



July 2022 Newsletter



WELCOME

LORD'S DAY

Morning Worship—11.00am

Evening Worship—6.30pm

PRAYER MEETING

Thursday—7.30pm

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WORD FROM THE MANSE

Dear congregation,

The Platinum Jubilee was undoubtedly a time of reflection and, in the main, gratitude on the part of the nation. Even the most ardent republicans acknowledge that the Queen has carried herself through these seventy years with grace and with dignity and represented the country accordingly on all occasions of state. And, in many vital areas of life, she has kept herself, and has been kept, while many around her fell.

However, the Monarch's role involves much more than that. Notoriously, she is head of her national church (a concept as problematic to Scottish Presbyterians as it is to Roman Catholics) and, as such, carries significant responsibility for the health of that church, particularly when she appoints its bishops. Also, as Head of State, every single Act of Parliament passed over the last seventy years has had to gain her assent prior to becoming law. No Royal Assent, no Act of Parliament.

This raises the unavoidable, and rather uncomfortable, question of the Queen's role in all the ecclesiastical and moral declension that has engulfed the nation during her reign. To those who think of her as a constant in a world of moral decay, the idea that she could be complicit in that decay rather than standing apart from it seems anathema. But facts are stubborn things: In her official role as defender of the reformed faith, she has been no help whatsoever; her national addresses have put no difference between various faiths; and her royal assent has been granted to the most perverse legislation from abortion to same-sex marriage.

Those who might wish to absolve her from real responsibility in those respects would say that, effectively, in both roles - particularly in parliament - her hands are tied. But that raises the all-important question which the platinum jubilee was always bound to raise - what really is the monarchy for?

After all, ardent monarchists have always pointed out, with enthusiasm, that our monarchy is not merely titular or ceremonial, but constitutional. In other words, the Queen has a meaningful role to play - beyond that of mere ceremony - in the government of both church and state. Indeed - but, if that is so, then the issue of responsibility can't simply be dismissed.

But wouldn't failure to grant royal assent to an Act of Parliament provoke a constitutional crisis? Possibly, yes - but who says we don't need a crisis? Indeed, can we possibly carry on as we are without a crisis? Surely, the real crisis is the passing of increasingly iniquitous legislation throughout her reign bringing the sword of divine judgment upon our heads? Perhaps her refusal to go along with it all might make some people think?

It was often held against Jeremy Corbyn that he was being rather too evasive by claiming that although he was 'present' at a ceremony honouring Palestinian terrorists, he was not 'involved'. But is that not the same kind of argument being used by those excusing the Queen for her silence and her Royal Assent?

We bear her, or the monarchy, no ill will and will always hold her in our prayers - but as far as the rapid and increasing spiritual and moral declension of this country is concerned, there can be no doubt. She was present. And, sadly, she was involved.

Your minister

NEWS & EVENTS

NEW MINISTER FOR BREADY RPCI

2 After a vacancy of over two years, the congregation of Bready, near Londonderry in Northern Ireland, was delighted to welcome its new minister and his family in April, 2022. Mr Paul Wallace, a licentiate of the Northern Presbytery, having accepted the call from the congregation, was ordained and installed as the new pastor.

The Moderator of Synod, Rev. Philip Moffett, opened the meeting with worship and prayer. Rev. Harry Coulter preached on 1 Thessalonians 1 and Rev. Prof. Stephen Neilly gave an exposition and defence of Reformed



Presbyterianism. The Moderator of Presbytery, Rev. Stephen Robinson, put the relevant questions for ordination and installation to Mr Wallace and having received satisfactory answers, he proceeded to ordain and install Mr Wallace with the laying on of hands by the Moderator of Presbytery and Rev. Mark Loughridge, who prayed the ordination and installation prayer. Rev. Jonny McCollum gave the charge to the minister and congregation from Exodus 3, after which Rev. McCollum brought proceedings to a close by pronouncing the benediction.

After the service, the Interim Moderator, Rev. Blair McFarland introduced the speakers: Rev. Philip Moffett brought greetings to Rev. Wallace from Synod; Mr Stephen Davis, Clerk of Session, gave a warm welcome to Rev. Wallace, his wife, Elaine, and their family, Joel, Heidi, Alexander and Craig on behalf of the Bready congregation and Rev. Caldwell Darragh welcomed the new minister and his family on behalf of the local community.

Rev. Wallace concluded the speeches by expressing gratitude for the welcome and generosity that he and his family had already experienced from the congregation, for all involved in planning for the evening, and for all the work that had been done to prepare the manse for their arrival. He then brought proceedings to a close by giving thanks for a lovely supper prepared and served by the congregation.

The Session would like to thank all visiting preachers who led services of worship each Lord's Day during the vacancy and preached God's word. The congregation is thankful to God for the provision of a new teaching elder and we pray that he and his family will know God's blessing as they serve the Lord in Bready.

After the evening service the following Lord's Day, over a cup of tea, Rev. Blair McFarland was thanked by the Clerk of Session for all his work as Interim Moderator during the vacancy; he received a gift from the congregation and his wife, Claire, was presented with a beautiful camellia by Abigail McMorris and Karla Rankin.

Report by William Lynch, Elder in Bready RPC

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEVEN LEE, SERMON AUDIO FOUNDER

On a recent visit to Scotland, along with his wife and 6 children, Steven Lee, the founder of Sermon Audio, spent a few days in Lewis. We were thankful to meet him for a short time of fellowship and took the opportunity to interview him.

What brings you to Stornoway and have you visited our islands before?

I have never been to Scotland before but it was always a personal dream of mine to visit the Isle of Lewis because of all that I read and heard about the revival that took place here on the island during the early 1950s under the ministry of Duncan Campbell. We don't live in the past, but I believe it is both helpful and Scriptural to have a healthy remembrance of what God did in history so as to keep the fires of our hearts burning for the future.

Can you provide a bit of background information about yourself, your family and how you came to faith?

I was born in Seoul, South Korea in 1972. By God's grace, I was born into a very strong Christian home where even my great grandparents were among the first Christians converted in Korea. Our family emigrated to Toronto, Canada when I was 2 years old and we attended a church called the Free Presbyterian Church (of Ulster) where I got saved under the preaching ministry of Frank McClelland as a boy of 10 years. I spent my childhood and youth in Canada until coming down to Greenville SC at the age of 18 to study Computer Science at Bob Jones University.

What are the origins and mission of SermonAudio?

I have always loved preaching growing up. As a boy, I would listen to sermons on cassette tapes over and over again. When I came to Greenville, I was greatly moved by the ministry of Alan Cairns in my home church at Faith Free Presbyterian Church. It was always a frustration for me, however, that more people couldn't be enjoying what I was enjoying week after week. I imagined that there were probably hundreds of other small but faithful churches all over the world that suffered the same experience. I wanted to create a platform by which even the smallest church could have a voice to reach many more outside its walls. This is where the idea of SermonAudio was born.

How has SermonAudio evolved over the years?

SermonAudio in many ways hasn't changed much over the years. People who visit the site will see a site that has maintained a consistent purpose and format throughout the 22 years of our existence. However, a great deal has changed behind the scenes with our infrastructure. It has significantly outgrown the initial set of servers that ran in a room in my house for many years. To date, we have distributed over 400 million sermons to every country on the planet at a rate of 3M+ sermons per month and growing.



Rev. Kenneth Stewart & Steven Lee

What are the greatest blessings and challenges you have experienced through SermonAudio?

Some of our greatest blessings have come in the form of testimonials of individuals that have found saving faith through the preaching on the site. It has also been a great blessing to hear that churches themselves receive similar feedback directly through the listeners on the site. The challenges of SermonAudio are many but it can be summed up by saying we are always facing technical challenges that stretch our abilities and faith.

Our March newsletter brought the Vault to the attention of our congregation. For anyone who may not have read the newsletter, what is the Vault and why is it important?

The Vault is a project that we have undertaken to, essentially, create our own mini-cloud so we don't have to depend on cloud services to operate SermonAudio. The only real answer to true independence is to build our own infrastructure. This means having our own set of physical servers and hard drives to run SermonAudio's core services. It also involves building a strategic partnership with an educational institution like BJU in order to discover and train a continual line of new help as we move into the future. All of this is what makes up the Vault project. You can learn more here: www.sermonaudio.com/vault

Can you explain the purpose of the Foundations Conference?

As much as we believe strongly in the importance of preaching, we feel there is a sad decline in prayer in the life of the church generally. Acts 6:4 teaches us that the early church put equal emphasis on both. The Foundations Conference is our attempt to bring into sharp focus the importance of both prayer and the ministry of the Word. We intentionally try to invite speakers from a broad spectrum of backgrounds while within the confines of Biblical orthodoxy and conservative convictions.

What is the united prayer meeting and who is it for?

The United Prayer meeting was born in response to a little booklet written by Jonathan Edwards called, *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth*. This title pretty much sums up the purpose of our United Prayer meetings. It is a humble attempt to promote agreement and union among God's people in prayer that goes beyond our "normal" prayers and specifically focuses on the revival of religion and the advancement of the Gospel throughout the world. You can learn more about this here: www.sermonaudio.com/unitedprayer

Is there anything in particular you would like us to pray for?

Please pray that we would stay humble so as to be used of the Lord to play a part in the fulfilment of Matthew 24:14 and Habakkuk 2:14. We believe in the God of the impossible, and we want to be a living testament to that fact.



A BETTER COUNTRY



“But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country” (Hebrews 11:16)

One of the issues which has dominated British politics over recent years is immigration, both legal and illegal. In terms of legal immigration, critics of Brexit sought to portray leave voters as xenophobes who wanted to raise the drawbridge to those who desired to enter our country. In reality, most supporters of Brexit simply wanted the freedom to implement immigration policies suitable for our own country. The EU ideal of the free movement of people no longer found sufficient support. A new system was preferred - a points based system - which swapped low skilled EU migrants for high skilled migrants drawn from throughout the world. As expected, movement from the EU has since fallen and migration from elsewhere in the world has significantly increased.

The issue of illegal immigration was brought to the fore two years ago when a prominent politician recorded boatloads of migrants crossing the English Channel illegally in the hope of claiming asylum. Most of them appear to be undocumented young men. It came to light that many of the boats were escorted by the French into British waters, and, in turn, the British government were failing to implement our own border controls. This has left Britain wide open to illegal immigration and has encouraged many to attempt the perilous journey across the Channel. These journeys are generally facilitated by criminal gangs in overcrowded dinghies which are highly unsuitable for the voyage. Sadly, many lives have been lost in attempting to make this treacherous crossing. This issue, which was initially ignored by the mainstream media, has now become a very visible problem. This has been particularly highlighted by the British government’s proposal to deter crossings by sending illegal migrants to Rwanda for processing.

It is strange that there are many living in Britain today who seek to decry everything about British culture and heritage, whilst on the other hand many throughout the rest of the world see things quite differently. Many are willing to risk their lives to reach our shores, considering Britain, in their estimation, a better country.

BETTER THAN THIS WORLD

For the Christian, we ought also to desire a better country, one that is not merely restricted to the here and now. In Hebrews 11 we read of the faith of, amongst others, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. These were all exceedingly rich men for God had blessed them abundantly. Nevertheless, their desire wasn’t fixated upon their earthly riches. They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims here on the earth (Hebrews 11:13) and their desire was for their inheritance, a heavenly country (Hebrews 11:16).

Whilst we cannot answer many of our questions about heaven, we can say with certainty from what the Scriptures have revealed to us that it will be far better than any life to be lived on earth. Why is heaven better than this world? The best that the world has to offer is fleeting, be that wealth, fame, esteem or any of the passing pleasures of sin (Hebrews 11:25). In fact, even our time here on earth is fleeting, as the Scriptures tell us that “we spend our years as a tale that is told” (Psalm 90:9).

It has been noted that there is not one reference in the whole of the Bible to believers going ‘to heaven’, when

they die. Rather they go to be 'with Christ.' For instance, Jesus said to the thief on the cross, "assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). Likewise, the Apostle Paul's desire was, "to depart and be with Christ" (Philippians 1:23). Therefore to be in heaven is to be with Christ. Christ is the focal point of heaven, as we read of "the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne" (Revelation 7:17)

There will be no sin in heaven for "there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles" (Revelation 21:27). Therefore, there will be no anger, hatred, greed, hypocrisy, violence, lying, lust, drunkenness or sin of any sort. What a thought it is – so difficult for us to comprehend – still in the body of this death - that we will have no desire whatsoever to sin. Furthermore, there will be no more cause for suffering at all for "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

Therefore, heaven will be a place of indescribable joy as Jonathan Edwards, the 18th century preacher, proclaimed: "what joy will there be, springing up in the hearts of the saints, after they have passed through their wearisome pilgrimage, to be brought to such a paradise as this! Here is joy unspeakable indeed, and full of glory."

That is why we ought to sing with the Psalmist, "one thing I of the Lord desired, and will seek to obtain, that all days of my life I may within God's house remain" (Psalm 27:4).

BETTER IN THIS WORLD

If heaven is our inheritance, it ought to affect how we live our lives and to give our lives purpose. If we know the way to heaven and we are journeying towards that better country, knowing that one day we will reach our destination, what joy we ought to have in this life, knowing that a better country awaits. All the trials and tribulations in this life, however grievous they may be, are nothing in comparison as we live our lives in the light of eternity.

If we find ourselves on a long arduous journey and we see our destination on the horizon does it not quicken our steps and boost our spirits? Likewise, meditation on the glories of heaven provides vistas of that awaiting and better country. Yet we are often guilty of neglecting to think upon heaven as we ought, preoccupied as we are with this world. Richard Baxter, in his book *the Saints Everlasting Rest* states that our eternal rest in the better country ought to be the subject of our conversation, especially with those who can speak from their hearts about it: "It is a pity that Christians should ever meet together without some talk of their meeting in heaven, or of the way to it, before they part."

We know the expression that there are those who are too heavenly minded to be of any earthly use. In reality, the only way we can truly be of any earthly good is to be heavenly minded as we set our minds "on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2). To be heavenly minded is to love God's Word: "O how love I thy law! it is my study all the day" (Psalm 19:97). To be heavenly minded serves to defend ourselves against temptation and to say with Joseph: "how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God" (Genesis 39:9). To be heavenly minded is to be a lively Christian, better equipped for evangelism and more useful to others: to "gladly spend and be spent" (2 Corinthians 12:15). To be heavenly minded is to seek out those who are on the same journey as us, so again we can sing with the Psalmist: "I am companion to all those who fear, and thee obey" (Psalm 119:63). To be heavenly minded is to recognise that we are strangers and pilgrims (Hebrews 11:13), realising that we are strangers to the world, but not to the Lord. CH Spurgeon noted that David's words in Psalm 39:12 were, "a very singular expression, *a stranger with Thee*. Blessed be God, not a stranger to thee, but *a stranger with thee*."

BETTER ETERNALLY

Sadly, some of those who sought to cross the English Channel in such unsuitable vessels met their demise. In this life we will reach a haven or make shipwreck of our lives. We must realise that, without Christ, we will

meet our eternal demise, with no hope of us ever reaching this better country. The roadmap to heaven is before us, as Christ said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

There are vast numbers today who live their lives without Christ and have no intention whatsoever of planning for the eternity that awaits. What are your plans for next week? What are your plans for next year? Many would be able to readily answer these questions. Have you made your plans for eternity? How few are ready for eternity.

Consider the Parable of the Rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16. The rich man had all that the world had to offer, whilst Lazarus, the beggar, had nothing. Yet, when they died, where did they find themselves eternally? There was a great gulf fixed between Lazarus in heaven and the rich man in hell. They were past the point of no return. Don't take it for granted that you are on the road to heaven if there is no evidence in your life that you are united to Christ. Without Christ, there is no hope of heaven, so we must come to Him now, for time and eternity. He is the Captain of salvation and there is much room yet in the ship of Redemption.

Jonathan Edwards, *Charity and Its Fruits*, P.352

Richard Baxter, *The Saints Everlasting Rest*, P.327

Scott Maciver

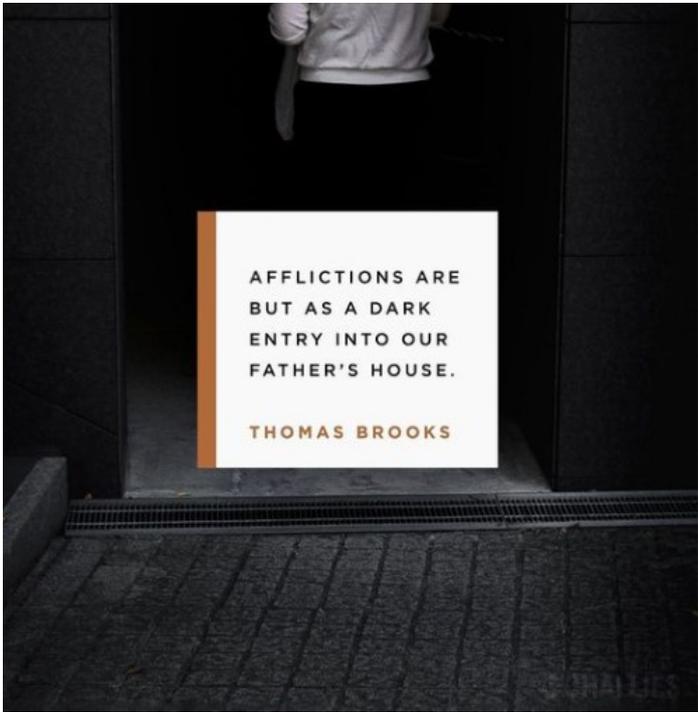




The more of heaven
there is in our lives,
the less of earth we shall covet.

C.H. Spurgeon

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AFFLICTIONS ARE
BUT AS A DARK
ENTRY INTO OUR
FATHER'S HOUSE.

THOMAS BROOKS



HOPE

c a n s e e

HEAVEN

through the thickest clouds.

—THOMAS BROOKS

THE PEACE AND COMFORT OF ASSURANCE



Assurance is to be desired, because of the present comfort and peace it affords.

Doubts and fears have power to spoil much of the happiness of a true believer in Christ. Uncertainty and suspense are bad enough in any condition,—in the matter of our health, our property, our families, our affections, our earthly callings,—but never so bad as in the affairs of our souls. And so long as a believer cannot get beyond "I hope" and "I trust," he manifestly feels a degree of uncertainty about his spiritual state. The very words imply as much. He says, "I hope," because he dares not say, "I know."

Now assurance goes far to set a child of God free from this painful kind of bondage, and thus ministers mightily to his comfort. It enables him to feel that the great business of life is a settled business, the great debt a paid debt, the great disease a healed disease, and the great work a finished work; and all other business, diseases, debts, and works, are then by comparison small. In this way assurance makes him patient in tribulation, calm under bereavements, unmoved in sorrow, not afraid of evil tidings; in every condition content, for it gives him a FIXEDNESS of heart. It sweetens his bitter cups, it lessens the burden of his crosses, it smoothes the rough places over which he travels, and it lightens the valley of the shadow of death. It makes him always feel that he has something solid beneath his feet, and something firm under his hands,—a sure friend by the way, and a sure home at the end.

Assurance will help a man to bear poverty and loss. It will teach him to say, "I know that I have in heaven a better and more enduring substance. Silver and gold have I none, but grace and glory are mine, and these can never make themselves wings and flee away. Though the fig tree shall not blossom, yet I will rejoice in the Lord." (Habak. 3:17-18.)

Assurance will support a child of God under the heaviest bereavements, and assist him to feel "It is well." An assured soul will say, "Though beloved ones are taken from me, yet Jesus is the same, and is alive for evermore. Though my house be not as flesh and blood could wish, yet I have an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." (2 Kings 4:26; Heb. 13:8; 2 Sam. 23:5.)

Assurance will enable a man to praise God, and be thankful, even in a prison, like Paul and Silas at Philippi. It can give a believer songs even in the darkest night, and joy when all things seem going against him. (Job 21:10; Psalm 42:8.)

Assurance will enable a man to sleep with the full prospect of death on the morrow, like Peter in Herod's dungeon. It will teach him to say, "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety." (Psalm 4:8.)

Assurance can make a man rejoice to suffer shame for Christ's sake, as the Apostles did. It will remind him that he may "rejoice and be exceeding glad" (Matt. 5:12), and that there is in heaven an exceeding weight of glory that shall make amends for all. (2 Cor. 4:17.)

Assurance will enable a believer to meet a violent and painful death without fear, as Stephen did in the beginning of Christ's Church, and as Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and Taylor did in our own land. It will bring to his heart the texts, "Be not afraid of them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." (Luke 12:4) "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." (Acts 7:59.)

Assurance will support a man in pain and sickness, make all his bed, smooth down his dying pillow. It will enable him to say, "If my earthly house fail, I have a building of God." (2 Cor. 5:1.) "I desire to depart and be with Christ." (Phil. 1:23.) "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." (Psalm 73:26.)

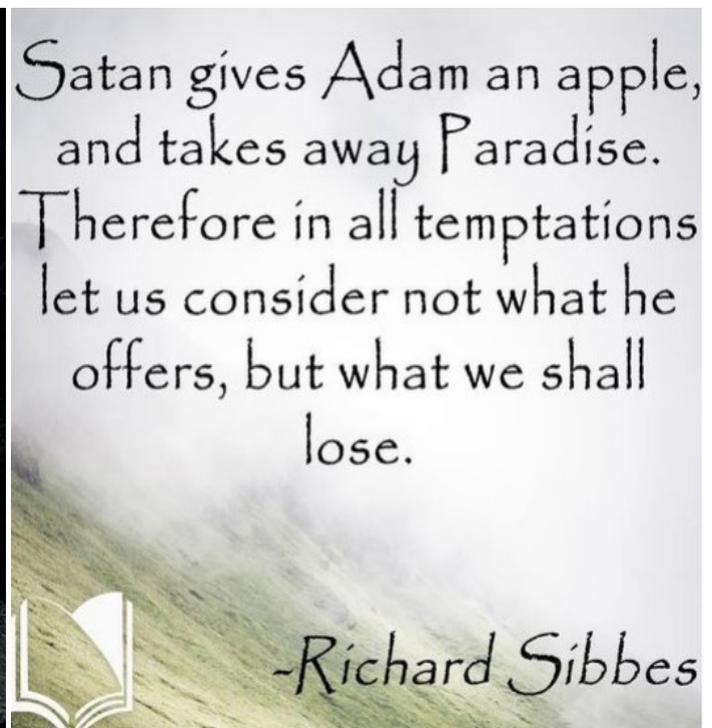
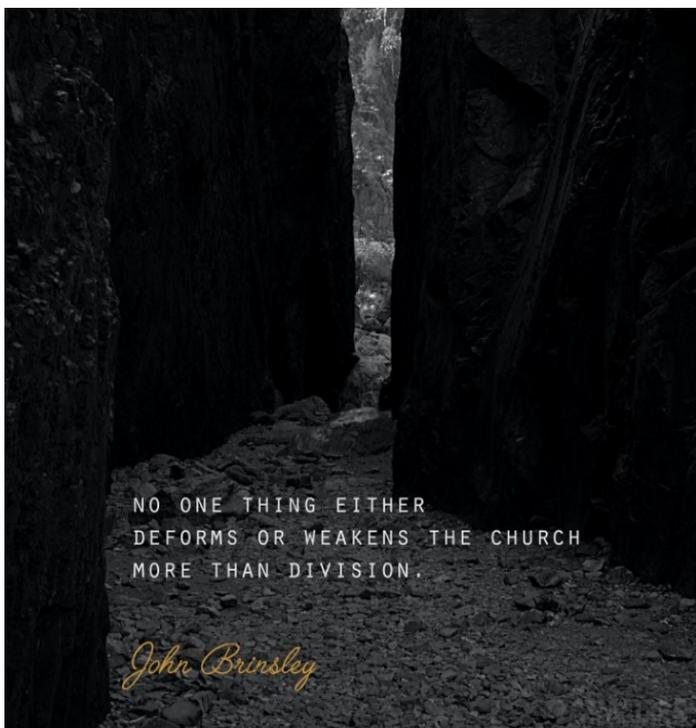
Reader, the comfort assurance can give in the hour of death is a point of great importance. Believe me, you will never think assurance so precious as when your turn comes to die.

In that awful hour, there are few believers who do not find out the value and privilege of an "assured hope," whatever they may have thought about it during their lives. General "hopes" and "trusts" are all very well to live upon, while the sun shines, and the body is strong: but when you come to die, you will want to be able to say, "I know" and "I feel."

Believe me, Jordan is a cold stream, and we have to cross it alone. No earthly friend can help us. The last enemy, even death, is a strong foe. When our souls are departing there is no cordial like the strong wine of assurance.

When the eyes grow dim, and the heart grows faint, and the spirit is on the eve of departing, there must then be knowing and feeling what Christ has done for us, or else there cannot be perfect peace.

JC Ryle



Children's Corner



Dear Children

I am writing these words to you as we celebrate 70 years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. Although I was born before her coronation in 1953 I do not remember much of that event. We had no television at home in those days and neither did we have one in school. All we knew about it was just seeing her picture in the newspaper and even that was not in colour. The world has changed so much in these 70 years. One thing I do remember is that we were all given a small blue New Testament commemorating her coronation.

God's Word was at the heart of her coronation service and, according to her own confession, has been at the heart of her life all these years. The Archbishop of Canterbury at that time was Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher. It was his duty to give her spiritual preparation for her very important role as Sovereign. He wrote *A Little Book of Private Devotions* for her to use. This consisted of short daily meditations with Bible readings and prayers which she was to use for 33 days leading to the day of her coronation. The first of these was a prayer found in Psalm 25: **Shew me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long.**

That is a prayer that is fit not just for a Queen but for each one of us. How can God shew us His ways and teach us His paths? Well, He has revealed that to us in His Holy Scriptures. That is where we will find these ways and paths. It is our duty, therefore, to search the Scriptures each day for we need daily advice and guidance for our life and who best to give it to us than our Creator. Whenever you buy a new gadget or appliance it is extremely important that you read the maker's instructions that come with it. The same is true for each of our lives. We need to acquaint ourselves with our Maker's instructions!

In the Scriptures you will find out that you are a sinner who sins daily in 'thought, word and deed' but there you will also find that God has provided a Saviour, His own Son the Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver us from our sins by His death on the cross. Is it enough to know these truths? No, we need to believe them, and, believing them, we need to trust in the Lord Jesus as our own personal Saviour, commit our hearts and lives to Him and follow Him all the days of our life.

During the coronation ceremony the Queen was presented with many gifts covered with jewels and diamonds but first of all she was presented with the Holy Bible which was described as "the most valuable thing this world affords" (or can give) because, as Archbishop Fisher said "it reveals (or shows) God to the world". We are told that the Queen's grandmother, Lady Strathearn, spent an hour every day reading the Bible to her family, one of whom was the Queen Mother. The Queen Mother then read Bible stories to her two little girls, Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret, and taught them to pray. We are also told that they started their weekly school lessons with half an hour of Bible reading and that they had to attend church every week. Queen Elizabeth has followed this practice too and she is said to keep a well-read Bible beside her bed. That is an excellent practice which we too should follow.

Although the practice of church attendance and daily Bible Reading is good we must remember that we need more than an outward practice. We need to believe and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as our own personal Saviour in order to be certain of our place in heaven for as David says in Psalm 34: "None perish who trust in Him." We need to have a loving and living relationship with Him. We need to listen to what He has to say to us, obey Him, speak to Him about all that concerns us and know that He has loved us with an everlasting love and that dying on the cross to save us from our sins is proof of that. I pray that you will know and trust in this Saviour and dedicate your lives to Him.

12 May God bless each one of you.

With my love

Granny M