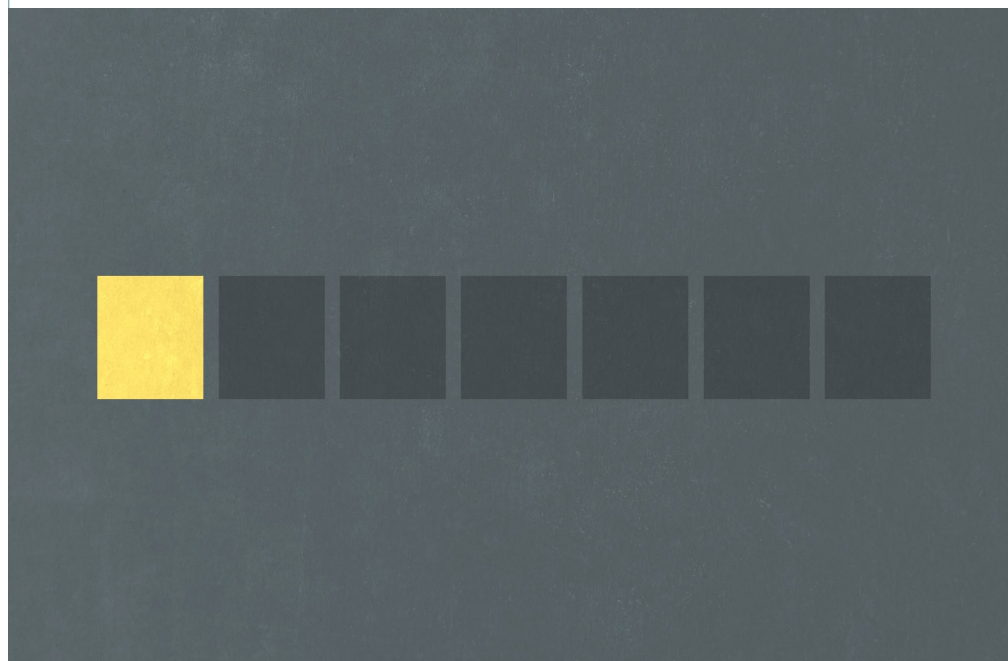




August 2021 Newsletter



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,

Brenda and I recently watched the 1975 film *The Hiding Place* which tells the story of the ten Boom family who hid Jews from the Nazis in the occupied Netherlands. Corrie ten Boom has become a well-known figure in Christian circles, although I think it would be fair to say that if she had lived at a different time she would likely have remained in obscurity. Corrie was an ordinary Christian, a watchmaker's daughter. In any other time period as she lived her life for Christ, few in the world would notice; yet because of her principled stand to protect human life whatever the consequences, she faced the full force of Nazi persecution and is known throughout the world today.

When I hear or read accounts of the Holocaust I always wonder what we would have done if we had lived then. It's tempting to think that we would have willingly resisted even to the point of bloodshed, but the haunting fact is that many Christians at the time did not speak out but tolerated the gradual implementation of National Socialism. The words of the Lutheran pastor Martin Niemöller are surely thought-provoking:

*First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist.
Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.*

The duty of Christians at that time was not to defend the unbiblical theories of socialism or the Jewish rejection of the Messiah. Rather they were to defend the rights of humans made in God's likeness and to show forth Christian compassion.

We wonder at how so many Christians turned a blind eye to what the Nazis did. But it's not hard to see. Changes happened gradually and all for the "greater good". The Jews were not immediately deported, but first ostracised, publicly identified by a badge of shame, and their businesses boycotted. Many Christians could feel that the changes did not affect them personally; at least they were protected if they kept their heads down. But such tactics were the prelude to something more sinister.

Even today governments use similar tactics. It may not be to commit gross acts of barbarism, yet governments progress from smaller to greater sins using the thin edge of the wedge. Unrighteousness that previously could not be imagined is now on the statute books, viewed largely as acceptable. Christians can be tempted to think that as long as it does not affect our day to day life then it's not a big deal and it's better to keep our heads down. For example, a ban on smacking is not a major problem for Christians without children – sure there are other ways to discipline a child – or again, the approval of homosexual marriage doesn't affect the livelihood of those who are not B&B owners or involved in the wedding industry. What of the dreaded hate crime proposals? Christians who are not engaged in speaking the truth to witness to those around them need not fear! But what of the ministers who preach against sin?

Governments seek to control the narrative, to show that their measures are for the greater good. They say it's progressive, fairer, more loving, or what we hear presently – it's safer! Things are changing at increasing speed and if we don't wake up soon, it may be too late.

NEWS & EVENTS

AUGUST COMMUNIONS

The August Communion Services are due to take place in the congregation from 26th-30th August. The visiting preacher will be Mr Ian Gillies. All services will be taken by Mr Gillies, aside from the Lord's Day morning service, which will be taken by the minister. All services will be held in the Bridge Centre. The service times are as follows:

Thursday 26 August 7.30pm—Mr Ian Gillies

Friday 27 August 7.30pm—Mr Ian Gillies

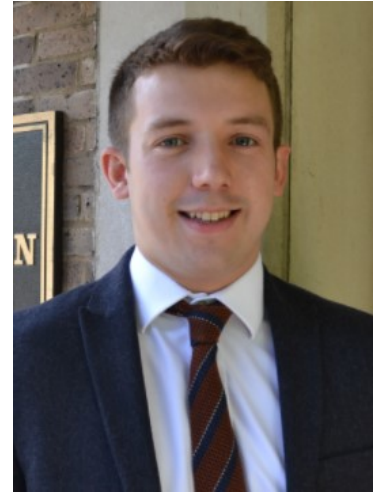
Saturday 28 August 11.00am—Mr Ian Gillies

Saturday 28 August 6.30pm—Prayer Meeting

Lord's Day 29 August 11.00am—Rev. Stephen McCollum

Lord's Day 29 August 6.30pm—Mr Ian Gillies

Monday 30 August 7.30pm—Mr Ian Gillies



Mr Ian Gillies



KNOX MCCOLLUM BAPTISM

As a congregation we were delighted to celebrate the sacrament of baptism on 25th July. Knox McCollum was baptised by his uncle Rev Jonny McCollum (Milford and Letterkenny RPCI) and so welcomed as a covenant child of the congregation. Jonny preached on Psalm 127:3-5 reminding the parents and the congregation that God has given them a great gift (v3), a great challenge (v4), and a great hope (v5). The sermon was very appropriate and many in the congregation spoke of how much they appreciated it and how encouraging it was. After the evening service we were able to enjoy tea, cake, and fellowship together.



GLEANINGS BY BILL LUCAS

VICTORY OVER OPPOSITION

"But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods." (Exodus 7: 12)

This incident is an instructive emblem of the sure victory of the divine handiwork over all opposition. Whenever a divine principle is cast into the heart, though the devil may fashion a counterfeit, and produce swarms of opponents, as sure as ever God is in the work, it will swallow up all its foes. If God's grace takes possession of a man, the world's magicians may throw down all their rods; and every rod may be as cunning and poisonous as a serpent, but Aaron's rod will swallow up their rods.

The sweet attractions of the cross will woo and win the man's heart, and he who lived only for this deceitful earth will now have an eye for the upper spheres, and a wing to mount into celestial heights. When grace has won the day the worldling seeks the world to come. The same fact is to be observed in the life of the believer. What multitudes of foes has our faith had to meet! Our old sins -- the devil threw them down before us -- and they turned to serpents. What hosts of them! Ah, but the cross of Jesus destroys them all. Faith in Christ makes short work of all our sins.

Then the devil has launched forth another host of serpents in the form of worldly trials, temptations, unbelief; but faith in Jesus is more than a match for them, and overcomes them all. The same absorbing principle shines in the faithful service of God! With an enthusiastic love for Jesus difficulties are surmounted, sacrifices become pleasures, sufferings are honours. But if religion is thus a consuming passion in the heart, then it follows that there are many persons who profess religion but have it not; for what they have will not bear this test. Examine yourself, my reader, on this point. Aaron's rod proved its heaven-given power. Is your religion doing so? If Christ be anything he must be everything. O rest not till love and faith in Jesus be the master passions of your soul!

CH Spurgeon

ADAM'S GAELIC

Alexander Gair (Sandy) of Latheron, one of the most gifted and prominent of the Northern "Men" could also make use of withering sarcasm though he generally kept it under restraint. At Wick one minister asked him in a half scoffing way whether Adam knew Gaelic and spoke it. "Well," was Sandy's ready retort, "Whether the first Adam knew Gaelic or not, I am not sure, but I know that the Second Adam has plenty, for many a time He has heard me when I addressed him in that language."

On another occasion when passing on a country road with a horse which was not overfed, he met one of the stipend-lifting ministers who accosted him and referred to his hungry looking beast. "O yes," Sandy remarked, "I know my nag is lean in the meantime, but he will become fat enough when he gets a presentation." "I never heard," said the parson, "of presentations being given to horses." "Probably not," was the reply, "But it seems they are not infrequently given to asses!"

THE BRIBE

Donald Munro (Records of Grace in Sutherland)

And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying: "Say ye His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept." (Matt. 28: 12 - 13)

The Roman soldiers were paid off to perpetuate a lie. The sum must have been great indeed. A soldier admitting to sleeping on the job could well have meant the death penalty. In the two millennia since, people of influence and means still perpetuate lies to lead people away from the truth of a risen Saviour. We must pray for them. There is forgiveness available, even for the agents of deception such as these; the sentence awaiting them is horrible and eternal.

Rick Morse

GRAVEN ON THE PALMS OF HIS HANDS

Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have passion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me."

(Isaiah 49: 15 - 16)


Millions of times each year in our terrible age women forget their children or permit them to be killed by abortion. By this we can see that natural love is disappearing. This is a sign that our Lord Jesus Christ is coming soon. Yes, the natural man is hard and cruel, and inclined to all evil. And still, there is no end to the Lord's goodness. He is full of compassion for His people.

Zion complains: "The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me." That's how Zion feels, but it is not reality. Sometimes we can feel far away from the Lord. Job said: "Behold. I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him." (Job 23:8). What a difference there is between our feelings and reality! A woman can forget her child, but not the Lord. He will never forget His child. He loves you from eternity to eternity with a perfect love. You have been in his heart always and you shall always be there. He showed His love by giving His Son for you. He poured out His love in your heart by the Holy Spirit, so that you love Him.

"Behold, I have graven you upon the palms of my hands." Oh, to see your name there in God's hands! The hands of Christ were pierced on the cross for your sin. In Christ you see the great love of the Father for you. In Christ, you see His great love for you, giving Himself unto death.

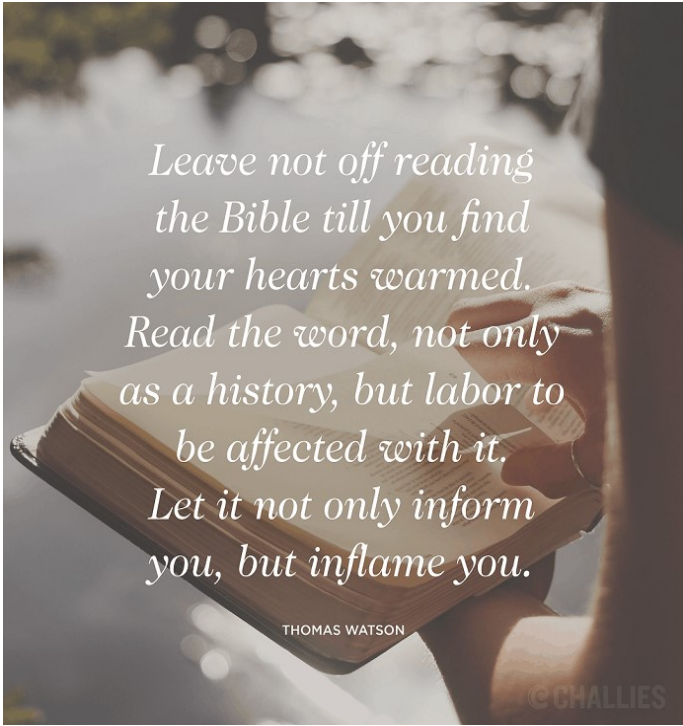
"Thy walls are continually before me." Zion, God's city, the church of the living God, has walls that are always open before the Lord. All the events in Zion, all that happens in Zion, all your sorrows, all your tears and sighs, are continually before Him. And now He comes to you and He takes you up so that you are where He is. And He shall wipe away all your tears. Christ has really been forsaken so that we should be taken to the Lord and never be forsaken by Him. We are always before Him, always with Him. Is that the desire of your soul?

Dirk J Budding (Providence congregation in Grand Rapids)



I SAY TO
THE GLORY OF GOD
and IN UTTER HUMILITY
THAT WHENEVER I SEE
MYSELF BEFORE GOD *and*
REALIZE EVEN SOMETHING
OF WHAT MY BLESSED LORD
HAS DONE FOR ME, I
AM READY TO FORGIVE
ANYBODY ANYTHING.

Martin Lloyd-Jones



*Leave not off reading
the Bible till you find
your hearts warmed.
Read the word, not only
as a history, but labor to
be affected with it.
Let it not only inform
you, but inflame you.*

THOMAS WATSON

WHY DO CHRISTIANS WORSHIP ON SUNDAY?



From creation onward, the people of God worshiped on the seventh day of the week. This was a “creation ordinance” that the Creator Himself established by His example, with the intent that His creatures would follow it. He worked six days and called His image-bearers to work (Gen. 2:15); He rested on the seventh day (Gen. 2:2; Ex. 20:11; 31:17) and called His image-bearers to rest. He signified this with His benediction, setting apart the seventh day as “holy” (Gen. 2:3).

Later, when the Sabbath command was reiterated, we read: “In six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed” (Ex. 31:17). The word refreshed (Hebrew, *naphash*) is used only two other times in the Old Testament: once in reference to giving rest to animals, servants, and visitors within Israel (Ex. 23:12), and once in reference to David and his men (2 Sam. 16:14). After God worked to make everything, it was as if His rest refreshed Him. Yet God’s rest and refreshment mean so much more; they have to do with His joy and satisfaction. The psalmist writes, “May the LORD rejoice in his works” (Ps. 104:31). God’s rest and satisfaction was that of a King; having created the heavens and the earth to be His cosmic palace, He took His place on His throne, so to speak, on the seventh day.

After God brought His people out of Egypt and through the Red Sea, the Sabbath day took on even more significance as a covenant sign that God sanctified His people (Ex. 31:13). On that day, the saints celebrated the reality that God had created them and that their rest was rooted in His rest: “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day” (Ex. 20:8-11). As well, the Sabbath signified that God had redeemed His people (Deut. 5:12-15). Finally, the annual Day of Atonement fell on a Sabbath (Lev. 16:30-31), so the Sabbath also celebrated God’s forgiveness of His people.

Under the old covenant with Israel (Ex. 19; Heb. 8:6, 7, 13), the Sabbath day was extremely strict. Not only was no work to be done by the Israelites and their children, they also were to give rest to all in their households—servants, livestock, even sojourners (Ex. 20:10). God even gave regulatory laws over what could and could not be done. For example, if one even went out to gather sticks on the Sabbath in order to kindle a fire (Num. 15:32-36; Ex. 35:1-3), he was to be put to death (Ex. 31:14-15; 35:2). All this strictness was a part of the tutelage of the law, which was meant to lead Israel by the hand to Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:24), who is the final sacrifice ending the old covenant (Heb. 7:11-12, 18-19; 8:7, 13).

When Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week, things changed. Christ, the second Adam, “finished” (John 19:30) the work that the first Adam failed to do (Rom. 5:12-19). Because of that pivotal event, the church determined that for Christians under the new covenant, the day of worship and celebration of the Lord’s grace in Jesus Christ was to be the first day of the week, Sunday: “From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, [the Sabbath] was the last day of the week; and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which, in Scripture, is called the Lord’s day, and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath” (WCF, 21:7). On this day, we are reminded of and participate in the glorious reality that we have already entered God’s rest (Matt. 11:28; Heb. 4:10) and that we await the experience of the fullness of this rest in eternity in the new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21-22). We now assemble corporately for worship and enjoy a foretaste of our eternal rest, then go out into the kingdom of this world to work for six days. So why do we worship on Sunday and not Saturday?

The first day of the week was the day on which our Lord rose from the dead (John 20:1; cf. Ps. 118:24).

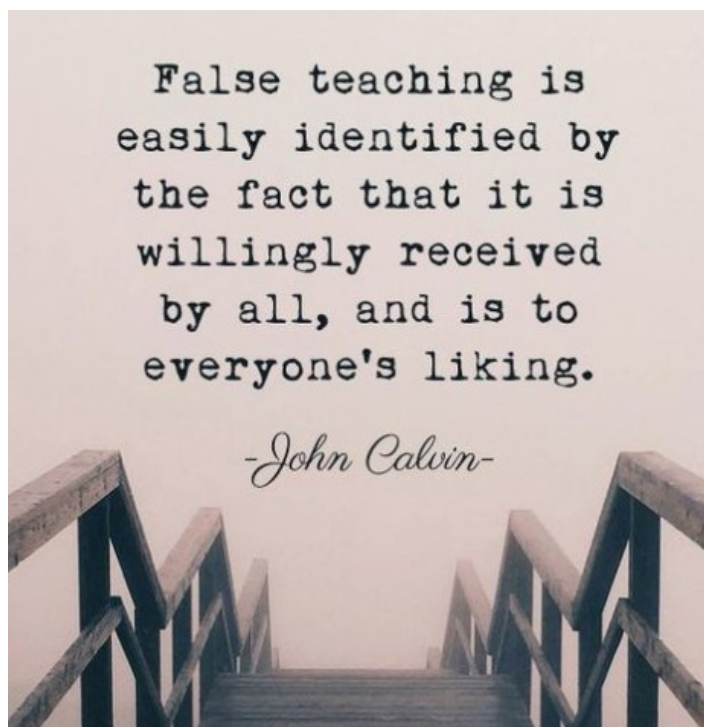
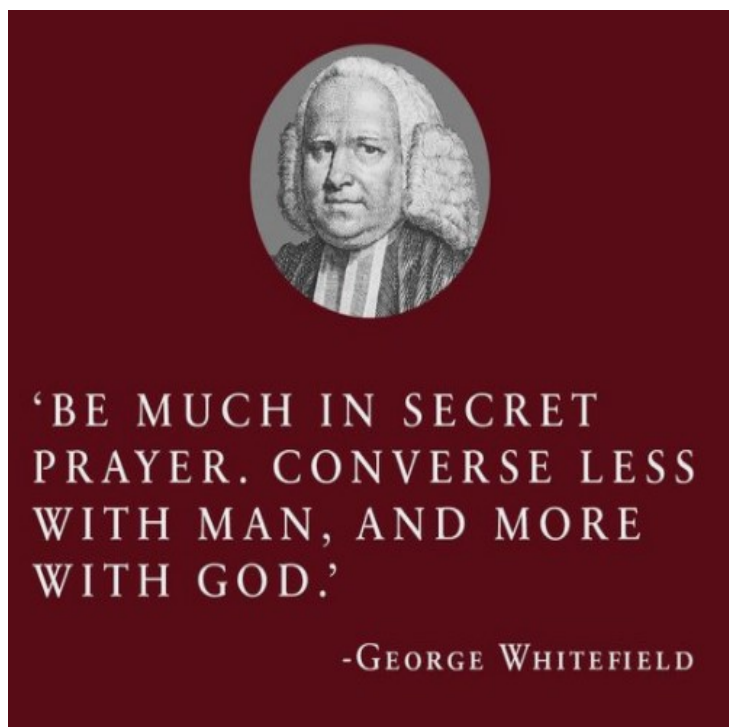
The first day of the week is called “the Lord’s day” (Rev. 1:10; cf. 1 Cor. 16:2).

The first day was the day on which the Holy Spirit was poured out on the church (Acts 2:1-36).

Just as on the first day of creation God made light and separated it from the darkness, we gather on the first day of the week to celebrate the light of the gospel in Jesus Christ, who has separated us from the world of the darkness of sin (John 1:5, 9; 3:19; 8:12; 2 Cor. 4:1-6).

From creation until Christ, the people of God worked six days and then rested on the seventh day. This was a picture of their looking forward to eternal rest; the seventh day of creation was not structured with an “evening and morning” as the previous six days (Gen. 2:1-3), which signified that the seventh day had no end and was thus a foretaste of eternity itself. On the other hand, from the work of Christ until the consummation, the people of God rest on the first day and work the next six, looking back on the finished work of Christ. Yet we too look forward to the full consummation of this rest.

Rev Daniel Hyde, Ligonier Blog



WHY REFORMATION IN AFRICA IS A KEY PRIORITY

Africa's population growth is exponential, it is doubling every thirty years and expected to surpass 2 billion by 2038. By 2060, six of the world's ten largest Christian countries will be in Africa. Of course, the question is, what sort of Christian will that be? In 1910 there were 2 million identifying as Christians in Africa, today there are 650 million but 200 million of these are evangelicals. There are many opportunities for biblical truth but there are also many challenges. Scripture indeed holds out specific hope and promise for those labouring to bring greater reformation to Africa.

We are well aware of many challenges such as extreme poverty, conflict, corruption and disease among other challenges. There is also great spiritual poverty. Less than 20 percent of evangelical pastors have received seminary training and biblical illiteracy and heresy wreak havoc. In some places Christians face persecution from Islamist extremist groups. These challenges are also opportunities and Scripture offers great encouragement in seeking to meet them with the truth of God's Word. One particular passage is Zephaniah 3:9-10. This speaks of how God will make pure doctrine, worship and profession spread to many people both Jews and Gentiles in New Testament times. They will combine together in serving Him and helping one another in His obedience (v9). This unity and common profession is described as "a pure language" (see Isaiah 19:18). The Lord promises that He will gather them from the furthest parts of the world to seek Him and offer service to Him (v10). This promise is accomplished, partly in His gathering together in Christ His people dispersed throughout the world and its remotest corners (see John 11:52). The regions beyond Ethiopia are especially mentioned. These peoples will be included among the rest in a time of great blessing. George Hutcheson comments further on these verses in a way that is helpful for us.

1. THE LORD WILL GATHER HIS CHURCH IN AFRICA

It is cause for praise to God and of encouragement to the godly that however it goes with nations, God will not lack a Church. He may gather it from among pagan Gentiles and those of whom there is little apparent hope. He will get many people, even from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia.

2. THE LORD WILL REFORM HIS CHURCH IN AFRICA

Purity of doctrine, worship and profession is the glory of a gospel Church. It is a glorious work of God to make it so and keep it so. The Lord says, "I will turn to the people a pure language" or pure doctrine and profession instead of their idolatrous and blasphemous imaginations and ways.

3. THE LORD WILL REFORM HIS CHURCH IN AFRICA THOROUGHLY

Purity of doctrine, worship and profession do not consist in a lawless liberty or a toleration to think or say whatever people want to. Rather it is conjoined with and carried on by a united uniformity. This is the rich fruit and recompense of much trouble, so it is to be expected in the Lord's time and measure. After much trouble (v8) they shall have a pure language, they will serve Him with one consent (literally shoulder) even in that pure language (see Jeremiah 32:39; Zechariah 14:9).

- 8 Unanimity in the matters of God and the free access of Jew and Gentile to serve God is a great mercy of the kingdom of Christ. When those who seek God are of one heart and all put their hands to help one another without obstructing or lying idle it is a sign of thriving in serving God. This is also included in the promise as a great blessing and a means of much good, "they shall serve him with one consent."



The true marks of a converted and spiritual people are being much in calling on God, making use of Him in all things, and giving up themselves entirely to be His servants. To testify their subjection and thankfulness they put their hands to His service as far as they are called to do so. They will do everything as service to Him and bring their worship, themselves, or others, as they are able to offer them up to Him. They described here in this way “they all call on the name of the Lord”, when they get the pure language, they are suppliants, they serve Him, and bring His offering.

4. THE LORD WILL REFORM HIS CHURCH IN AFRICA IN HIS TIME

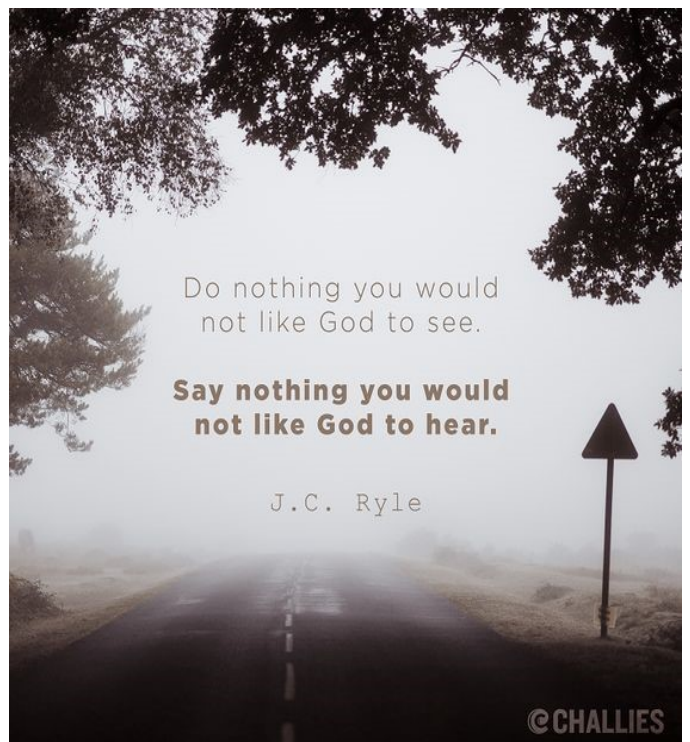
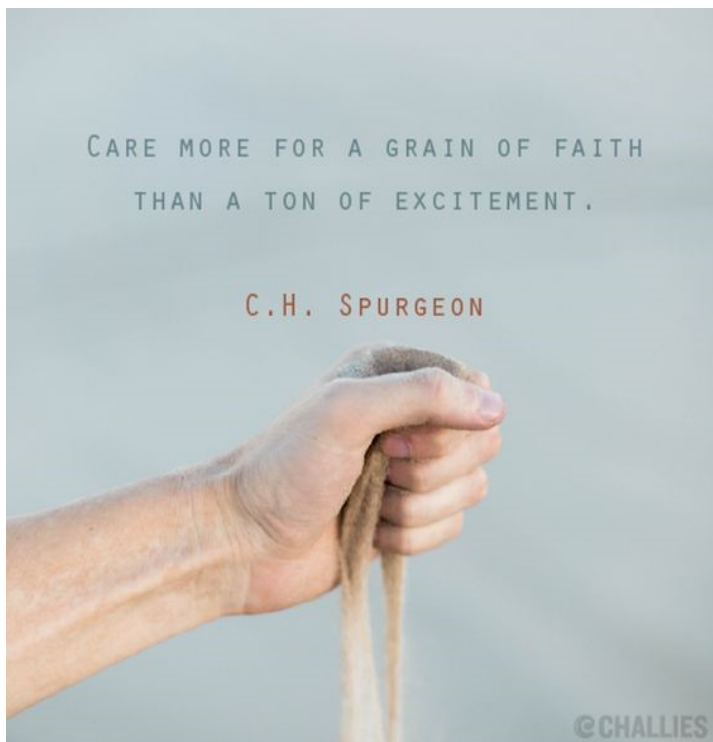
The Lord will not lose any of His elect, however far they are scattered throughout the world. He will recover His own, when their condition shows they are afar off and driven into exile, without hope or probability of return. The Lord will in due time seek after and recover His ancient people, now for a scattered long time. This will lead to a reviving of His service in the world. For “from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, he will seek the daughter of his dispersed, and cause them to come”. At this time there will be suppliants and offerings brought and serving Him with one consent.

CONCLUSION

Reformation in Africa should be a key priority for our prayers and endeavours. There are many church and mission endeavours that can be prayerfully supported, among them [Reforming Africa Ministries](#), [The Liberia Project](#) and [The Gambia Partnership](#).

George Hutcheson (1615-1674) ministered in Ayrshire and Edinburgh and was a noted bible expositor. Like many other ministers he was removed from his congregation in 1662 for refusing to conform to the rule of bishops.

Reformation Scotland Trust, www.reformationscotland.org



WHO IS THE GREATEST?

"A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. And he said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves. You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel' (Luke 22:24-30).

Let us observe, in this passage, **how firmly pride and love of pre-eminence can stick to the hearts of Christian men.** We are told that "There was a dispute among the disciples, as to which of them should be considered the greatest." The strife was one which had been rebuked by our Lord on a former occasion. The ordinance which the disciples had just been receiving, and the circumstances under which they were assembled, made the strife peculiarly inappropriate. And yet at this very season, the last quiet time they could spend with their Master before His death, this little flock begins a dispute, as to who should be the greatest! Such is the heart of man, ever weak, ever deceitful, ever ready, even at its best times, to turn aside to what is evil.

The sin before us is a very old one. Ambition, self-esteem, and self-conceit lie deep at the bottom of all men's hearts, and often in the hearts where they are least suspected. Thousands imagine that they are humble, who cannot bear to see an equal more honoured and favoured than themselves. Few indeed can be found who rejoice heartily in a neighbour's promotion over their own heads. The quantity of envy and jealousy in the world is a glaring proof of the prevalence of pride. Men would not envy a brother's advancement if they had not a secret thought that their own merit was greater than his.

Let us live on our guard against this sore disease, if we make any profession of serving Christ. The harm that it has done to the Church of Christ is far beyond calculation. Let us learn to take pleasure in the prosperity of others, and to be content with the lowest place for ourselves. The rule given to the Philippians should be often before our eyes--"In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves." The example of John the Baptist is a bright instance of the spirit at which we should aim. He said of our Lord, "He must increase, but I must decrease." (Phil. 2:3; John 3:30.)

Let us observe, secondly, in this passage, **the striking account which our Lord gives of true Christian greatness.** He tells His disciples that the worldly standard of greatness was the exercise of 'lordship and authority'. "But you," He says, "shall not be so. He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that serves." And then He enforces this principle by the mighty fact of His own example--"I am among you as he that serves."

Usefulness in the world and Church--a humble readiness to do anything, and put our hands to any good work--a cheerful willingness to fill any post, however lowly, and discharge any office, however unpleasant, if we can only promote happiness and holiness on earth--these are the true tests of Christian greatness. The hero in Christ's army is not the man who has rank, and title, and dignity, and chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. It is the man who looks not on his own things, but the things of others. It is the man who is kind to all, tender to all, thoughtful for all, with a hand to help all, and a heart to feel for all. It is the man who spends and is spent to make the vice and misery of the world less, to bind up the broken-hearted, to befriend the friendless, to cheer the sorrowful, to enlighten the ignorant, and to raise the poor. This is the truly great man in the eyes of God. The world may ridicule his labours and deny the sincerity of his motives. But while the world is sneering, God is pleased. This is the man who is walking most closely in the steps of Christ.

Let us follow after greatness of this sort, if we desire to prove ourselves Christ's servants. Let us not be content with clear head-knowledge, and loud lip-profession, and keen insight into controversy, and fervent zeal for the interests of our own party. Let us see that we minister to the needs of a sin-burdened world, and do good to bodies and

souls. Blessed be God! the greatness which Christ commended is within the reach of all. All have not learning, or gifts, or money. But all can minister to the happiness of those around them, by passive or by active graces. All can be useful, and all can be kind. There is a grand reality in constant kindness. It makes the men of the world think.

Let us observe, thirdly, in this passage, **our Lord's gracious commendation of His disciples**. He said to them, "You have remained true to me in my time of trial." There is something very striking in these words of praise. We know the weakness and infirmity of our Lord's disciples during the whole period of His earthly ministry. We find Him frequently reproofing their ignorance and lack of faith. He knew full well that within a few hours they were all going to forsake Him. But here we find Him graciously dwelling on one good point in their conduct, and holding it up to the perpetual notice of His Church. They had been faithful to their Master, notwithstanding all their faults. Their hearts had been right, whatever had been their mistakes. They had clung to Him in the day of His humiliation, when the great and noble were against Him. They had "remained true to Him in His time of trial."

“He knew full well that within a few hours they were all going to forsake Him. But here we find Him graciously dwelling on one good point in their conduct, and holding it up to the perpetual notice of His Church”

Let us rest our souls on the comfortable thought that the mind of Christ is always the same. If we are true believers, let us know that He looks at our graces more than at our faults, that He pities our infirmities, and that He will not deal with us according to our sins. Never had a master such poor, weak servants as believers are to Christ--but never had servants such a compassionate and tender Master as Christ is to believers! Surely we cannot love Him too well. We may come short in many things. We may fail in knowledge and courage, and faith, and patience. We may stumble many times. But one thing let us always do. Let us love the Lord Jesus with heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. Whatever others do, let us "remain true to Him," and cleave to Him with purpose of heart. Happy is he who can say with Peter, however humbled and ashamed, "Lord, you know that I love you." (John 21:15.)

Let us observe, lastly, **what a glorious promise our Lord holds out to His faithful disciples**. He says, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father has appointed unto me; that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

These words were our Lord's parting legacy to His little flock. He knew that in a few hours His ministry among them would be ended. He winds it up by a wonderful declaration of good things laid up in store for them. We may not perhaps see the full meaning of every part of the promise. Enough for us to know that our Lord promised His eleven faithful ones--glory, honor, and rewards, far exceeding anything they had done for Him. They had gone a little way with Him, like Barzillai with David, and done a little for Him. He assures them that they shall have in another world a recompense worthy of a king.

Let us leave the whole passage with the cheering thought that the wages which Christ will give to his believing people will be far out of proportion to anything they have done for Him. Their tears will be found in His bottle. Their least desires to do good will be found recorded. Their weakest efforts to glorify Him shall be found written in His book of remembrance. Not a cup of cold water shall miss its reward.



Dear Children

If you have been reading the book of Daniel you will have read about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and how they had to suffer for their faith in God and that in a very cruel and trying way. Daniel, having been appointed ruler over the whole province of Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar, requested the king that he give prominent positions of authority to his three friends. That was granted to Daniel but there were men in Babylon who were not at all pleased. They made up a plan to get rid of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. You can read it in Daniel chapter 3. What a cruel plan they had but what strong faith in God these three young men had! They knew that God was able to protect them and preserve them even in the midst of a furnace that had been made seven times hotter than before. Nebuchadnezzar saw this miracle for himself. First of all he saw how the heat from the furnace had killed the men who had thrown in Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Then, to his astonishment, he saw not **three** men but **four** men in the furnace walking around unharmed. Who do you think was the fourth person who was with them in the furnace? It could be none other than the Son of God. Nebuchadnezzar also noticed that the three of them were no longer tied up like they were when they had been thrown into the furnace. When he called them to come out of the furnace he was amazed that the fire had not even singed their hair or their clothes and that there was no smell of burning from them. Nebuchadnezzar just had to acknowledge that only God could do such a thing. He then promoted them to even higher office than they had before.

In 1 Samuel chapter 2 and verse 30 we read these words: “Those who honour Me I will honour and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed.” We see the truth of these words not just in many Bible stories but also in the experiences of God’s people all over the world. God’s eyes are on each one of us every day of our lives. He knows what we think, He hears what we say and He sees what we do at all times. There is a little verse which says:

God is always near me hearing what I say,
Knowing all my thoughts and deeds, all my work and play.

God is always near me in the darkest night.
He can see me just the same as by midday light.

God sees if we are faithful to Him and trust in Him. He takes notice of us whenever we stand up for Him and honour Him when others mock Him and despise Him. He will give us the strength to be “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might” as the apostle Paul exhorts us to do in Ephesians chapter 6, verses 10-18. And He will do for us as He has promised: “those who honour Me I will honour.” Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego as well as Daniel found Him to be true to His Word. God is faithful to **all** His promises and He promises that His grace and His strength will make us strong when we feel weak.

As you grow up and meet difficult situations I pray that God will help you too to be faithful to Him as these young men were. You will meet many challenges and trials in your life but God will never let you down if your trust is in Him. My prayer for each one of you is that you will be faithful witnesses on the Lord’s side all the days of your life. The greatest honour that He can bestow on you is that you will be one of His dear children and be assured of an eternity with Him in heaven – an eternity of happiness and bliss, learning more and more about your precious Saviour.