

STORNOWAY
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

June 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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WORD FROM THE MANSE

Dear congregation,

Richard Cameron is a controversial historical figure. For us in the Reformed Presbyterian Church who see ourselves as the heirs of the Covenanters, Cameron is the “lion of the covenant,” the man who fearlessly stood for important distinctive principles, even to the point of death. However, many others have criticised Cameron for being overly dogmatic, schismatic, and even illegitimately ordained. Let’s look at the life of this character.

1. LIFE PRIOR TO THE MINISTRY

Richard Cameron was born in 1648 in the royal burgh of Falkland, Fife. He entered the University of St. Andrews in 1662 at a time when Scotland was in turmoil. The National Covenant had been publicly burned, Robert Blair and other ministers had been banished, and Argyll and Guthrie had been executed for the faith. The atmosphere in St. Andrews was tense. Just one year prior to Cameron’s matriculation, Samuel Rutherford had died. Rutherford had been rector of St. Mary’s College in St. Andrews until he was forced out at the Restoration of Charles II. Rutherford’s controversial work *Lex Rex* had been burned publicly, and now James Sharp was Archbishop. Sharp, a close ally of Charles II, had worked to bring about the Restoration. Under his rule a roll was read each week to find out who was at church. Those not in attendance (because in good conscience they could not endure the abuses of the Kirk’s worship and government) were then reported to the government.

Despite these difficult circumstances, the Reformation cause was not extinct in Scotland. Many ministers left their parishes and preached in the fields so that they could remain faithful to Christ. The king tried to crush them with his army, but, when this tactic proved ineffective, he resorted to a sly measure that successfully divided the Covenanting movement into factions. He issued a series of *indulgences*, which were licences that allowed ministers to return to their own parishes and receive their stipend on the condition that they did not preach against his policies. Taking one of Charles’ indulgences was a serious compromise of the Covenanting principles and a denial of the spiritual independence of the church. The first indulgence in 1669 brought back 42 ministers; the second in 1672 brought back 80. Thus the King’s measures were highly successful in dividing the cause.

In Fife, where Cameron lived, the first indulgence actually led to increased conventicle attendance. Men like John Welsh, the great-grandson of John Knox, remained faithful and continued to preach the Gospel in the open air. Cameron was no doubt aware of these field meetings, but when he graduated in 1665 with a Masters of Arts, he was still an Episcopalian. Cameron had a two-step conversion from Episcopacy – first by going to hear the indulged ministers in their buildings and later by attending outlawed conventicles in the fields. It was around this time that Cameron came to the conviction that it was sinful to accept such indulgences. It would have been easier for Cameron to settle into the ministry of the state-approved, Episcopalian Church, but he was determined to follow his new-found convictions, even though it would cost him dearly.

After his graduation, Cameron became a private chaplain to Sir William Scott of Harden, Selkirkshire. A chaplain’s responsibilities would have included leading family worship, catechizing and disciplining servants, and acting as tutor for any children. But not long after taking this post, Cameron had to leave because he refused to go to a church service at which an indulged minister preached. One might perhaps question why such an inflexible position had to be taken. Was he just being stubborn? The reason why Cameron refused to attend services under indulged ministers is because he considered the indulges to be an Erastian encroachment on the discipline of the church and a serious compromise by the ministers. Instead of the church being free to determine who or who should not be ministers, the Government was dictating the qualifications to the Church. If a minister was prepared to compromise in this matter, in what other ways would he compromise? These ministers were not trustworthy and Cameron, by now a decided Presbyterian, chose to follow his convictions with consistency.

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2. CAMERON AS LICENTIATE

Cameron was licensed as a preacher in 1678. To his credit, he was upfront in stating that his conscience would compel him to preach against the indulgences. Nevertheless, five months after his licensure Cameron was charged with schism, for doing the very thing he had said he would do. At this time the Covenanting party had

been divided into three broad camps. First were those ministers who had accepted the King's indulgences; second, there were those field preachers who refused the indulgence but still maintained fellowship with the indulged ministers; third, there were the stricter Covenanters who maintained separation from any indulged ministers.

Cameron belonged to the last group and he often used severe language against the indulged. Hetherington criticizes this last group as "too prone to condemn the weaknesses as well as the errors of many whom gentler treatment might have made their friends." Nevertheless, Cameron was encouraged in a letter by the aged and respected John Brown of Wamphray, a refugee in Holland due to his Covenanter principles. Brown's support of Cameron upset several of their brethren in Scotland, but his mature view was that the indulged ministers were responsible for this breach amongst the Covenanters. In other words, it was the indulged that had changed position. Quite often, throughout the history of the Church and even in our own day, those who maintain a position, which they believe to be Biblical, are the ones called schismatic by the very ones who have compromised.

3. ORDINATION

The tensions amongst the broad Covenanter movement continued and Cameron was forbidden to preach among the moderate party. Somewhere around May 1679 he left for Holland to seek ordination. The times were unsettled. There were no official church courts in Scotland because of the persecution. The established church was Episcopalian. On the continent there were Covenanter ministers, such as Brown of Wamphray, who had fled for their lives. These men had a different opinion of Cameron to that of the ministers who had barred him from preaching, saying, "He was no mere faction leader, warring with words and theories; he was a true herald of the gospel of life and peace." Robert M'Ward, who had studied under Rutherford and was his secretary at the Westminster Assembly, was one of these exiled ministers. He had reserved judgment about Cameron until he met him. However, when they became acquainted he was very impressed with Cameron's gifts and graces. Cameron was duly ordained in the old Scots Church of Rotterdam by M'Ward, Brown, and Koelman.

4. RETURN TO SCOTLAND

Cameron returned to Scotland in autumn 1679. He was not a separatist but joined with other faithful field preachers, Thomas Douglas and Donald Cargill. Cargill was sixty years old at this point.

Many have attacked Cameron's preaching, indeed, Robert M'Ward records that "the common report of poor Mr. Cameron...was that not only did he preach nothing but 'babe' against the Indulgence, but that he could do no other thing." However, after meeting him, M'Ward wrote that he was "a man of a savoury gospel-spirit, the bias of his heart lying towards the proposing of Christ" John Malcolm, a martyr who often heard Cameron, said, "I am sure the gospel preached by Mr. Richard Cameron especially was backed with the power and presence of Christ. As much of Christ and heaven was found as finite creatures on earth were able to hold; yea and more than they could hold."

Furthermore, the copies of Cameron's sermons that we have are replete with warm-hearted evangelical piety. Certainly he was a man who preached against the sins of the day, even those not commonly counted too serious. But such topics do not monopolize his sermons; rather he preached Christ and him crucified. He called people to embrace Christ, to mortify sin, to seek the Lord diligently and eagerly, to love Christ not just from the mouth but from the soul, and so forth.

He was not lacking in love, nor was it a neglected theme in his preaching. In a sermon on Song of Solomon 3:3, for example, Cameron gives six marks of true love for Christ. These marks are, (i) thinking of him often, (ii) speaking of him often, (iii) trying to bring others to him, (iv) being "loath to offend Him", (v) having a great love for his commandments, and (vi) being prepared to lose and leave all things for him. He was raptured with love for Christ and lamented the dismal lack of love for Christ in Scotland stating that there was "much talk about religion and religious matters, but little talk of Christ"

All that being the case, the times in which Cameron lived were days of ecclesiastic and civil tyranny. A minister could not bury his head in the sand. We will consider Cameron's response next time.

Every blessing, Stephen

NEWS & EVENTS

SABBATH SCHOOL

The session has agreed to start a Sabbath School in August, dv. Please keep this work in prayer.

CALL FOR A BAN ON GAMBLING IN FOOTBALL—THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE

Forest Green Rovers has become the first professional football club in England to come out in opposition to gambling advertising and sponsorship in the sport.

Club Chairman Dale Vince said that “gambling has taken over football” and that the game is now “inundated with ads”.

The move comes as the Government conducts a major review of gambling law, which could see the most significant changes to the advertising and running of the industry since the introduction of the 2005 Gambling Act.

The fun stopped

Vince highlighted that “gambling logos are on almost half of Premier League shirts, and constantly flash up on pitch side boards”.

He added: “For me, the fun already stopped. This is an abuse of football and of football fans.”

In a statement, the League Two side argued: “Logos plastered across every fixture and ground are ruining the game for many struggling with addiction and risk drawing in more.

“There are 55,000 11-16 year old ‘problem gamblers’ and 340,000 adult gambling addicts in the UK according to research.”

Change needed

The statement also announced that the club would be partnering with The Big Step campaign, which is part of the charity Gambling With Lives.

The Big Step founder James Grimes welcomed the club’s support at this “vital moment to secure meaningful gambling reform in the UK”.

He said: “Our outdated gambling laws need to change, especially with the exponential rise of online gambling. Sponsorship of sporting events by tobacco companies is banned and we believe gambling should be the same.

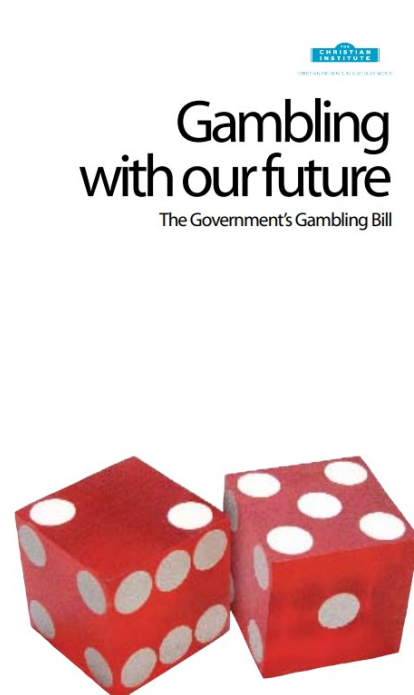
“To be truly effective, shirt sponsorship, stadium promotions and other branding should not be visible during matches.”

Campaigns

Earlier this year, a number of Christian groups, including Ambassadors Football, joined forces to campaign against betting firms advertising in sports.

When the Gambling Act 2005 was being considered by Parliament, The Christian Institute published ‘Gambling with our future’ (See the link below), which warned that the proposed liberalisation of gambling laws would lead to an increase in problem gambling.

<https://www.christian.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/gambling-with-our-future.pdf>



GLEANINGS BY BILL LUCAS

IS THERE A TEAR TODAY?

"You have delivered ... my eyes from tears" (Ps. 116:8)

It is astounding the emotions that can be squeezed into a single tear. We may think they come from our eyes but a tear begins its journey in our heart. Broken with emotions it cannot contain, our heart compresses them into a tear and releases it onto our cheek. From there it makes a slow journey down towards the heart from whence it came. Is there a tear today? What is it made of? A wrenching farewell to a beloved one? A bitter disappointment? A dream that didn't come true? A frightening diagnosis? A longing for youthful days gone by? Failure? Loneliness? He knows. He cares. And soon He will wipe our last tear away.

THE RANSOM

S. Mceachern

"Being justified by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom: 3.4)

Redemption ... is the delivery of anyone from captivity and misery by the intervention of a price or ransom ... Only this spiritual redemption has some supereminent things in it, that are not to be found in other deliverances:

First, he that receives the ransom does also give it. Christ is the propitiation to appease and atone the Lord, but the Lord himself set him forth to be so, whence he himself is often said to redeem us. His love is the cause of the price in respect of its procurement, and his justice accepts the price of its merits; for Christ came down from heaven to do the will of him that sent him (John 6:38). It is otherwise in the redemption amongst men, where he that receives the ransom has no hand in providing it.

Second, the captive or prisoner is not so much freed from his power who detains him as brought into his favour. When a captive among men is redeemed, by the payment of a ransom, he is instantly set free from the power and authority of him that detained him; but in this spiritual redemption, upon the payment of the ransom for us, which is the blood of Jesus, we are not removed from God, but are "made nigh" unto God (Eph. 2:13) -- not delivered from his power, but restored to his favour.

Third, as the judge was to be satisfied, so the jailer was to be conquered; God, the judge giving him leave to fight for his dominion, which was wrongly usurped ... And he lost his power, as strong as he was, for striving to grasp more than he could hold; for the foundation of his kingdom being sin, assaulting Christ who did no sin, he lost his power over them that Christ came to redeem, having no part in him. So was the strong man bound, and his house spoiled.

John Owen

HE WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU

"How long will thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? (Ps 13:1)

What do we do when the promises of God seems to contradict His providence? When the withdrawing presence of the Spirit makes us feel as if He will hide Himself from us forever? We must see that even in this there is purpose. Not one feather of affliction is laid upon the heart of the believer that is not set there with great purpose by God. Even when God appears to withdraw, He never does so completely. He is causing us to let go of the ropes and tethers that strap us to this earth. To wait in silence for our God, then, is our object. A delay in answer is only a perception on our part, all the while being taught by the school of silence.

Have we then any reason to complain of days and months of apparent loneliness? No. God has appointed a set time, and at the set time He will return to you. These seemingly absent days are good for us. Though the time seems long in our mind, to wait with patience for Him creates an expectancy through serious meditation and confession of sin. God has always dealt with way with His people for growth in grace. And these trials, like the tilling blade of the farmer, break up the fallow ground of the heart, bringing forth a rich crop of ripened fruits. This brings an increase of glory to God, and unspeakable joy to the soul, through the ages of eternity. Isn't this worth more than all that might come from a speedy answer?

Then sit still, dear soul, and calmly wait for the return of your Lord, He is not far. And while you wait for the sense of His presence to return, wonder more why justly deserved judgements are not executed against you rather than His promise never to leave you. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Heb. 3:5).

Jerrold H. Lewis (Milk and Honey) Devotional

YEA AND AMEN

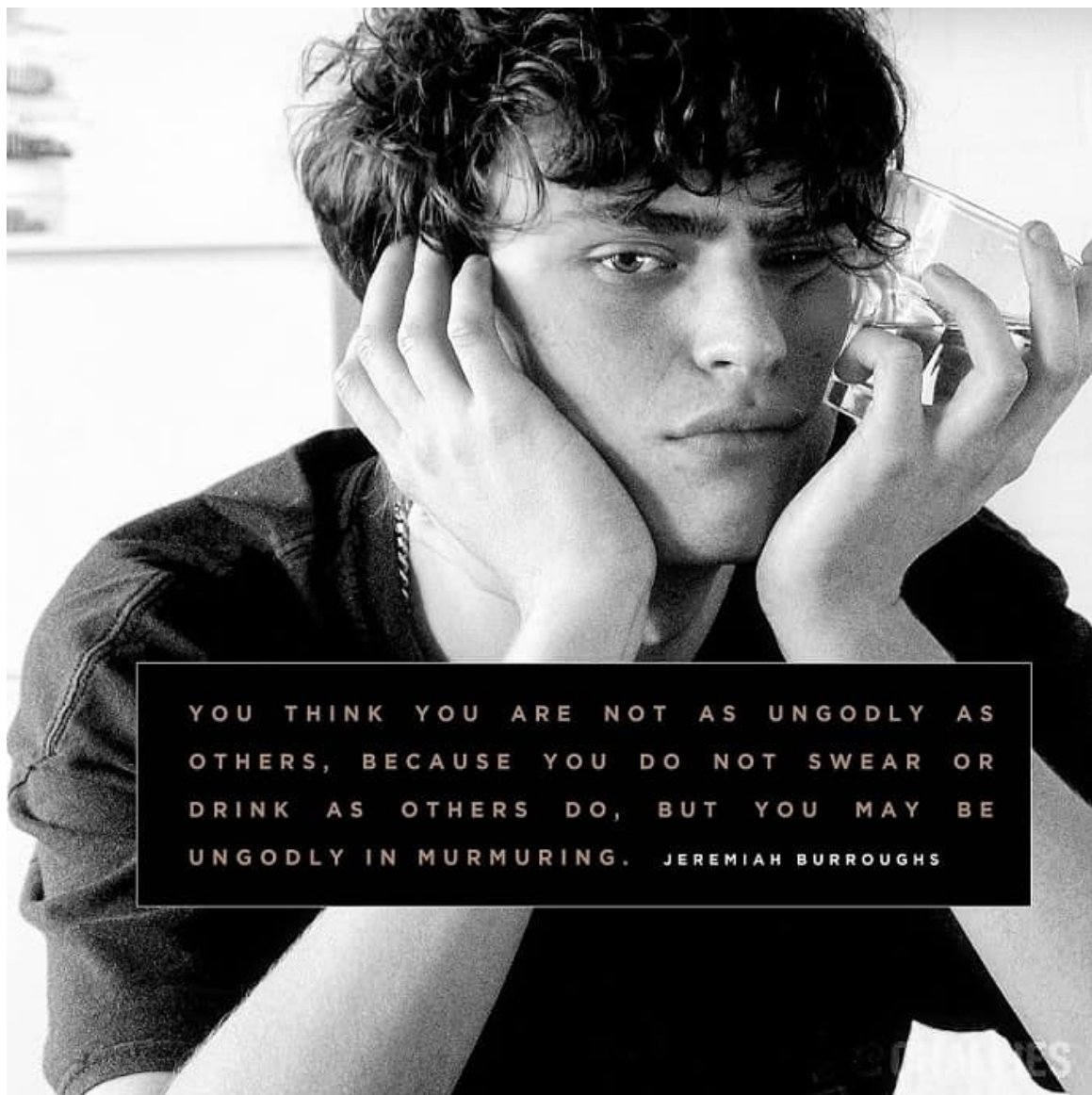
... Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant ... (Heb.12:24)

In this covenant, pardoning mercy, renewing grace, and eternal glory, are promised. Earth and heaven, the creature and the creator himself, by himself, belong to believers. You must know that all their promises are "Yea and Amen" in Christ

(2 Cor: 1:20). The covenant was made for his sake: it was ratified and confirmed by his death. His blood is called "the blood of the everlasting covenant" (Heb. 13:20). His blood being shed, the covenant stands good for all eternity.

Here is a vast encouragement to lay hold on the promises. If you come to God, and ask: "Lord! hast thou not made promises of pardon to the penitent and believing? Promises of grace to the humble? Promises of satisfaction to the hungry souls? Promises of joy and comfort to the mourners?" In his word, God answers, "Yes." If you further add: "Lord, let these promises be accomplished for thy Christ's sake"; the answer is, "Amen, it shall be so: they shall be all fulfilled."

Nathanael Vincent



THE COUNSEL AND CARE OF THE ELDERLY



Deep down in our hearts, we all like to convince ourselves that we are more knowledgeable and wiser than we actually are. This is why Scripture raises the warning about being “wise in your own eyes” (Prov. 3:7). Pride manifests itself in a thousand subtle ways in our hearts. Add to this the fact that we live at a time of remarkable societal pride. Society feeds the pride of young men and women by telling them that they can change the world—regardless of God-given giftings, intellect, upbringing, associations, providential encounters, guidance, or hard work. Society tells us that the elderly are a burden to progress. While there is nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9), ours is an increasingly narcissistic culture. This is nowhere more evident than in our disdain and disregard of the elderly.

I have seldom heard younger individuals speak about getting counsel from older and wiser men and women throughout my life. I often think of Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, who “abandoned the counsel that the old men gave him and took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him and stood before him” (1 Kings 12:8). Presently, we hear exponentially more snide and demeaning comments by younger individuals about those who have gone before them than we have in bygone decades. In our superior wisdom, we like to convince ourselves that the elderly need to get out of the way and let us lead. The Scriptures point us in the opposite direction.

The Psalmist declares that the godly man or woman “bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green (Psalm 92:14). David explains that younger generations need elderly saints to teach them about the might and power of God. He wrote, “So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come.” In a similar way, Moses charged Israel to “remember the days of old; consider the generations long past. Ask your father and he will tell you, your elders, and they will explain to you” (Deut. 32:7).

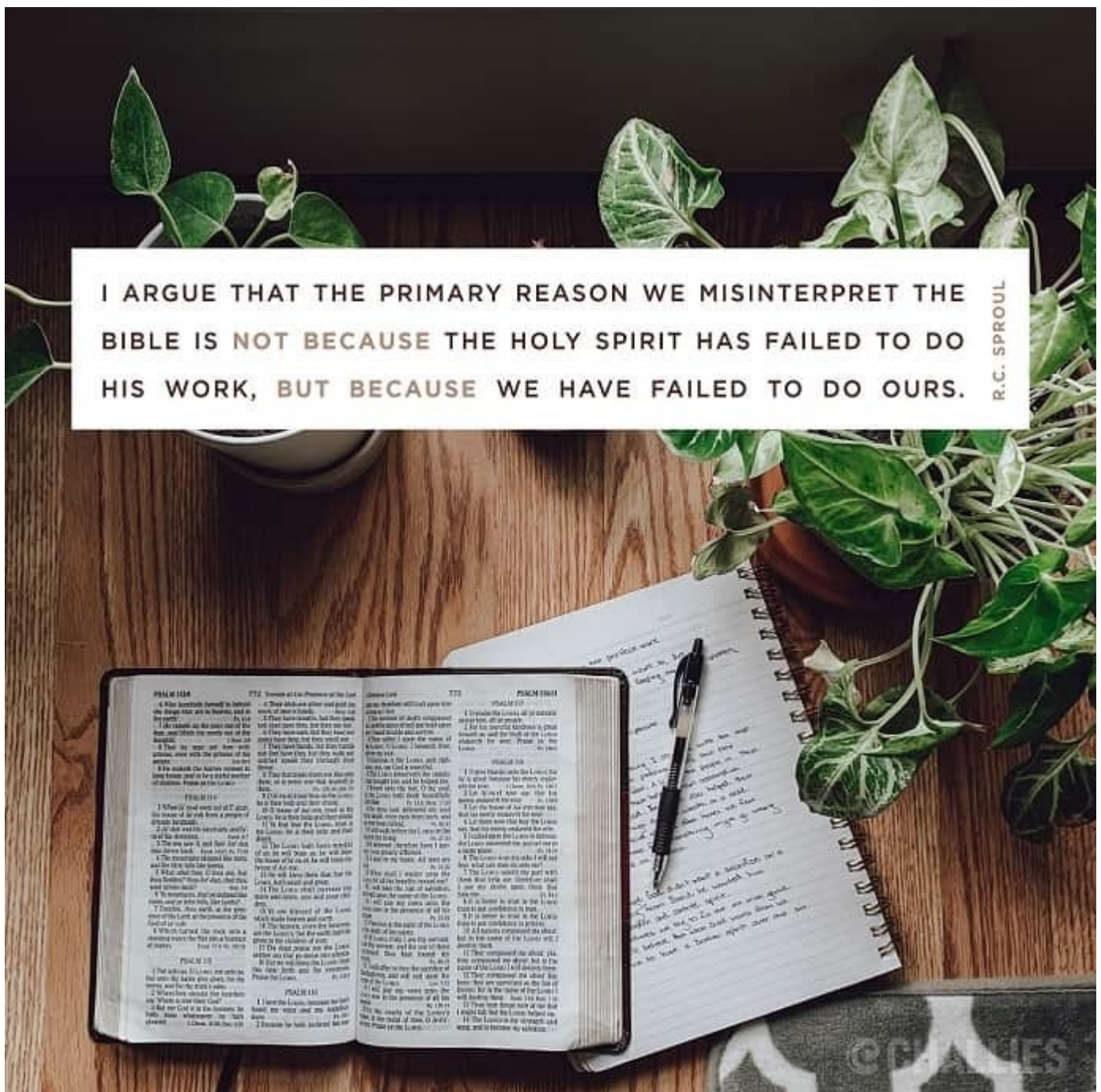
It would serve us well to remember the old adage, “Older men have wisdom, younger men have zeal.” We need the wisdom of the elderly and the zeal of the youth. While God has often used young individuals in remarkable ways throughout church history (e.g., the Reformers, Robert Murray M’Cheyne, Andrew Gray, David Brainerd, etc.), there are ample examples of foolish and rash young zealots. Even the great Augustine—when he was older—wrote a book of retractions regarding things he had written when he was young. The more we seek the counsel of the elderly when we are young, the better position we will be in to avoid the snares and mistakes they made.

The principle of honouring the elderly is bound up in the fifth commandment. When God commands you to “honour your father and your mother,” He is charging you to respect all superiors in age and rank. As the Westminster Shorter Catechism Q.64 explains, “The fifth commandment requires the preserving the honor, and performing the duties, belonging to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals.” This is the way in which God has structured the world in which we live. If we are to fill our place in this generation in a God-glorifying way, we are to do so with great respect for the elderly.

It is not simply in our disdain for the wisdom of the elderly that we show our pride—it is also seen in our disregard for them. Caring for widows is one of the foremost marks of godliness in Scripture (James 1:27). With all the talk of justice in our current milieu, I never hear people talking about caring for widows in their need. Over years of visiting church members in nursing homes or assisted living homes, I have often sat and listened to elderly saints tell me that their children rarely come to see them. How indifferent have we become as a society that we are comfortable sequestering our parents away in a facility without visiting them? Our churches should prioritize ministry to the elderly as they do ministry to the youth.

A time is coming when you may be able to say with David, “I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his children begging bread” (Psalm 37:25). Such a statement is born from years of experiencing the sustaining, delivering, and providing grace of God through many trials and challenges. Until that time, I would humbly encourage younger men and women to seek the counsel of the elderly, to honor and respect them, and to care for them in their time of need.

Rev. Nicholas Batzig. www.feedingonchrist.org



12 WAYS WE SEE CHRIST'S INFINITE WISDOM

We think we are superior in knowledge and values to previous generations but often our values are upside down. We value what is new, instant, youthful, tangible, technological and dismiss the converse. There may be much knowledge and intelligence, but wisdom transcends this. If wisdom is pursuing the best things in the best way, where best is defined by God, then it is in short supply today. Ultimately the one who completely knows how the best goals can be achieved in the best way is God "the only wise God" Himself. He has infinite wisdom. This is not just seen in creation and providence but especially in redemption (Ephesians 3:10). In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3). No one knows more or knows better how to apply that knowledge for the good of His own people. We may be tempted to question how things are with ourselves and around us, but infinite wisdom is ordering all things for us.

Christ is fully equipped and qualified to do all that He has purposed for His people. There is nothing required for the work which He does not have. David Dickson imagines a poor soul asking, "Christ may be able to do all I need; but is He willing to employ His wisdom and strength for me?" He answers that Christ not only has wisdom and strength, but He will deal prudently. He foresees all the impediments in His way, anything that could mar the work of salvation. There is no wound His soldiers get that He has no cure for. There is no adversary He does not know how to defeat. In a word, everything from eternity to eternity is managed prudently. Dickson is expounding and applying Isaiah 52:13 "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently" and in the course of doing this he brings out the way in which Christ applies His wisdom. There are twelve ways this is identified in the following updated extract (Dickson's fifteen ways have been summarised into twelve).

1. CHRIST DEALS WITH GOD'S JUSTICE WISELY

The justice of God must lose nothing, before we are reconciled or get heaven, a just God must be satisfied. Our prudent Lord answers, "If these people cannot get to heaven until justice is satisfied, behold I am come to satisfy it." And yet the Lord's mercy will have as great a place as it pleases; for He deals so prudently that He makes mercy and justice kiss each other. Mercy runs like a river, and justice is satisfied — is not that prudent dealing?

2. CHRIST DEALS WITH GOD'S LAW WISELY

The law says, "I will take satisfaction from Christ for past sins; but what obedience will I have for the future? Will those whom Christ has redeemed, be permitted to break me in the future?" Prudent Christ answers, "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." Before the law could only get punishment for its being broken, now, it gets full obedience by Christ. Christ did not come to abolish but to fulfil the law; He came only to abolish the cursing part of it, but to establish the obeying part of it. Here is prudent dealing.

3. CHRIST CONQUERS SATAN WISELY

In comes Satan the jailer and death with him; he flies at Christ to get Him overthrown. But prudent Christ destroyed him who had the power of death by the means of death. He overcomes him who had the power of death, and says, he will be the death of death.

So death lies down in the grave and all his own die and lie down with him. Satan thinks to have Christ held in this way. But He could not be held by the sorrows of death. He rises and breaks an opening with Him through death. Like Samson, He takes away the gates and bars of death and has left death neither door nor lock to hold us in. Here is prudence.

4. CHRIST ENTERS THE WORLD WISELY

See His prudent dealing in His coming into the world. He comes not with pomp or show, but in a humble way. He was meek and lowly, riding on an ass's colt. Though He was a great king, yet often He went on foot. When

He rode, it was on such a low beast, that any might have stood beside Him, and presented their petition in His ear, as He rode.

5. CHRIST SENDS OUT HIS GOSPEL WISELY

See His prudent dealing in sending His gospel forth to bring home souls. He does not use thunder and fire but poor, weak men with His word in their mouth. By this means, the rod of Zion, He casts down proud hearts and allures others. He puts His heavenly treasure in earthen vessels and lets them carry it and takes the glory to Himself. He puts the sceptre of His kingdom in these weak men's mouths.

6. CHRIST DEALS WITH RULERS WISELY

He gives kings no reason to envy His kingdom. He gives his ministers neither crowns nor lands, but only seeks that the workman gets his wages. Is this not great prudence, He does not trouble the kings and nobles of the land with His kingdom on earth. All His office-bearers must be everyone's servant, "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours" (1 Corinthians 3:22). His kingdom is not of this world, but a spiritual kingdom.

7. CHRIST DECLARES HIS SOVEREIGNTY WISELY

He deals so prudently, that the mouth of the reprobate shall be stopped, and have no just argument against their condemnation. He either sends His gospel to them and so invites them to repentance. Or He makes them know His goodness by fruitful seasons, summer and winter, and use of all His good creatures. If they will not make use of these, will be found to have in themselves the cause of their own damnation.

He makes the elect abandon their sins and come in, that they may be vessels of honour. He declares His doctrines in such a way that none who desire to quit their sins and come to Him will find a mark of reprobation in themselves. However filthy they are, if they come, He will cleanse them. His doctrine is so wise, that it will hurt none who seek to come to Him only those who will not quit their sins.

8. CHRIST DEALS WITH PEOPLE'S PRIDE WISELY

The elect are made to see their sinfulness, needs and unworthiness that they may have His sufferings in high estimation, as their main refuge.

9. CHRIST COMFORTS HIS PEOPLE'S PRIDE WISELY

He deals prudently in urging all to believe, and yet He reserves the right to bestow comfort. He urges them to believe and yet keeps back the comfort of believing till they vomit out their sins. He deals prudently in calling His children to peace, joy, and comfort, and yet give them heavy burdens and afflictions lest they go to excess. In this way, He comforts their souls while making sure also to have their flesh mortified. If He lifts them up in Himself, He puts them as low as possible in themselves. He does not let them sink into trouble for lack of comfort, nor let them disregard Him due to lack of affliction. He fills them with comfort and makes them shed tears for affliction.

10. CHRIST JUSTIFIES SINNERS WISELY

Christ exercises great prudence to make a sinner righteous, yet that righteousness is not in themselves, neither does it depend on their own keeping. In His prudent dealing, He sends forth ministers to preach, and dispense heavenly mysteries, and yet keeps the seal in His own hand. Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6). Thus, none may depend on the minister for the blessing. Christ has great prudence to forgive sin, and yet still keep us crying, "Lord, forgive us our sins!"

11. CHRIST FEEDS HIS PEOPLE WISELY

He continues to feed with the food that endures to eternal life and yet still keeps us hungering for it. He holds our mouths to the well and yet we are still thirsty.

12. CHRIST EXALTS HIS PEOPLE WISELY

He exalts His own above principalities, powers and afflictions, yet lays them exceedingly low with a sight and sense of their sins. He heartily and warmly comforts and refreshes them, making their bed in their sickness, and yet keeping them humble, so that the better He is to them the humbler they are. He quietly and shrewdly slides consolations into their hearts when no one knows, His voice is not heard in the streets. He keeps a covered table with rich delicacies in the souls of His own, and none know of it, for strangers do not meddle with their joy.

CONCLUSION

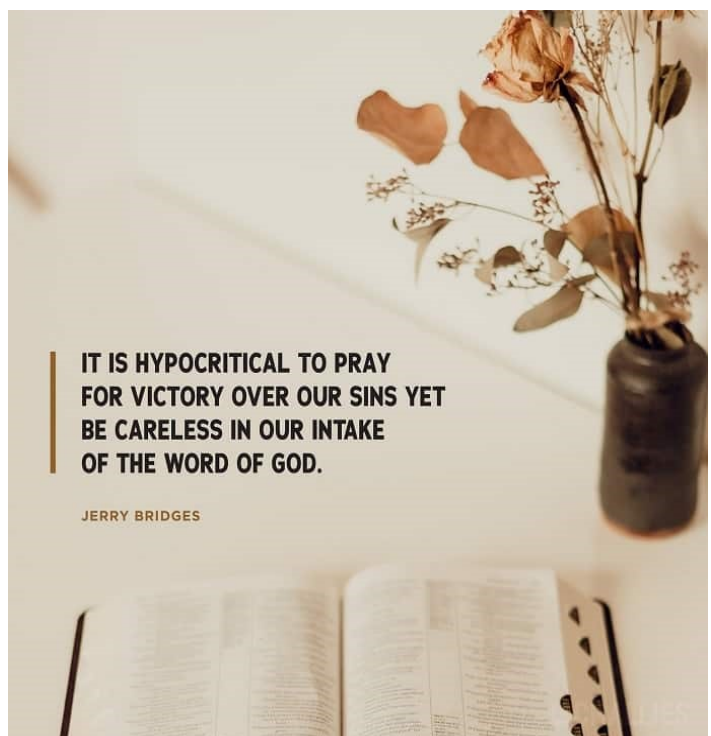
I have told you only of part of Christ's prudent and wise dealing. But it is a deep which cannot be fathomed, for even the angels stoop down, to learn His wisdom and prudence. They wonder at the wisdom of the cross:

that by death, so many should be brought to life;
by His shame, there should come so much glory;
by abasing Him down to the death, so many should be brought to heaven;
by His becoming cursed, so many should be blessed.

This wisdom and prudence cannot be fully told, therefore I leave it, as a thing that cannot be grasped. But make use of it. When the work of Christ is not as you would have it, then believe deeper wisdom in it than you can see. His wise and prudent dealing gives to everyone's condition as their situation requires.

If He has trouble with a distorted piece of wood full of knots, He drives a hard wedge; or if He deals with one that is stubborn, He takes a baton. If there is one whose root is fastened in the earth, He takes a sharp knife to cut these roots. He comforts a heavy heart. If gives a weighty burden it is not too heavy. He lifts us up, but not too high. Everything is done in wisdom, due time, measure, manner, and might.

Reformation Scotland— www.reformationscotland.org



Children's Corner



Dear Children

Do you have a favourite Bible story or are you like me – they are all favourites? I'm sure there are some stories that you like to hear or read over and over again. What about a favourite character in the Bible? Who would you put at the top of the list? I think I would find that difficult although if you were to ask me which character I would like to meet and why then I think I know who I would say.

The person I would like to meet is Mary the mother of Jesus. She was a very young woman, living in Nazareth, and engaged to be married to Joseph when the angel Gabriel told her she was going to have a baby boy. The angel also told her that the baby's father was not to be Joseph but the Holy Spirit. This baby was to be the Messiah promised so long ago even in the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve had sinned. She was also told that she was to call His name Jesus "for He shall save His people from their sins." This baby was to be the promised Saviour.

I wonder how Mary really felt when she heard this amazing news. The angel had told her that she was favoured by God. This made her feel humble and undeserving and she broke out into a song of praise and adoration of God for His wonderful mercy to His people. Read it in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 1 and verses 46-55. I think too she must have felt great excitement and anticipation at the prospect of being the means of bringing this child into the world. Expecting a baby is very exciting. You long for the baby to be born and to see how the child will develop and grow and what kind of life he or she will have. I'm sure Mary had many thoughts and questions over these nine months until Jesus was born. She was to discover that His life was not going to be an easy one. Satan was devising many ways of pursuing Him and trying to get rid of Him even as a baby. Read Matthew chapter 2 and verses 13- 23 to discover Satan's first attempt on His life.

Now think of Mary watching Jesus growing up. She would have seen that He was so different from the rest of the family. The people who lived in Nazareth saw the difference too and they were astonished at His words as He taught in the synagogue. In spite of seeing that there was something special about Him they refused to believe in Him. Read Matthew chapter 13 and verses 54 – 58. This rejection must have been hard for Mary. She knew who He was and would have been grieved to see how He met with so much opposition. This had been told her by Simeon when Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the Temple when He was eight days old. Read it in Luke chapter 2, verses 21 – 35.

Mary would also have witnessed the many miracles that Jesus performed. She would have heard what He said about Himself, about why His Heavenly Father had sent Him into the world. Then, what would have been even harder for her, she would have heard Him tell how He had to suffer and die. As His mother, I also wonder how she felt knowing that He was the Son of God and that she was to trust in Him as her personal Saviour. That must have been a wonderful experience for her.

We know that Mary was still alive at the time that Jesus was crucified because, as she stood at the cross watching all that was happening there, He asked John, the beloved disciple, to take her home with him and care for her. Read it in the Gospel of John, chapter 19 and verses 23 – 27. We don't hear any more of Mary but she must have been full of joy when she heard the news of His resurrection. Yes, her Saviour was alive and she would have remembered what He had said in that wonderful sermon in John chapter 14 and verse 19: 'Because I live, you also will live.' We don't know whether she ever set eyes on Him before He ascended into heaven but we can be sure that after she died she went to be with Him there. The Bible does not ask us to give Mary a higher place than any other believer. It is certain that we are not to go to her with any requests or prayers as some people do. We are to go to Jesus alone. He alone is the way to heaven as He said in John chapter 14 and verse 6: 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'

My prayer for each one of you is that you will trust in Jesus as your Saviour and find in Him the only way to heaven.

May God bless you all. With my love.

Granny M