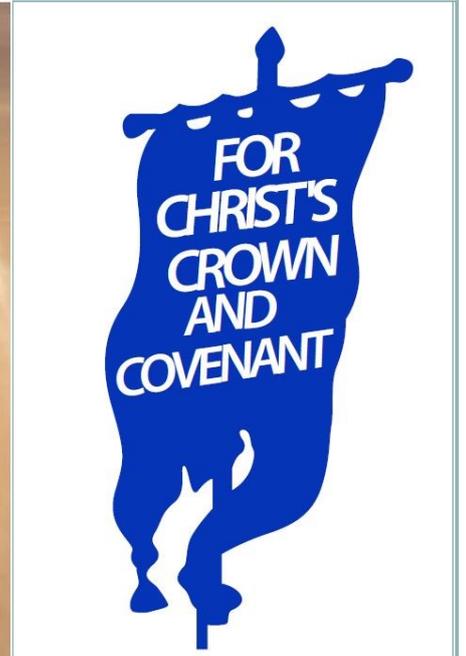
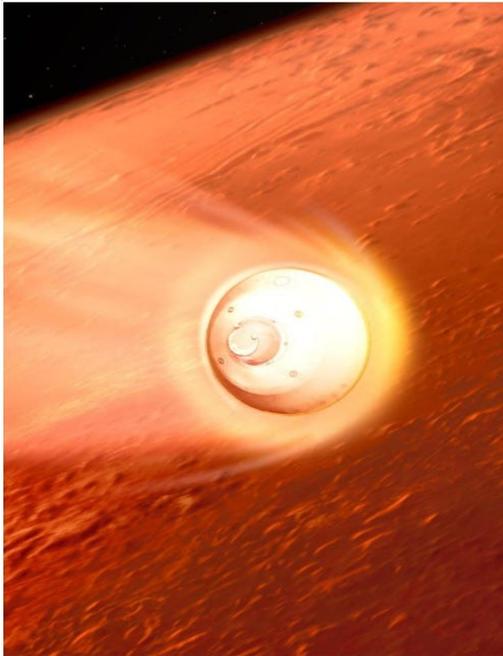




## April 2021 Newsletter



### 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,

How do you make a cup of tea? Perhaps there are two types of people – those who dip the tea bag in the cup once or twice, and those who allow the tea bag to steep in the water, whether in the cup or, better still, in the teapot. Which one gets the most out of the tea bag? Donald Whitney, in his book *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* uses this example to compare the difference between hearing the Word and meditating upon it.

It is important that in all of our hearing and reading of the Word that we spend time meditating on the wonderful truth and how it applies to our individual lives. How else will we get advantage of what we hear? We would be like those who swallow their food in gulps without chewing or savouring.

We live at a time when there are many opportunities to hear the Word. I preach three sermons a week to you. You are able to listen to other sermons online and read Christian books. I trust that you read the Word daily in your homes. There is no shortage of information. But how deep does it go?

When God spoke to Joshua after the death of Moses, He commanded him to be strong and courageous. The ability to do so was not from within Joshua himself, and so the Lord adds, “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” (Joshua 1:8).

May we be diligent to get the most out of the Scriptures through mediation.

“Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97).

Every blessing,  
Stephen

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## NEWS & EVENTS

### SGOIL CREIDEAMH (FAITH SCHOOL), GAMBIA—PRAYER POINTS

Please remember to pray for Sgoil Creideamh (Faith School) in Kabekel, Gambia. The School Management have asked for the following prayer points to be shared:

- 1 – The spiritual growth of every child in the school.
- 2 – That hearts would be opened to receive the Gospel.
- 3 – Unity in the midst of the teachers to continue.
- 4 – For God to continue to protect our Scottish partners from the Coronavirus pandemic.
- 5 – For God to continue showering His blessings upon the work.



*Sgoil Creideamh head boy and girl, along with the deputy head boy and girl*

**Church**

The Church, located in Brikama, has experienced growth in recent times, with Lord’s Day attendance doubling from 20 to around 40. People are beginning to see the importance of a reformed church and as we reach out, many are coming to a saving knowledge of Christ.

**Youth Fellowship**

The Youth Fellowship has 4 young men who have expressed an interest in becoming pastors.

**Sunday School**

The Sunday School has attracted children who previously knew nothing about the Bible, but now have a familiarity with the Scripture and can recite up to 10 questions and answers from the Shorter Catechism.

**Pastors Fellowship**

The monthly Pastors Fellowship has attracted an additional pastor interested in reformed theology, along with another charismatic pastor, who has embraced reformed theology and given up the excesses of the charismatic church.

**Life Impact Nursery School**

The nursery school, is provided free of charge to some on scholarships. If we were to have external sponsorship, it would help us to more effectively run the nursery, in terms of administrative supplies and payment of teachers. The nursery school has grown from 50 to 82 children this year, although all our classrooms are now full. The nursery has been a major source of evangelism, with parents and their children coming to church.

**Challenges**

A great and effective door has opened (1 Corinthians 16:9) to the Gospel in Gambia, however the major challenge we have is a suitable building for worship. We currently meet in a church member’s family compound, surrounded by corrugated fencing and hidden out of the way. People in Gambia are tired of false doctrine and are looking for truth. If we have our own building, suitably located, we believe the congregation will flourish, under the Lord’s blessing.

**Prayer Points**

Pray for land and a building for worship.

Pray for both my family and for myself, that I would effectively carry out the work of the ministry, to the glory of God.



*Life Impact Nursery School*



*The Konteh family*

## GLEANINGS BY BILL LUCAS

### OUR FIRST LOVE

"Thou hast left thy first love" ( Revelation 2: 4)

EVER to be remembered is that best and brightest of hours when first we saw the Lord, lost our burden, received the roll of promise, rejoiced in full salvation, and went on our way in peace. It was spring time in the soul; the winter was past; the mutterings of Sinai's thunders were hushed; the flashings of its lightnings were no more perceived; God was beheld as reconciled; the law threatened no vengeance, justice demanded no punishment. Then the flowers appeared in our heart; hope, love, peace, and patience sprung from the sod; the hyacinth of repentance, the snowdrop of pure holiness, the crocus of golden faith, the daffodil of early love, all decked the garden of the soul. The time of the singing of birds was come, and we rejoiced with thanksgiving; we magnified the holy name of our forgiving God, and our resolve was, ~Lord, I am Thine, wholly Thine; all I am, and all I have, I would devote to Thee. Thou hast bought me with Thy blood~let me spend myself and be spent in thy service. In life and in death let me be consecrated to Thee.~ How have we kept this resolve? Our espousal love burned with a holy flame of devotedness to Jesus~is it the same now? Might not Jesus well say to us, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love"? Alas! it is but little we have done for our Master's glory. Our winter has lasted all too long. We are as cold as ice when we should feel a summer's glow, and bloom with sacred flowers. We give to God pence when He deserveth pounds, nay, deserveth our heart's blood to be coined in the service of His church and of His truth. But shall we continue thus? O Lord, after Thou hast so richly blessed us, shall we be ungrateful, and become indifferent to Thy good cause and work? O quicken us that we may return to our first love, and do our first works! Send us a genial spring, O Sun of Righteousness.

**CH Spurgeon**

### LISTENING

"A time to keep silence, and a time to speak" (Ecc.3:7)

By rearranging the letters of the word silent we can get the word "listen" and that play on words carries real significance. We need to be silent with concentrated minds if we are to listen effectively. Yet in modern society silence is so often missing as people seem to need constant sound such as television at home , radio in the car, headphones when on the move. Noise weakens our ability to listen and that is especially true when it comes to listening to God. Let us shut out the noise and through prayer and His Word, hear the voice of God as He speaks to us today.

**Paul Young**

### GOD'S METHOD OF WEANING

"But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10)

Two lessons God would principally teach you by affliction: First: That your affections be taken off earthly possessions. When Israel doted on Egypt as a palace, God made it an iron furnace to make them weary of it. The creature is our idol by nature, but infinite wisdom makes it our grief, that it may not be our God. When children fare well abroad, they are mindless of home; but when abused by strangers, they hasten to their parents. The world is therefore a purgatory, that it might not be our paradise. As soon as Laban frowned on Jacob, he talks of returning to his father's house.

4 Second: That you choose the good part that shall never be taken from you. Man's heart will be fixed on something as its hope and happiness. God therefore puts out our candles, that we may look up to the sun. When we are delving in the earth to find treasure, He sends dampness purposely to make us call to be drawn upward. Till the prodigal met with a famine, he regarded not his father. If the waters be abated the dove is apt to wander and defile herself, but when they cover the face of the earth and allow her no rest, then she returns to the ark.

**George Swinnock**

## WHEN TO SPEAK

Teach me, Lord, when to speak and when to be silent; when to act and when not to act; in all the details of daily life, to do your will on earth as it is done in heaven.

Give me, Heavenly Father, I pray, a self-forgetful spirit, so that I may be more anxious to give than to receive, more eager to understand than to be understood, more thoughtful of others, more unmindful of myself.

**F B Meyer**

## TRIBULATION

If we are to be in heaven, we must be made fit; and the Lord will lead us in the right paths. It is through much tribulation that God's people have to travel to glory. We cannot change God's plans. May we kiss the rod, and know who has appointed it.

**Rev William Tiptaft**

(a nephew by marriage to J C Philpot).

## EVERY WORK OF GOD

There are three stages in every work of God: first it is impossible, then it is difficult, then it is done.

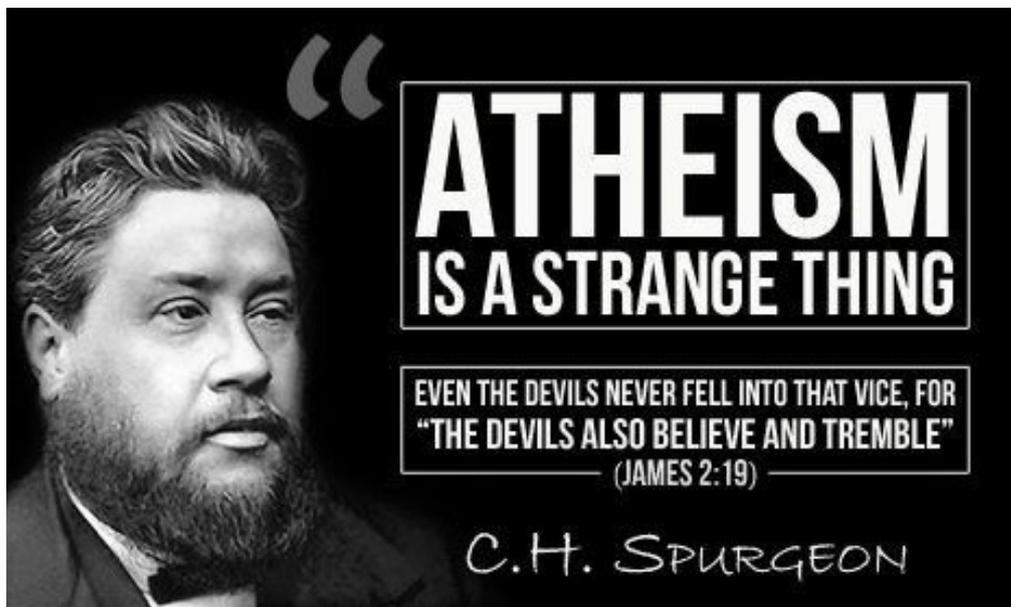
**Hudson Taylor**

## MAGNIFY THE LORD

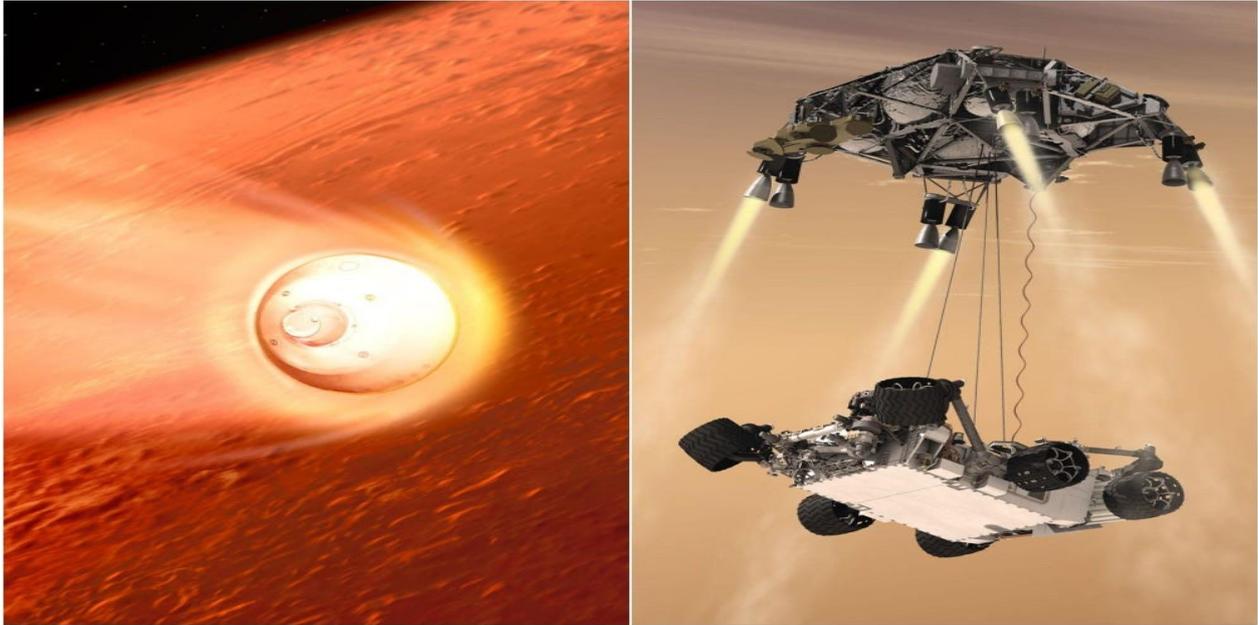
"I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. (Psalm 34: 1 -3)

If we make this Psalm our daily prayer, we will be different people! By keeping our eyes on Him and seeking His face, we would then recognise His saving and protecting hand in every part of our daily life. God cannot refuse a contrite heart, but is open to those who sincerely look for Him. Then we can speak from personal experience.

**G Frear**



## THE WISDOM OF MEN



“Your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God” (1 Corinthians 2:5)

The world watched as NASA’s Perseverance Rover completed its seven month journey to Mars, entering the Martian atmosphere, descending and successfully landing on 18<sup>th</sup> February. Perseverance landed in a crater that scientists believe once held a lake, there being evidence of both an inflow and an outflow channel. The Rover is a motorised vehicle intended to travel across the surface of the planet. The purpose of the mission is to explore the planet, seeking for signs of past life. The Rover will collect rock and soil samples as well as testing oxygen production from the Martian atmosphere.

Unmanned missions to Mars are not new, dating as they do back to the Soviet Union’s failed 1971 mission. NASA’s Curiosity Rover mission, which landed in 2012, collected a series of fascinating images of the Red Planet. Perseverance is said to be an upgrade of Curiosity, carrying 19 cameras, microphones and a miniature helicopter, with an on-board camera powered by a solar panel. Ultimately, the mission is said to be a stepping stone towards human exploration of Mars. This NASA plans to achieve by 2033. The world’s richest man, SpaceX founder Elon Musk, has even more ambitious plans, aiming to land humans on Mars by 2026 to establish a small human colony focused on the establishment of manufacturing, food production and power plants. Eventually, Musk intends to establish cities on Mars by transporting 100 people at a time in a reusable starship.

### CHRISTIANS AND SPACE EXPLORATION

C.S. Lewis, the famous Twentieth Century Christian author, although by no means an evangelical, was asked the question, in a 1963 interview, “do you think there will be widespread travel in space?” Lewis responded, “I look forward with horror to contact with the other inhabited planets, if there are such. We would only transport to them all of our sin and our acquisitiveness, and establish a new colonialism. I can’t bear to think of it. But if we on earth were to get right with God, of course, all would be changed. Once we find ourselves spiritually awakened, we can go to outer space and take the good things with us. That is quite a different matter.”

Whatever the rights and wrongs of his statement, Lewis correctly identified much of what we see today with modern space exploration. It appears to be an endeavour largely driven by man’s rebellion against God removing God from the equation. Secularists are desperate to find intelligent life on other planets, as a means of supposedly proving their evolutionary worldview. Charles Bolden, former Head of NASA, stated, “It’s highly improbable in the limitless vastness of the universe that we humans stand alone.” If life evolved on earth, according to their thinking, it must have evolved elsewhere, given the right conditions. It would be wrong, however, to suggest that it is the only motive held by those in the space industry. There is the ongoing pursuit of knowledge and scientific discovery, along with the basic human urge to explore. There are no doubt many believers working in the space industry today, although mention of God and of a created order does not seem to be something that is publicly emphasised or is readily promoted by the mainstream media.

By contrast to the widespread secularism in the space industry today, the earliest days of space exploration were not short of professing Christians and of Christian experience. While orbiting the moon on Christmas Eve in 1968, the crew of Apollo 8, Frank Borman, James Lovell and William Anders, during a television broadcast took turns reading the creation account from Genesis 1 for the world to hear. Less than a year later in 1969, prior to becoming the second man to walk on the moon, Buzz Aldrin was said to have observed the Lord's Supper in the lunar module of Apollo 11, following the reading of John 15:5, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." That is not to suggest that it was legitimate for Aldrin to conduct the Lord's Supper, given that he was not an ordained minister. Furthermore, James Irwin, who walked on the moon in 1971 through Apollo 15, later expressed how his time in space gave him a profound sense of God's presence, as he said, "I felt the power of God as I'd never felt it before." He later said that, "Jesus walking on the earth is more important than man walking on the moon."

## STEWARDSHIP AND SPACE EXPLORATION

It is undoubtedly true that immense amounts of money have been spent over the years in space exploration. Exploring Mars is a costly undertaking with previous missions costing billions of dollars. The Perseverance mission alone is expected to cost \$2.7 billion over the lifetime of the project. This raises justifiable concerns about the issue of stewardship. Even from a secular perspective, could these vast sums of money not be better spent here on, for instance, medical research to alleviate suffering, as well as the feeding, clothing and education of the needy? By way of balance, space exploration has been said to be a source of employment and economic stimulation, along with a means of scientific, technological and medical advancement.

The concept of stewardship, however, begins with creation as Adam and Eve were given dominion over the whole of creation, and tasked with the care of God's earth. "God said to them, be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Genesis 1:28). The scriptures teach that the earth is unique in all of God's creation, "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool" (Isaiah 66:1). It is the scene of God's redemptive plan in Christ, whereby "the lamb slain before the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8) walked this very earth, fulfilled all righteousness, died for our sins, and "rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:4). Moreover, the earth will also be the theatre of Christ's second coming: "behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him" (Revelation 1:7).

The reality is that the vast sums of money spent on space exploration, generated either via taxation through the Federal Tax Budget in the case of NASA, or via private enterprise in the case of Elon Musk and other billionaires, ultimately belong to God and not to man. As the apostle Paul put it, "what do you have that you did not receive?" (1 Corinthians 4:7). It is from God that we have received our existence and all that we have, including the very breath in our lungs. The question is whether or not we are Biblical stewards? Nobody can be a Biblical steward without first understanding and personally experiencing God's saving work in Christ, carried out here on this earth.

## CONCLUSION

In all of the recent media coverage of the journey and successful landing of the Perseverance Rover on Mars, the great minds of our time have been lauded for their wisdom, ingenuity and vision. Likewise, the billionaires of our day are also highly exalted by the masses for their entrepreneurial brilliance, allowing them to generate sufficient financial wealth to privately fund their own space explorations.

As fascinating as it is when we see these incredible images transmitted from the surface of Mars, and, as brilliant as these people undoubtedly are, we would do well to be reminded of the words of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians who said, "your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:4-5). When we see the images and the beauty of God's creation beyond this earth, let us not think primarily of the wisdom of the men and women involved in these endeavours, but of the power of God, who created not only this earth, but the vastness of all the lies beyond. "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1). Let us think of the uniqueness of this earth in all of God's creation and of the uniqueness of Christ who walked this earth, the "one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).

## QUESTIONS

**1** - In Psalm 115:16, the Psalmist declares that, “the heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord’s; but the earth He has given to the children of men.” Does this verse bring into question the right of man to venture beyond the bounds of earth’s atmosphere at all? How would you respond?

**2** – In the vision of Obadiah, we read the words, “though you ascend as high as the eagle, and though you set your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down, says the Lord” (Obadiah v4). Do these words speak of the possibility of man colonising other planets, or does the immediate context not allow for such an interpretation?

**Scott Maciver**

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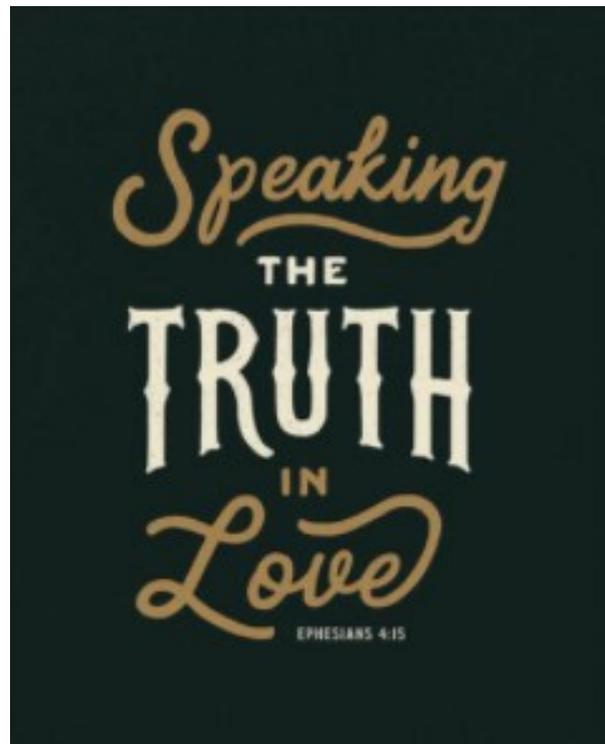
## AM I STIRRING UP HATRED?

I grew up hearing people shout insults and then, when challenged for their hate, retort that ‘it’s a free country.’ They may have been saying nasty things, and they may have been nasty people, but they were quite right – it was a free country. But, as we wake up today following the passing of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland Bill) in the Scottish Parliament last night, will that still be the case? In all honesty, I’m not entirely sure.

### HATE CRIME AND FREE SPEECH

Undoubtedly, the Bill has been improved since it was introduced to Parliament in April 2020. However, there are still serious concerns with regards to how it shall be prosecuted. The offending section is Part 2 of the Bill. The explanatory notes summarise the section as follows:

*“Part 2 creates offences of stirring up hatred against a group of persons based on the group being defined by reference to a listed characteristic (age, disability, race (and related characteristics), religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity and variations in sex characteristics). It also creates offences of possessing inflammatory material with a view to communicating the material in circumstances where there is an intention to stir up hatred or it is likely that hatred would be stirred up.”*



The sharp edge has arguably been removed from this section by an amendment by Conservative MSP Adam Tomkins which seeks to guard the freedom of speech. In his own words, the amendment would make sure that

*“You are not committing a hate crime unless you cross that threshold of saying something that is not only offensive, but saying something that a reasonable person would hold to be threatening or abusive in a manner that intends to stir up hatred.”*

This is certainly a helpful clarification, and it’s good that it was included. However, it is not foolproof. For example, where exactly is that threshold? What defines a reasonable person? In our polarised day, what is hatred? What does it look like to stir it up? Many of the key words in this debate have been left worryingly undefined.

Humza Yousaf tried to reassure the man on the street by saying,

*“To those who think they may accidentally somehow fall foul of the law... because they believe sex is immutable, or they believe an adult man cannot become a female or they campaign for the rights of Palestinians... or those that proselytise that same-sex relationships are sinful, none of these people would fall foul of the stirring up of hatred offence for solely stating their belief – even if they did so in a robust manner ... Why? Because solely stating any belief, which I accept may be offensive to some, is not breaching the criminal threshold.”*

Interesting use “proselytise.”

So, clearly, at least according to the drafters of the law, ‘solely stating any belief ... is not breaching the criminal threshold.’ One wonders, then, not only how this crime will be prosecuted, but also who it will satisfy? One group will be constantly looking over their shoulder, worried that they may have broken a taboo, and another group will be frustrated that those who disagree with them, offend them, and therefore arguably hate them, will not be prosecuted, shamed and silenced. How, then, is this Bill going to deal with the, apparently systemic, hatred at the grassroots level of society?

The fact is that you can’t have a free speech provision in a Bill that is, in its very essence, designed to curtail free speech, and still expect the Bill to do what it was designed to do in the first place. That is a confusing sentence, but its is a confusing piece of legislation.

#### STIRRING UP HATRED

Most people are not in a position in which they could stir up hatred even if they tried. As a minister, however, I feel a bit nervous. It is, after all, my job to stir people up. The Apostle Peter wrote to the Church in his own day saying,

*“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour.” (2 Peter 3:1-2)*

His intention is to stir up the minds of the people to remember the words of the prophets and the commandments of the apostles. Bear in mind that, in Biblical terminology, to ‘remember’ something isn’t simply to recollect it – it’s to act upon it. Peter was stirring up the Church to action.

And so it is with the preacher. Not dissimilar to the comedian who wants to make you laugh, or the singer who wants to move your emotions, so the minister preaches for a response. It is our job to stir you up to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and to go out and live a consistent Christian life in the public sphere while you ‘contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.’ (Jude 3) Can we still do this?

#### EXAMPLES

With regard to the protected characteristics under this legislation, there are significant points of tension. In terms of religion, I will continue to preach that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way to Heaven. I will encourage my congregation to promote this view and to witness to people of all faiths to embrace Biblical Christianity. Is this stirring up hatred?

With regards to sexual orientation, I will teach that the only legitimate place for sexual relations is in a lawful marriage between a man and a woman. I will encourage my congregation to live in accordance with this teaching and to promote it in their own spheres as the only legitimate moral position. Moreover, the elders of the Church will deny membership to any who defy that Biblical principle. Under this new legislation, will myself

and the elders who serve alongside me be illegally stirring up hatred?

With regards to transgender identity, I will continue to teach the congregation, in the words of Jesus, that ‘from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.’ (Mark 10:6) I will teach that there are two sexes and two genders and that what we are born with is simply the hand that God has dealt us – to deny that or to seek to alter it is both sinful and unnatural. Not only will I teach this but I will also call my congregation to hold to it and to promote it. Will that be stirring up hatred?

To the, arguably legitimate, anger of some, sex has not been included as a protected characteristic under this Bill. Should it be introduced, as it is expected that it will be, I will continue to preach that men and women are, in many cases, naturally suited to different but complementary roles. I will expound the Bible’s teaching that, although women are invaluable to the Church, they are not to hold office in it (i.e., be ministers, elders or deacons). Will I be stirring up hatred?

#### WHAT NEXT?

It is my job to stir people up to specific views on all of these issues. I will never do so out of hate but, rather, out of love. Indeed, I hope that I would give the shirt off my back for those who disagree with me and are living lives which Scripture deems to be sinful and dishonouring to God. They are all welcome in the Church and they are welcome at my dinner table.

However, without a shadow of a doubt, there will be feminists, homosexuals, members of other religions, and transgender people who will believe that I am stirring up hatred against them. Does this legislation give them a grounds to say that? Does it give a judge a legal basis to charge me? Will ‘speaking the truth in love’ (Ephesians 4:15) be deemed hate speech in 21st century Scotland?

I hope not. However, in all honesty, I am not sure. This new legislation has certainly made it a worrying possibility, if not yet a reality. I suppose time will tell.

One thing is for sure – in this increasingly transparent day, there will be new fears and anxieties as ministers preach on such moral issues in the future. Not just that we might offend someone in the congregation, but that we might have an awkward policeman knocking at the door on Monday morning. However, regardless of what the future holds, I hope that, like thousands before us, ministers will continue to understand that ‘we ought to obey God rather than men.’ (Acts 5:29)

**Rev. Paul Murray**



‘THEY LOSE NOTHING  
WHO GAIN CHRIST.’

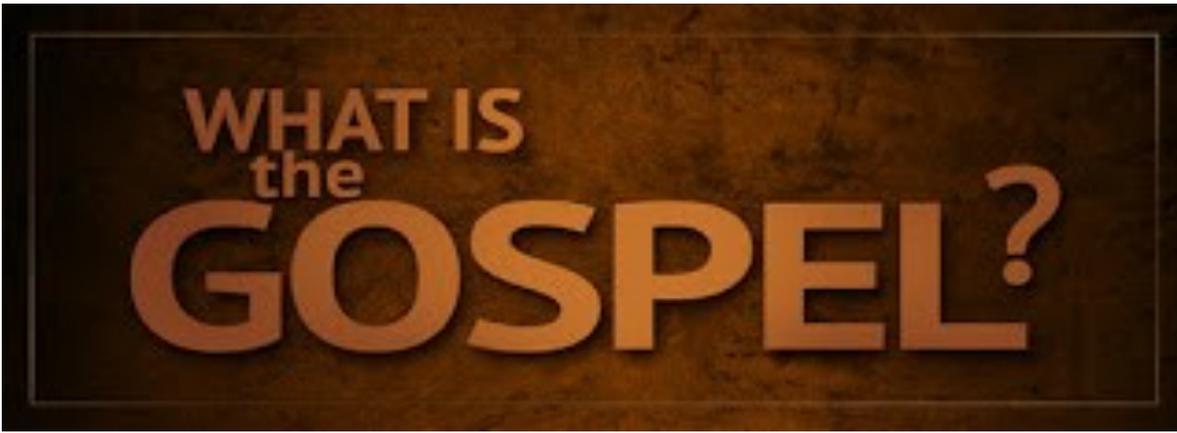
- SAMUEL RUTHERFORD



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

-D. MARTYN LLOYD-JONES

## WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

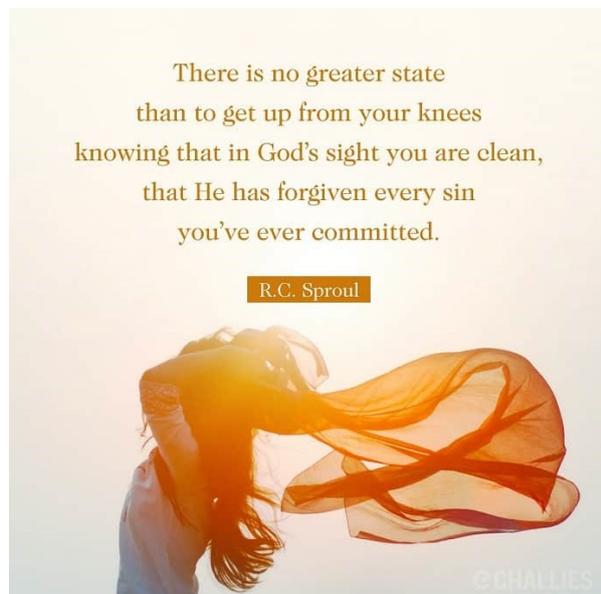
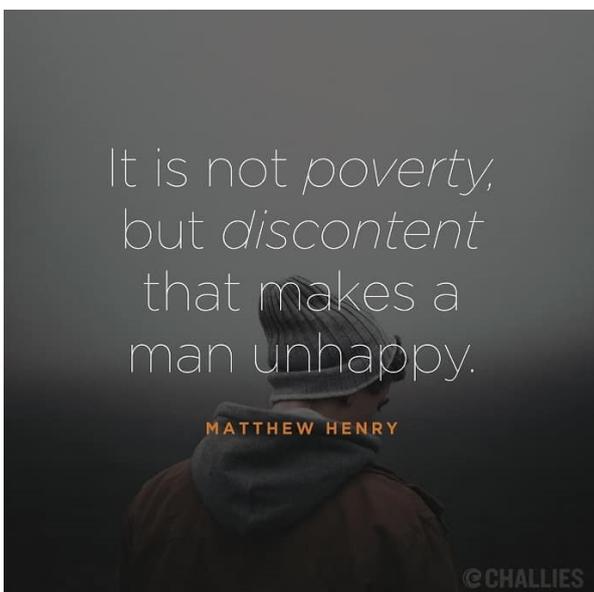


There is no greater message to be heard than that which we call the gospel. But as important as that is, it is often given to massive distortions or over simplifications. People think they're preaching the gospel to you when they tell you, 'you can have a purpose to your life', or that 'you can have meaning to your life', or that 'you can have a personal relationship with Jesus.' All of those things are true, and they're all important, but they don't get to the heart of the gospel.

The gospel is called the 'good news' because it addresses the most serious problem that you and I have as human beings, and that problem is simply this: God is holy and He is just, and I'm not. And at the end of my life, I'm going to stand before a just and holy God, and I'll be judged. And I'll be judged either on the basis of my own righteousness—or lack of it—or the righteousness of another. The good news of the gospel is that Jesus lived a life of perfect righteousness, of perfect obedience to God, not for His own well-being but for His people. He has done for me what I couldn't possibly do for myself. But not only has He lived that life of perfect obedience, He offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice to satisfy the justice and the righteousness of God.

The great misconception in our day is this: that God isn't concerned to protect His own integrity. He's a kind of wishy-washy deity, who just waves a wand of forgiveness over everybody. No. For God to forgive you is a very costly matter. It cost the sacrifice of His own Son. So valuable was that sacrifice that God pronounced it valuable by raising Him from the dead—so that Christ died for us, He was raised for our justification. So the gospel is something objective. It is the message of who Jesus is and what He did. And it also has a subjective dimension. How are the benefits of Jesus subjectively appropriated to us? How do I get it? The Bible makes it clear that we are justified not by our works, not by our efforts, not by our deeds, but by faith—and by faith alone. The only way you can receive the benefit of Christ's life and death is by putting your trust in Him and in Him alone. You do that, you're declared just by God, you're adopted into His family, you're forgiven of all of your sins, and you have begun your pilgrimage for eternity.

**R.C. Sproul, Ligonier Blog**





Dear Children

This month I want to return to our Alphabet texts and will look at the letters P Q R.

**P. Prepare to meet your God.** Amos 4: 12

If you were intending to meet someone of great importance then you would be very busy preparing for that meeting. For example, if you were told you were going to meet the Queen or a member of the Royal Family you would have lots of preparations to make. Amongst other things you would be concerned as to what you should wear. Very few of us will ever meet the Queen but there is one person that **ALL** of us will meet one day. That person is God, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and the Bible tells us we are to prepare to meet Him. Just as you would be concerned what to wear to meet the Queen so you should be concerned what to wear to meet God. The prophet Isaiah in chapter 61, verse 10 thanks God that He has clothed him with 'garments of salvation' and covered him with a 'robe of righteousness'. What is meant by a 'robe of righteousness'? Righteousness means righteous or good deeds. Because we are sinners we have no good deeds of our own and any that we think we have the Bible tells us that they are like filthy rags. That's what Isaiah tells us in chapter 64, verse 6, so where and how do we get a righteousness that will make us presentable in God's sight?. The Bible tells us that only the Lord Jesus Christ can give us that righteousness. He has fulfilled God's law perfectly on behalf of His people and by putting our trust in Him His righteousness is then put to our account as if we had kept God's law perfectly. Isn't that wonderful?

**Q. Quench not the Spirit.** 1 Thessalonians 5:19

Now what does this text mean? First of all it is speaking about the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit who is one of the three Persons of the Godhead (the Father and the Son are the other two) speaks to our conscience. He warns us when we do wrong and then we feel guilty. Have you ever felt that? I'm sure you have. The Holy Spirit also tells us that what we read in the Bible is true and that we should believe it. Now this text is telling us not to quench the Spirit. When you quench something you try to suppress it or put it out of your mind. You don't want to pay heed to what that person is saying. Do you ever feel like that? Well, when it is God the Holy Spirit who is speaking, that is a very dangerous thing to do. You should listen carefully to what the Holy Spirit is saying to you and be obedient to these pricks of conscience. It is for your eternal good. If you keep rejecting Him then He might just leave you alone. That would be the worst thing that could happen to you because it could mean that you would end up in a lost eternity.

**R. Repent and believe the gospel.** Mark 1:15.

What does it mean to repent? Your answer may be that it means to be sorry for your sins. It certainly means that but it means a lot more. Question 87 in the Shorter Catechism helps us to understand what it means. It tells us that we must have a deep sense of the sinfulness of our sin and the punishment to which it makes us liable. We have to admit that we have sinned and confess these sins to God. Read 1 John chapter 1 and verses 8 – 10. At the same time we need to believe the Gospel, that is the good news that the God against whom we have sinned is a merciful God who assures us that He is ready and willing to forgive us all our sins when we confess our sins and trust in Christ as our Saviour. He has borne the punishment of sin by His death on the cross. In his Gospel John tells us that is why God sent His Son into the world that "whosoever will believe in Him will not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

My dear children, think of what God is saying to you in these verses we have looked at. Start with the second one – **Quench not the Spirit.** When God is speaking to you in His Word and in the preaching of the gospel, don't refuse to listen to Him. Obey what He says in the last verse – **Repent and believe the gospel.** Then you will be **prepared to meet your God**, as the first verse says.

That is indeed my prayer for you all. I pray that the Lord will make Himself known to you and enable you to trust in Him for none perish who trust in Him.

With my love and prayers.

Granny M