



STORNOWAY
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

October 2021 Newsletter



WELCOME

LORD'S DAY

Morning Worship—11.00am

Evening Worship—6.30pm

PRAYER MEETING

Thursday—7.30pm (Meeting at the Gospel Hall)

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WORD FROM THE MANSE

Dear congregation,

I want to note our appreciation as a family for your prayers during this time that I have been under call. It has been a difficult time as we wrestled with the various factors involved. On balance, it seems clear to me that it is best for us to remain here. I commend you on how you have prayed, even to ask God for submission to His will no matter what that might be.

Allow me to exhort you to earnestly pray for the Bready congregation that they might soon get a pastor of their own. Vacancies can be difficult times for congregations, and they certainly aren't the ideal situation. If only there were enough ministers for all the congregations! If only there were enough ministers to send more of them out into the mission field and to plant churches! We should be giving ourselves even more persistently to prayer for men to come forward for the Gospel ministry.

Every blessing,
Stephen

NEWS & EVENTS

SABBATH SCHOOL



On the first Sabbath of September a Sabbath School was started in the congregation. Although it's beginnings are small with just two children – Zoe and Eloise – yet it is such a privilege to be able to instruct these little ones in the knowledge of the Lord and in His dealings with those who love Him and trust in Him. They are both very keen pupils, eager to learn and also very good listeners.

I remember hearing a well known minister say that if he were to start his ministry again he would give the instruction of the children a priority. That has always been an encouragement to me to reach out to the children in order to give them a grounding in the things of God before they are defiled by the world. I would, therefore, encourage you to pray for this work earnestly. Also, if you know of any children who do not attend a Sabbath School please invite them to join us.

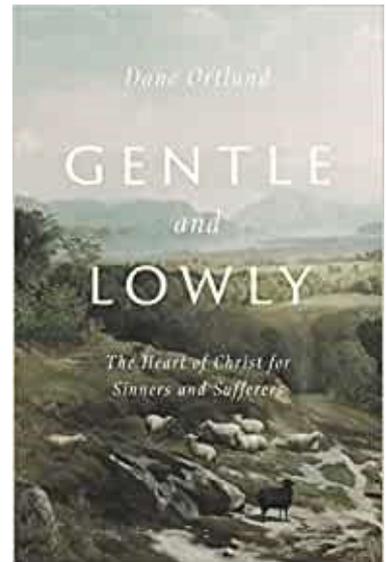
“ Let the little children come to Me and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

Marietta Macdonald

BOOK STUDY

Our book study, which resumed in March of this year, initially had to take place on Zoom. Whilst it is preferable to do things on Zoom rather than not at all, yet we all agree that our preference would be to meet in person. This was granted to us with the recent lifting of Covid restrictions so for our September meeting some of us gathered in person at the Manse whilst others joined us by Zoom. This worked well and we hope that more will decide to join us for our October study.

We are working through the book, *Gentle and Lowly, The heart of Christ for sinners and sufferers*, by Dane Ortland. It is based on Matthew 11:28 & 29. In his introduction he states that the book is written for “the discouraged, the frustrated, the weary, the disenchanted, the cynical, the empty” and for those who suspect that “God’s patience with us is wearing thin”. He also states that “the strategy of the book is to take either a Bible passage or a bit of teaching from the Puritans or others and consider what is being said about the heart of God and of Christ.”



I think we all agree that it is a most helpful study and, though we may not at times be in full agreement with some of his statements, yet we have found it a most beneficial study and one where we can say we have experienced the Lord’s blessing as we have shared experiences with one another. Those of you who have not joined us are still free to do so. I guarantee you will not regret it.

Marietta Macdonald

UPDATE FROM GAMBIA

Church

In God’s providence, Grace Reformed Church in Brikama is gradually progressing, and our members are very appreciative of the Doctrines of Grace which are being taught in the Church. These Doctrines are a valuable asset to our members, particularly in comparison to the heresies being taught elsewhere. Some of our members are travelling from a distance to attend worship on the Lords Day, noting that our doctrine are rich in theology and practice.

Mission Work

We have set up several meetings throughout the month. These include the Men’s Fellowship, Women’s Fellowship, Youth Fellowship, Children’s Club, Pastors Fellowship, and a Teachers Fellowship. In all of these fellowship groups we have seen people expressing interest in Reformation. Recently we had the Sabbath School graduation where the children sang Psalm 67. We also recently held a women’s conference, which dealt with the issue of abortion.

Evangelism

Evangelism has been carried out on a weekly basis. We have seen a lot of families, whose children are on scholarship schemes in our mission school, coming to church as a result. Some are sending their children to church secretly, due to fear of persecution.

Interestingly, our form of worship is considered preferable to Muslims, as we worship without musical instruments or dancing, as some of the charismatic churches do. Some have commented that if they were to attend a church, they would attend ours due to the reverence of the worship.

Prayer Requests

Pray for the Church in Brikama, that the Lord would make disciples of many generations, raise up leaders and enable us to plant new congregations and eventually establish a Gambian presbytery. Pray for my family, which has recently had a lot of health challenges, and all who support the work, especially the RPCS.

We wish to express our heartfelt thanks and appreciation for all your prayers and support towards the work in Gambia. May God richly bless you and reward your labour of love.

Pastor Sylvester Konteh

GLEANINGS BY BILL LUCAS

THE BIBLE

The Bible has a message for the Nation as it has for individuals. It is a guide to human living, to character and conduct, and it offers its guidance to individuals, tribes, churches and nations. It brings the nation to its bar of judgement and it offers the nation its only hope of healing and survival. "I will heal their land" is God's promise in the Book, and a land can be sick, economically sick, socially sick, morally and spiritually sick; and its disease can sap its energies, frustrate its efforts, and drag it down in inertia, lassitude, ruin.

There are symptoms today that our nation is sick: the will to work is paralysed, the vision of spiritual ideals is lost, the sense of God is gone.

And the Bible indicates that the Nation that does not fit in with God's plan must perish. The nation that does not serve the voice of God is disowned and thrust into the dust.

Professor R A Finlayson (A Just God and a Saviour)

GREEN PASTURES

What does the Shepherd feed His sheep on? The Word of God and the means of grace. Green grass is always living grass, full of sap and nourishment and good for sheep to feed on. The living word of God is where the soul must feed. Young Christians, let me say something to you. Do you want to know the Shepherd better? He is here, in this Book. If you want to feed on Him, do it from His Word. Why do young Christians find the Christian way difficult? Why do they get cold and wander back into the world? Why do they become afraid and not make a strong and uncompromising stand for Christ? Nearly always because they are neglecting God's word.

Professor J Douglas Macmillan (The Lord Our Shepherd)

BACKSLIDING

"I will heal their backsliding" (Hosea 14:4)

One word describes Israel's history: backsliding. Two words describe God's response: chastening and healing. Most of Hosea's message was about the backsliding and the chastening, but here his theme moves on to the healing.

Hosea's prophecies tell us that backsliding is very common. Octavius Winslow said: "There is a tendency to secret, perpetual and alarming departure from God." Backsliding requires no effort. You don't need to do anything to slip away; it is such a gradual process that it is usually unnoticed until it is too late. And this despite preachers like Hosea pointing it out so clearly.

It usually begins in the heart. Love for God and His people diminishes. Reverence for the Bible decreases. Enjoyment of prayer evaporates. Delight in the Sabbath fades. It is like an ant removing sand, one grain at a time, from one side of a set of scales to the other. No change is noticed until suddenly the scales tip. Church activity and service may cover up the worrying inward reality for a time, but when the scales eventually tip, outward moral catastrophe is usually imminent.

And, as Israel discovered, backsliding and its eventual chastisement is a miserable experience. Remember Bunyan's erring pilgrim who had to go back for his mislaid scroll - he ended up covering the same road three times, and it was dangerously late and dark when he finally arrived exhausted at his lodgings. Ask Naomi how bitter backsliding is. (Ruth 1: 2-21).

But, and here is great encouragement, backsliding can be healed -- not by the backslider but by the Lord. "I will heal their backsliding." No one can return from backsliding except through the merciful intervention of Christ. Look at Peter weeping bitterly over his declension and desertion. Who can restore him? "Go tell the disciples, and Peter ... (Mark 16:7). The Lord intervenes to heal his backsliding.

So Israel, and so you, backslidden one, look to Christ the great Healer of backsliding. True grace is indestructible. It may decay but it can never die. Bring you faint embers and remaining sparks to the Lord and say: "Heal my backsliding. Fan my embers into flame."

David P Murray (Professor at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary) From: Milk and Honey, A Devotional

THE WORD AND THE SPIRIT

We must not be content with the Spirit without the Word, or with the Word without the Spirit. Our life must travel along these two. as the locomotive along the parallel metals. The Word is the chosen organ of the Spirit, and it is only by our devout contact with it that we shall be enabled to detect His voice. It is by the Word that the Spirit will enter our hearts, as the heat of the sun passes into our chambers with the beams of light that enter the open casement.

We need a widespread revival of Bible study. These mines of Scripture, living beneath the surface, call loudly for investigation and discovery, and those who shall obey the appeal, and set themselves to the devout and laborious study of the inner meaning of the Word, shall be soon ware that they have received the filling that they seek.

There is no such way of communing with God as to walk to and fro in your room or in the open air, your Bible in hand, meditating on it and turning its precepts and promises into prayer. God walks in the glades of Scripture, as of old in those of Paradise.

F B Meyer (The Secret of Guidance)

A LETTER FROM GOD

The Bible is a letter God has sent to us.

Prayer is a letter we send to Him.

Matthew Henry

THE ABODE OF DIVING TRUTH

The Bible contains all necessary truth, and nothing but truth. It was written expressly for sinners, it is freely given to them by God, that they may learn the things which make for their everlasting peace and salvation. It was never designed to gratify the critic's pride, or please the carnal imagination; but it was intended . . .

to inform the mind, to sanctify the heart, and to direct the feet. When we take it up, we should remember that it is a precious gift of God to poor sinners, designed to benefit them, and glorify His holy name.~

James Smith (The Way of Salvation Set Forth)

WHY HAS THE WEST BEEN HUMILIATED?



There is one word that the whole world seems agreed on in relation to the western withdrawal from Afghanistan – humiliation. Whether we are truly humbled or only temporarily disgraced depends on how our nations respond. We ought in all humility, to ask why this has happened. To do so does not minimise the heart-rending distress experienced by those abandoned in Afghanistan. Nor does it reduce the courageous sacrifice of our troops. Asking why this has happened gives us a window into our real state as nations. This is not just a military and strategic defeat but a failure of the mission to remake Afghanistan in the image of the West and its values. The decline of the West is due to its moral decay.

As western nations we thought we could export to Afghanistan the benefits inherited from the Christian heritage we have rejected, without also giving them the framework of belief and morality that produced them. The US army were so afraid of doing that they even burned Afghan language Bibles sent to them. It appears that British involvement commissioned fatwas calling for converts from Islam to be killed. As one writer has observed, the West in its decadence has lost its virtue, it has squandered the moral capital bequeathed by a living faith.

The emptiness of our pride as nations and the fatal complacency it produces have been exposed for all to see. The Old Testament prophets frequently show us such decadent pride in nations, with the implication that we are to learn from it. The small book of Obadiah is largely taken up with the nation of Edom who manifested proud contempt towards Judah. They were proud of their prosperity, resources and wealth (v3-6); allies (v7); wisdom (v8) and military might (v9). But judgement is threatened against the, ultimately their pride would be brought low and every one of these things in which they put their confidence pulled down. They would then be exposed to misery and contempt. As George Hutcheson observes the prophet shows how “the Lord would diminish their number, power, wealth, and reputation, and put them beneath all other nations and load them with contempt and ignominy.” In the following updated extract Hutcheson draws out the meaning of Obadiah 2-4 in teaching us the fearful danger of pride, the sin that God hates so much.

1. PRIDE CAN BRING THE GREATEST DOWN

The Lord in pursuing for sin, can bring down the greatest person and people in the world, lay them in the dust, and pour contempt upon the most honourable. The Lord says He has made them small, and greatly despised.

The Lord’s showing mercy to any makes way for others also to show mercy towards them for their good (Jeremiah 42:12). In the same way, when the Lord becomes an adversary in anger, the affections and respect of others will dry up towards them. For however Edom was esteemed before by others, when God deals with him he is greatly despised.

2. PRIDE IN OUTWARD ADVANTAGES

- 6 A natural heart together with outward advantages and benefits usually produces pride, self-confidence and insolence. Edom is proud of their high and secure location and says in his heart, “Who shall bring me down to the ground?” But though a renewed heart has all these benefits, they are poor and depend on God.

3. PRIDE OF HEART IS KNOWN TO GOD

The Lord does not judge people's pride by their outward conduct (which may be masked over with an appearance of humility) so much as by looking at their heart and discerning the conceit and lofty imaginations that reign there. He sees the pride of Edom's heart.

4. PRIDE IS SELF-DECEIT

Self-deceit is one of the greatest of all deceptions. In this they are given up to delude themselves with vain imaginations and confidences so that their heart deceives them. However much pride and conceit musters up people's excellences, it merely deludes them and makes a pretence of what will prove nothing. Either it is an evidence of what is nothing in reality or that what they are conceited about becomes blasted and withered. However much presumption may promise great things to make sinners secure and despise God's threatenings, it only deceives them and feeds them with vain hopes. It will prove a deceiver in the end when they have greatest need of what they seemed to promise.

5. PRIDE IS GOD'S ENEMY

God looks on pride in the creature as an enemy against Himself. It strikes pre-eminently at His glory in failing to depend on Him and seeking to usurp His throne. It therefore provokes God, though there were no other aggravation or enemy, it engages Him to prove His power in abasing it. Therefore, that general defiance, "Who shall bring me down to the ground?" is answered by God as being His special concern. He says that He will bring them down.

The Lord is able to reach man and bring him down in even though he has the maximum imaginable strength and greatness. He can make strong holds a vain refuge in a day of vengeance and is even able to overturn more confidences than man can build up for his own security. To dwell in the clefts of the rock was but a small thing for God's power to reach, and yet that was the utmost of what Edom could boast of.

CONCLUSION

It is easy to be proud of many things, even spiritual privileges. We need to take this to heart ourselves, how can we see this in our national life without living more humbly before others in our personal life? Perhaps the West is as it is because the Church has not been what it should be. We also need to make it clear to others why the West has lost its virtue. The more moral decay we see, the more we need to shine as lights in the darkness and the more we need to plead with and intercede on behalf of our rulers and nations. We need to be a clear voice for the truth as well as salt and light that has a restraining influence.

Reformation Trust Scotland, www.reformationscotland.org

BANNER
of TRUTH

“The first step in
preparation for
heaven, is to know
that we deserve
nothing but *hell*!”

—J.C. Ryle



BANNER
of TRUTH

“Oh that men would
understand that happiness
does not depend on outward
circumstances, but on the
state of the heart.”

—J.C. Ryle



10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY



1. Hospitality reflects the gospel

Faithful Christians are—and have always been—a strange minority in a hostile world. Redeemed by Christ, we have lost our old lives—and with our lives, we have left behind the history, identity, and people who once claimed us. Conversion starts with the sacrifice of what once was, and the gospel provides for what we have relinquished through hospitality. When Peter says to Jesus, “See, we have left everything and followed you,” Jesus responds with this comfort: “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold, now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come, eternal life” (Mark 10: 28–30). The gospel comes with a house key, and that key unlocks the “hundredfold” of God’s provision of family and community for others. Hospitality is the ground zero of the Christian life.

2. Hospitality is spiritual warfare.

Hospitality that gathers brothers and sisters alongside unsaved neighbours and strangers isn’t charity or kindness; rather, it takes the gospel upstream of the culture war—where it belongs—and shakes the very gates of heaven for the souls of our neighbours. When we are in each other’s lives daily, we are not operating with ignorance or stereotypes about other people and their “lifestyles.” We don’t have to wonder what our unbelieving neighbour thinks about us, because he is sitting right here, passing the potatoes and telling us exactly what he thinks. At our house, when the meal is finished, the children pass around Bibles and my husband, Kent, begins nightly practice of family devotions, where all are welcome to join. My neighbours know that they can leave, but usually, they don’t.

3. Hospitality makes room for different kinds of hosts and guests.

Every Christian is called to practice hospitality, but that does not mean that everyone practices it in the same way. We practice hospitality by sharing our resources and our needs, by serving as both host and guest, as Jesus did when he walked this earth. Hospitality works on the same principle as tithing. You are either giving, or you are receiving. You are either building up the body, or you need the body to build you up. All of us have a stake in hospitality because Jesus does.

4. Hospitality is the Benedict option on mission.

St. Benedict, the 6th century father of western monasticism whose response to the collapse of Roman civilization helped preserve the Christian faith, has received renewed attention with Rod Dreher’s 2017 publication of *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation*. We Butterfields practice almost-daily hospitality, including table fellowship, Bible reading, psalm singing, and prayer. This comes out in the wash as Benedict option on mission. The invitation is wide open, and sometimes we spill into three rooms. Dining nightly with brothers and sisters from the church has developed deep familial bonds. Over the years, we have learned how to help each other without being asked. We are a set-apart people. We love the church, and we extol her virtues, and we call others to come into God’s family.

At our house, some people come early, and some people come late. Some people come because they want to know why all the cars are parked outside our house. Some people bring food. Some people bring friends. This feast of grace is our mainstay, and we intentionally seek out unbelievers to join us. We are distinctly set apart for Christ, and we are invested in the world, serving others, beckoning others to taste and feel that the Lord is good.

Is this awkward? Yes. But how else will your unsaved neighbour know that the throne of God brings grace to some, but judgment to others? How will he know that the culture of sexual freedom and personal autonomy has duped him and stolen his integrity as an image bearer of a Holy God?

5. Hospitality requires unity in the church.

When I lived as a lesbian in a diverse LGBTQ community in New York in the 1990s, someone's home was open every night for anyone in our community. The AIDS epidemic simultaneously terrified and unified us, and it was unthinkable that anyone in our community would be left alone in chronic and extensive ways, especially during such desperate times. My lesbian partner and I opened our home on Thursday nights, and I learned back then how to cook for a crowd of unknown numbers, and make serving others a priority, even in the midst of a frenetic professional life. If the church felt the priority of our brotherhood and sisterhood over and against our fleshly identities, we too would make hospitality a priority. Christian unity would shift our focus from programs to relationships. We would see our lack of vibrant, regular, and distinctive hospitality as the dirty, rotten sin that it is.

6. Hospitality nurtures and grows the family of God.

Chronic loneliness should never be the norm in the church. The church is God's family, and we should live in daily community. Chronic, debilitating loneliness in the midst of the great assembly of God's people devastates lives, and sadly, this cancer is growing in the church. A small group that meets once a week is a paltry answer to this problem. But nightly table fellowship, where all brothers and sisters from the church are welcome, forges relationships of belonging and growth in grace. We don't want to stop there.

Nourishing the family of God and compelling those outside of God's favour to come to your table are the twin heartbeats of hospitality. In communities bounded by race and class sameness, it is often hard to know how to break out of our own boxes. We must seek those outside of ourselves with intention. What would our church family look like if we had members whose participation in social programs brought the outside in?

We could become a SAFE family partner, become a liaison to an incarcerated brother or sister, become a licensed foster family, meaningfully care for refugee families by working alongside agencies that already do this. These are not grand and impossible relationships to forge. All this takes is a background check, a home study, your time, and the willingness to step out of your comfort zone.

7. Hospitality is good for the giver.

People whose lives are riddled with hidden sin patterns hate hospitality. They fear its openness. They moan about its burdens. Their idols leave no room for competition. And maybe it isn't egregious sin that causes the barrier. Maybe it is domesticated sin. Maybe they care more about their boundaries and their white carpet than they care for their church family or for the eternal state of their neighbours.

Hospitality puts our lives and hearts on display. We see our selfish ambition and our pride. When we see our own sin clearly, when we confess and repent of sin daily, then we are ready with a clean conscience to hold material things lightly and people dearly. Hospitality is good for the giver because it puts our lives and hearts on display. It compels us to confess and repent, to live below our means, and to build in margin time for the unexpected needs of others.

8. Daily hospitality is good for the children.

It's good for children to watch their parents living the gospel in regular, nightly table fellowship. They watch you warmly embrace neighbour's who think differently than you do, and they hope that maybe, just maybe, their secrets are safe with you. They watch you live gospel fluency, handle conflict, make sacrifices, and they see unbelievers come to Christ at the kitchen table. The children in the neighbourhood catch on to what is going on at your home, and soon, they start coming to dinner, asking questions, opening their hearts in family devotions, and coming to church. These kids start to bring their siblings. Or their parents. Your children behold that Jesus really is King and really is alive, and that he isn't just some prop you pull out on Sunday morning or for youth group.

9. Hospitality is expensive.

Hospitality takes money and time. Daily hospitality multiplies the Butterfield food budget. It also keeps me in a daily pattern of chopping vegetables, kneading bread, and soaking dry beans. By 4:30 pm, the rhythm of our house shifts from home-school to hospitality. While our teenage son is still doing homework, and our younger daughter is practicing the piano, I start picking up the house for table fellowship and Kent starts thinking through the passage for tonight's family devotions. My single friends from church come home to a warm meal with many friends waiting to embrace them. Other families from church start to wander in. My neighbours know that I am often able to do childcare after school, so we regularly have children from the neighbourhood here. All of this takes time, money, sacrifice, and flexibility.

“Hospitality is good for the giver because it puts our lives and hearts on display”

10. Hospitality is worth it.

Hospitality develops eyes to see. It sharpens the saw of God's word on our hard hearts. It develops bold intimacy among people who would never have reason to be friends. It grieves the loss of missed opportunities to serve. It shudders at Jesus's words, “For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me. . . . as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me” ([Matthew 25:42–45](#)).

Jesus identifies with the stranger, the outsider, the needy. Daily hospitality hones a distinctive Christian culture from within as it embraces evangelistic optimism, knowing that if God wills, strangers will become neighbours and neighbours will become part of the family of God. Who knows? This may happen at your kitchen table tonight.



Rosaria Butterfield

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Rosaria Butterfield is an author, speaker, RP minister's wife, home school mum, and former professor of English and women's studies at Syracuse University. She is the author of *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert* and *Openness Unhindered*.



The clear message from Genesis to Revelation is either go to hell with your own righteousness, or go to heaven with the righteousness of Christ credited to your account by faith alone. Faith in Christ is saving; faith in anything or anyone else is superstition.

MICHAEL HORTON



CHALLIES



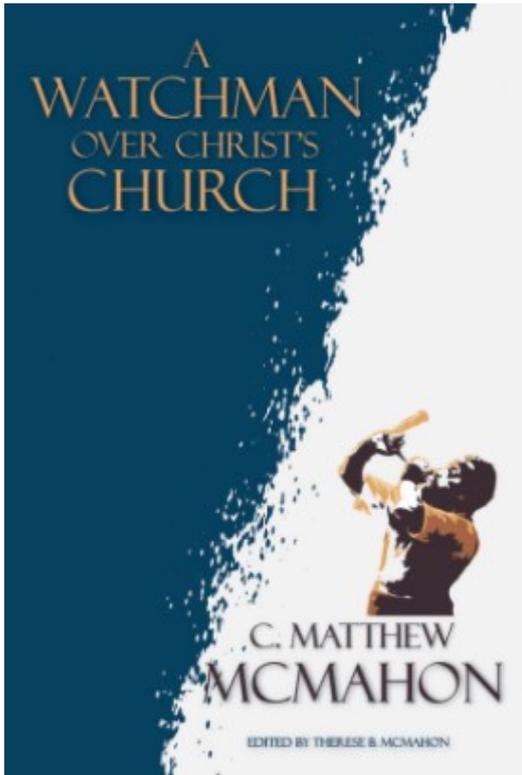
THERE CAN BE NO
BETTER EVIDENCE OF THE SPIRIT OF
CHRIST IN US **than** TO LOVE THE
IMAGE OF CHRIST IN OTHERS.

Matthew Mead

CHALLIES

PURITAN PUBLICATIONS

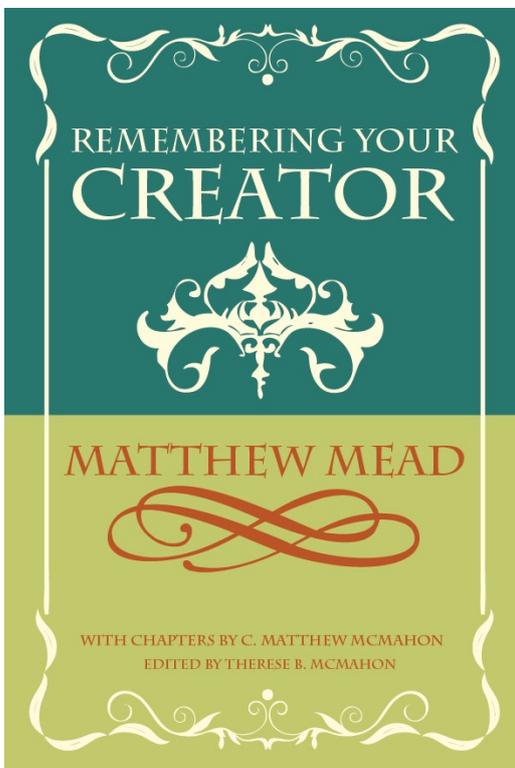
A WATCHMAN OVER CHRIST'S CHURCH



The watchman's life is a life of consecration; a life on the wall dividing the world and church, to watch and take heed, to sound the alarm, and bring God's message to his people boldly, faithfully and plainly. The watchman acts in the name of another, that is, of God, who has called him to the task of watching which includes praying (power) and preaching (guidance and direction). He is commissioned by God with supernatural gifts (given by the effectual work of the Spirit on behalf of Christ) which allows him to discern, speak and work in the ministry by the word God has given him to preach. He officiates in that office as one commissioned of God on behalf of God's people. He is not sent of his own accord, but sent of God to minister the words of Christ to his beloved church.

In this work on the watchman of Ezekiel 33, McMahon explains the nature of the watchman, the work of the watchman, the watched of the watchman and the faithful exercise of his duty on behalf of Jesus Christ, who has commissioned him to serve his sheep as a faithful steward of the glory of Gospel.

REMEMBERING YOUR CREATOR



Matthew Mead (Meade) (1630-1699) was an independent puritan divine, and popular reformed preacher and morning lecturer at Stepney Church (London).

In this work, Mead sets down the sincere choosing of God which should result in closing with Christ and being genuinely converted. His text is Ecclesiastes 12:1, "Remember your Creator now in the days of your youth." He directed the sermons to the youth of the church, but they are by no means linked only to them, and will make older sinners blush as well as younger ones.

He explains that the two great duties of the Christian life are to cease to do evil, and to learn to do well. No man can be good that does not cease to be evil. In the words of the preacher from Ecclesiastes, he shows that this exhortation is to take up a very concerning duty, backed with a threefold argument. In the duty, first, the act, which is to "remember." Secondly, the object to be remembered, "your Creator." And, thirdly, the time when he must be remembered, "now."

Sincere converts to the Christian faith should wisely improve this present life, and carefully provide for a better one to come. The one that is truly faithful in one will in some measure be conscious in both, and both are pointed at in Mead's text. The one that in the days of his youth remembers his Creator as he ought, rightly improves the present life and wisely provides for that which is to come. In doing so, he unites in his practice those duties that God has joined together in the precept, "remember your Creator now in the days of your youth."



Dear Children

This month we will look at the last of our alphabet texts. As we come to the end of the alphabet it is difficult to find texts which begin with the letters V, X, Y and Z. The letters this month are S, T, U and W.

S. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all other things will be added to you. To seek something means to search for something, earnestly desiring to find it. That is how we are to look for God. But God is not hidden away so that we cannot find Him. He has been pleased to reveal Himself to us in His Word, the Bible. As we read God's Word we should pray that the Holy Spirit will reveal God to us. What does the Bible tell us about God? It tells us that He is merciful and gracious and ready to forgive. The Bible also tells us that God sent His only beloved Son into the world to die for sinners - those who have rebelled against Him - and that, if they trust in Him, He will save them and give them everlasting life. We tend to think that if we trust in the Lord Jesus and become His followers that we will lose out on life's pleasures but this text tells that the opposite will take place – "all other things will be added to you". You will be far better off with God than without Him. You believe that and not what Satan tries to tell you.

T. Teach me your way, O Lord.

Now here is a prayer for you when you trust in Christ as your Saviour. To follow the Lord Jesus you will need to know the way to follow Him. Jesus said: I am the Way. Where does He show us the way? It is in the Holy Scriptures. That is where you will find what you need to know about God and how you are to live lives which will honour Him. The Bible is full of advice and instructions on how we should live the Christian life. Make sure you know your Bible well. It will be a great help to you in your journey through life.

U. Unto you, therefore, who believe He is precious.

Do you possess anything that is precious to you? I'm sure you do and whatever it is it will be precious to you for a very special reason. This verse is talking about a person who is precious to believers. Who is that? It is, of course, none other than the Lord Jesus and He is precious to them because He is their Saviour. He has forgiven their sins and saved them from the hell that their sins deserved. That is indeed precious but there is another reason why He is so precious to them. It is because He has given them a perfect righteousness which makes them fit for spending eternity with Himself in heaven. Isn't that a wonderful prospect? Are you one of those who are so blessed to be in this category? Do you believe in this Saviour and is He precious to you too?

W. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. Psalm 51, verse 2

It was King David who wrote this psalm. From what we read in 2 Samuel chapter 11 we can see that he had been guilty of more than one sin. God showed him how terribly he had sinned against Him and David was truly sorry for what he had done. He repented of his sin. In this psalm he is praying to God not just to forgive him but to wash him thoroughly from his sin. Sin had defiled him. That is it had made him feel really dirty and he felt that he needed to be washed and washed and washed until the stains that his sin had made could be completely removed. Have you ever felt that the wrong things that you do make you dirty in God's eyes? That is exactly what sin does to us and the Bible tells us that God is so pure that He cannot look on sin. We too, therefore, need to pray this prayer as well as David. The Bible is full of prayers that we can use when we pray to God. Make a list of these and then you will always have something to pray for when you pray to God. There are two here this month to start you off and you will find others in past months of Children's Corner.

My dear children, as you memorise these texts of Scripture it is my sincere prayer that the Holy Spirit will apply them to your hearts and that you will know for yourselves the blessed truths that are declared in them.

May God bless you as you pray to Him each day.

With my love and prayers, Granny M