



STORNOWAY
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

November/December 2022



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,

Recently, we considered Christ preaching the gospel in Capernaum and casting a demon out of someone who was present in the congregation (Luke 4: 31-37). Among ourselves, this gave rise to several questions and considerable discussion about demons and perhaps I can use this medium to put across a little more on this theme and, strange as it may seem, we should begin by considering angels.

Angels are an order of beings that can be described as created, rational and disembodied spirits. Whenever we think of them, we usually think of those of them who are 'elect angels' (1 Timothy 5: 21) who serve God (Isaiah 6: 2-3) and who, mysteriously and wonderfully, and as a part of that willing and humble service which they offer to God, serve redeemed humanity (Hebrews 1: 14).

However, it is sobering to remember that there is another category of angels spoken of in the Bible. They, like the rest, were created, rational, disembodied spirits and, again like the rest, they were created holy and good (for God cannot create anything except what is good). However, and this time unlike the rest, they are now distinguished by the fact that they are morally and spiritually perverted and malevolent. While they are still referred to sometimes as 'angels' (Matthew 25: 41), they are more often referred to in the New Testament as 'demons' or 'devils'. Demons, then, are simply angels who, sadly like us, have fallen from their original holiness into a state of sin. So, unpleasant as it is, we need to think for a time on the reality of angelic life as it exists on the dark side of God's creation.

At the head of these angels stands the 'Prince of the power of the air' (Ephesians 2:2 – Satan, who is also known by many other names or descriptive titles such as 'Dragon', 'Serpent', 'Devil' (Revelation 12:9), 'Lucifer' (Isaiah 14:12), and 'the God of this world' (2 Corinthians 4:4).

Originally created in holiness, Satan became the first creature to sin when, in pride, he exalted himself against God (Luke 10:18 – in context – along with 1 Timothy 3:6). Sadly, his sinful pride proved to be infectious with the result that one third of the angelic order became infected with him (Revelation 12:4). This sinful pride revealed itself in heaven in the form of a vast angelic rebellion, led by Satan, against the authority of the Triune God which led to the expulsion of these fallen angels from heaven (Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4). These angels, including Satan at their head, know themselves to be on borrowed time (Revelation 12: 12) and their destination to be the abyss (Luke 8:31).

It is these fallen angels, of differing ranks and powers and with Satan at their head, which constitute the 'principalities and powers' that are waging spiritual warfare against us as Christians (Ephesians 6: 12). Now, in this warfare there are several things to note regarding our enemies.

First, we note their *objective*. Since this is a war which Satan cannot win (Revelation 12:12), his objective – in anticipation of defeat – is to do as much damage as he can to the work of the God he hates. Sometimes, in the ancient world, new rulers would often begin their proud reign by trying to deface all the monuments or written references to the greatness of other rulers who had come before them (we saw an example of this recently in our studies in Exodus, in connection with the nationalistic Pharaohs of the 18th Egyptian dynasty). Similarly, Satan will try to destroy or, at the very least, maim or cripple, to the fullest extent possible, whatever or whoever bears God's name.

Second, we note their *motive*. Their motive lies, simply, in a fierce and unmitigated hatred of God. It is in this sense that the Devil was, as Christ tells us, 'a murderer from the beginning' – that is, hating, and therefore murdering God in his heart – see Matthew 5:22). And, morally and spiritually, there is nothing good left in him: 'there is no truth in him...he is a liar and the father of it' (John 8:44). It is this proud hatred which leads both him and his followers to wage war against God's creation as a whole, against man made in his image and, more particularly, against Christians who are being renewed in the image of Christ and who are heirs of all that Satan doubtlessly saw as his right and entitlement (Matthew 4: 9).

2 **Third**, we note their *methods*. Paul warns us against the 'wiles' (schemes) of the Devil (Ephesians 6:11) and, like Paul, we need to make sure that we are 'not ignorant of his devices (strategies/methods)' (2 Corinthians 2:11). Their goal is to lead us into the same sinful rebellion against God and, to achieve that goal, they will use every psychological weapon at their disposal. Two worthy of mention are, first, the weapon of deception: they specialise in deception by constructing a 'virtual reality' where sin is not just attractive but always rewarding (see 2 Corinthians 11:3 along with Genesis 3:1-5 and Matthew 4:1-11 and, perhaps especially,

2 Corinthians 11:14,15 where we discover that Satan – and his messengers – can appear as an ‘angel of light’; second, they specialise in slander and accusation: Satan is called the ‘accuser of the brethren’ (Revelation 12:10 and Zechariah 3:1 and Job 1 and 2). Satan does this by accusing us to God, God to us, us to others, others to us and us to ourselves.

Fourth, we note their commitment. This warfare against God’s kingdom is being prosecuted all the time. There is no rest – they never let up. When Satan appears before God (Job 1:6-12 and 2:1-6), he makes plain that his ‘ministry’ is conducted on the earth and consists in ‘going to and fro’ on it and ‘walking back and forth on it’. This carries the idea of a constant, determined effort to hinder, spoil or destroy the work of God. Peter picks up on this, in the New Testament, when he calls us to be ‘vigilant’ (on the look-out) because our ‘adversary the Devil walks about like a lion, seeking whom he may devour’ (1 Peter 5:8). Simply put, *we* need to be vigilant all the time because *he* is vigilant all the time.

Fifth, we note their success. Satan is not, of course, everywhere (omnipresent), all-powerful (omnipotent) or all-knowing (omniscient) but, nonetheless, he marshals his legions effectively. And, in wielding their weapons, Satan and his legions are highly experienced and extremely clever with the result that thousands fall all the time in this spiritual battlefield (Psalm 91:7). People profess Christ and fall away – because the Devil defeated them! Christians commit grievous sin and while they suffer for it themselves, others also see and turn away from the faith or become discouraged – because the Devil defeated them! So, even if he does not win the cosmic war, he leaves a fearful, cosmic trail of destruction.

In this warfare, since you are not on the dark side but on the side of the light (1 John 1:5-7), everything is entirely opposite as far as you are concerned:

Your *objective* is to ‘win Christ and be found in him’ (Philippians 2:8,9), to ‘conquer (Romans 8: 37) and to ‘overcome’ (Revelation 2:7); your *motive* is not hatred but love, ‘for the love of Christ compels us’ (2 Corinthians 5:14); your *strategy* is truth and purity, ‘not walking in craftiness’ (2 Corinthians 4:2), ‘speaking the truth in love’ (Ephesians 4:15) ‘doing good to all men’ (Galatians 6:10) and fighting with weapons which ‘are not carnal’ (2 Corinthians 10:4) but spiritual: the ‘belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, gospel shoes, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit – and prayer’ (Ephesians 6:10-18); your *commitment* is total, not fighting ‘as someone who beats the air’ (1 Corinthians 9:26) and, at the last, your *success* is assured because ‘your labour is not in vain’ (1 Corinthians 15:58) and ‘the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly’ (Romans 16:20) and a heavenly crown of the victor awaits you (2 Timothy 4:8).

Finally – *be warned!* The greatest mistake you can make in connection with the Devil and his angels is to fail to take their existence seriously enough and, thereby, underestimate their power. Make no mistake, their malevolent power is utterly awful to contemplate and only the greater power of the Holy Spirit working in your life can overcome it. The consequences of fighting this warfare in your own strength are truly devastating for yourself and for others. May the Lord help all of us to fight daily, armed with the whole armour of God (Ephesians 6: 10-20).

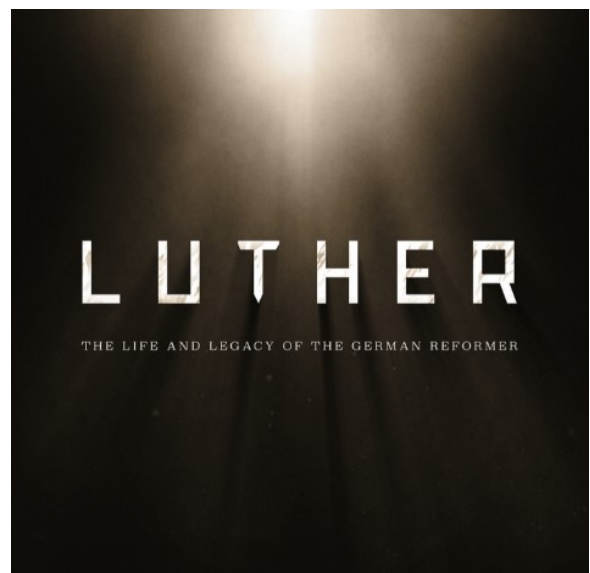
Your minister

NEWS & EVENTS

THE LUTHER DOCUMENTARY

More than five hundred years ago, Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the Castle Church door in Wittenberg. Little did he know how the Lord would use him to ignite a movement that would change the world.

You can stream *Luther: The Life and Legacy of the German Reformer* for free on [Ligonier’s YouTube channel](#). Watch to remember the events God used in Luther’s life that led him to rediscover the gospel of justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

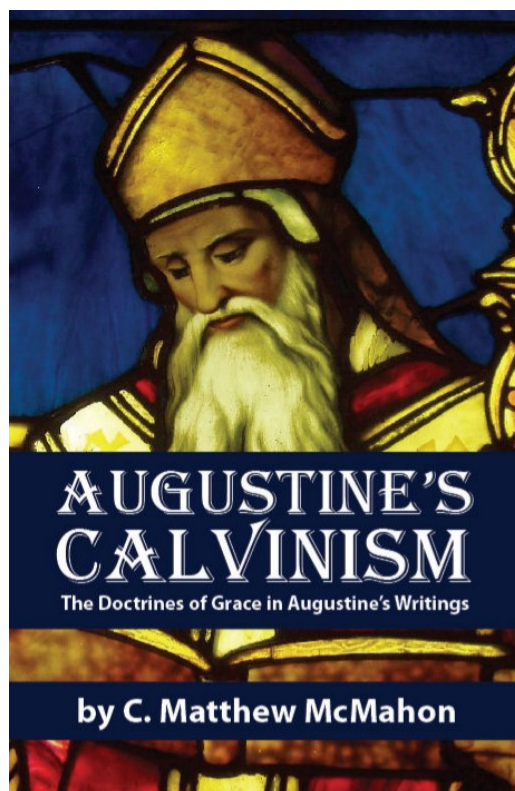


John Maynard (1600-1665) was a faithful member of the Westminster Assembly, and a courageous preacher of Christ's Gospel.

The truth of God is the foundation of all true religion. This is why the first commandment in Exodus 20, in order to love God with all your heart, soul and mind, is to have no other gods before him, and to take God as your God, in the way God has revealed himself. God has deposited his truth, his will, his word, into the hands of the church (into the very heart of the church). It has been delivered to them. "...that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," (Jude 1:3).

Maynard's exposition of the "truth" comes from Proverbs 23:23, "Buy the truth and sell it not." He gives two propositions that serve as his doctrines: 1.) An affirmative, or precept, Buy Truth, and, 2.) A negative, or prohibition, Sell it not. In this, Maynard shows 1. What is this Truth which we are required to buy? 2. What does it mean to buy Truth? 3. From whom must it be bought? 4. Why is this purchase necessary?

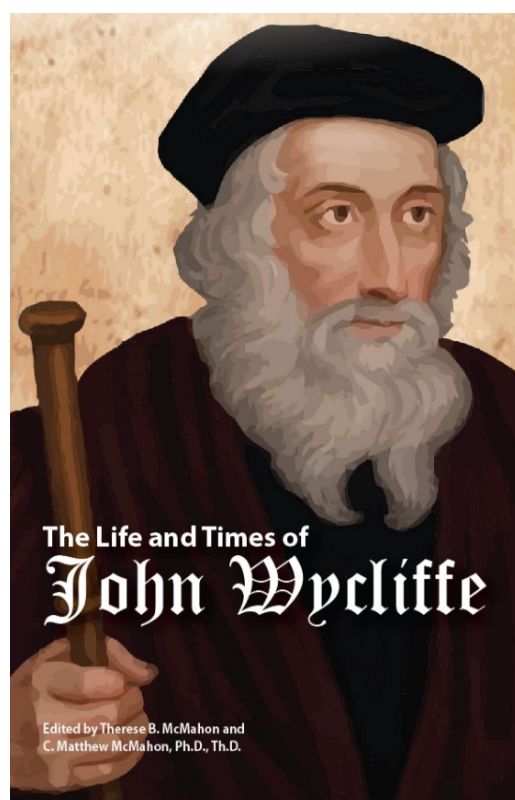
In his second address, he covers Philippians 3:21, "According to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." He will argue for Christ's kingship, that the work and merit of the Saviour is both a current reality in subduing his enemies, and a future reality in its completion. In light of this, he argues that if the Lord has honoured you by adopting you into his family, it behooves you to render your absolute service to the King of heaven. Not only that you would see the delights surrounding the cross of Christ, but also the wonders surrounding the crown of the King. Not only that you would love the sweet Saviour, but also that you would heed his commands and his truth as the commanding King.



This excellent biography is a helpful treatment of the Reformer John Wycliffe (1320-1384) which has been lost for over 100 years. Wycliffe was an English scholastic philosopher, theologian, Biblical translator, reformer, and seminary professor at Oxford. Though there have been some biographical articles published about Wycliffe, there is not much more given except by way of short biographies for children or small sections in larger historical works. This volume appears as a complete biography of Wycliffe and will aid the reader in seeing his lasting influences that we, as Christians, even experience today.

4 Significantly, Wycliffe was the first reformer to take the Bible and place it in the hands of the English laity. This event alone is a hallmark moment in Reformation history.

Both books can be purchased in print or eBook format at www.puritanpublications.com



THE TRUE REFORMERS



Semper reformanda has been hijacked. It is one of the more abused, misused, and misunderstood slogans of our day. Progressives have captured and mutilated the seventeenth-century motto and have demanded that our theology, our churches, and our confessions be always changing in order to conform to our ever-changing culture. However, semper reformanda doesn't mean what they think it means.

Semper reformanda doesn't mean "always changing," "always morphing," or even "always reforming." Rather, it means "always being reformed." When it was first used, semper reformanda was part of the larger statement *ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda* (the church reformed and always being reformed). To make the statement more clear, the phrase *secundum verbum Dei* (according to the Word of God) was later added, making the statement "The church reformed and always being reformed according to the Word of God." It grew out of a pastoral concern that we as God's people would always be reformed by God's Word—that our theology would not be merely theoretical knowledge but that our theology would be known, loved, and practiced in all of life. Simply put, that our reformed theology according to God's Word would be always reforming our lives.

Fundamentally, Reformed theology is theology founded on and fashioned by God's Word. For it is God's Word that forms our theology, and it is we who are reformed by that theology as we constantly return to God's Word every day and in every generation. At its core, this is what the sixteenth-century Reformation was all about, and it's what being Reformed is all about—confessing and practicing what God's Word teaches. God's Word and God's Spirit reform the church. That said, mere men are not the true reformers, but rather they are stewards and servants of God's reformation.

In this sense, Martin Luther, John Calvin, and others were not reformers. Luther and Calvin did not boldly set out to reform the church; they humbly submitted to the reforming truth of the Word and the reforming power of the Spirit. The Word and the Spirit reformed the church in the sixteenth century, and they have been reforming the church ever since. Luther and Calvin were the ones who helped point the church back to Scripture, and Scripture alone, as the infallible authority for faith and life.

The Reformation isn't over, nor will it ever be over, because reformation—God's Word and God's Spirit reforming His church—will never end. God's Word is always powerful and God's Spirit is always working to renew our minds, transform our hearts, and change our lives. Therefore, the people of God, the church, will be always "being reformed" according to the unchanging Word of God, not according to our ever-changing culture.

DIRECTIONS FOR PROFITABLE SCRIPTURE READING

“It shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them” (Deuteronomy 17:19)

1. “If you would profit by reading, remove those things that will hinder your profiting.”

Such as “the love of every sin”, which acts as poison to our souls and neutralizes the medicine of the Word we take by reading (pg.115). Watson urges us to remove “those thorns which will choke the Word read”, such as, the cares of this world (covetousness), which can cause us to be so taken up in our minds with secular employments that we “can scarce find time to read”, and even when we do, our eyes will be “upon the Bible” but our hearts “upon the world.”

2. “If you would profit, prepare your hearts before the reading of the Word.”

Watson adds that “the heart is an instrument which needs to be put in tune.” To do so we must summon “our thoughts together to attend to the solemn work we are going about.” We are not reading the morning paper, or our friend’s Twitter feed, but God’s holy and infallible Word, given for our eternal benefit.

3. “Read the Scriptures with reverence; think about every line you read; God is speaking to you.”

When a person of great importance speaks with us we give them our full and undivided attention. How much more when the Lord of Glory is speaking to us about matters of our salvation!

4. “Read the books of Scripture in order.”

Watson adds, “Order is a help to memory. We do not begin a friend’s letter in the middle.” Whatever reading plan you employ, starting in Genesis and reading through Revelation in order is always an easy one to follow.

5. “Get a right understanding of Scripture”

The psalmist prayed, “Give me understanding, that I may learn Thy commandments.” (Ps. 119:73)

Understanding the words on the page as English is not enough, we must understand their meaning. We must not only read what God says, but comprehend it. “The knowledge of the sense of the Scriptures”, writes Watson, “is the first step to profit. In the law, Aaron was first to light the lamps and then to burn the incense; the lamp of the understanding must be first lighted before the affections can be inflamed ... Without knowledge the Scripture is a sealed book.” We obtain understanding of Scripture’s meaning by “comparing Scriptures [with other Scriptures], by conferring with others, [and] by using the best commentaries.”

6. “Read the Word with seriousness.”

We cannot expect to profit from the Word if we casually and cursorily read it, as one might meander through the articles in a magazine at a doctor’s office. We must read them with seriousness, acknowledging the importance of what we are reading. The Word is not an invitation to a third grader’s birthday party, but an invitation to eternal life. “Some of have light, feathery spirits”, says Watson, “they run over the most weighty truths [in Scripture] with haste.” Many people attempt to see how much they can read or how quickly they can read it rather than to see how much they can comprehend or how quickly they can apply it. Watson tells us that the remedy is to read “with a solemn, composed spirit.”

7. “Labour to remember what you read.”

Satan labours to take the Word from our mind the moment it enters. We must labor to retain it. Watson rights, “If the Word stays not in the memory, it cannot profit.” Watson’s next comment could not be more relevant, “Some can better remember a piece of news than a line of Scripture.” Be as the Psalmist, “I remembered Thy judgments of old.” (Ps. 119:52)

8. “Meditate upon what you read.”

Again, the Psalmist serves as an example, “I will meditate in Thy precepts.” (Ps. 119:15) “In meditation there must be a fixing of the thoughts upon the object” writes Watson. We must fix our minds upon what the Scriptures say and then turn them over in our heart until they meld with our spirit. “Reading brings a truth into our heart, meditation brings it into our heart.” Watson concludes this section with these words, “Meditation is the bellows of the affection. ‘While I was musing the fire burned.’ (Ps. 39:3) The reason we come away so cold from reading the Word is because we do not warm ourselves at the fire of meditation.” Do not simply take the Scriptures into your mind by reading, but into your heart by meditation and into your hands by practice.

9. “Come to the reading of the Scripture with humble hearts.”

Watson says that we must “acknowledge how unworthy [we] are that God should reveal Himself in His Word to [us].” Humility is the key to exaltation. Those who are taken highest in Spiritual attainments are those who realize how low they are. David had, “more understanding than all my teachers” (Ps. 119:99); but he was humble, “I am a worm, and no man.” (Ps. 22:6)

10. “Give credence to the Word written.”

In other words, believe it. Do not stand skeptically over it, but believingly under it. “Believe it to be of God,” says Watson, “see the name of God in every line.” He exhorts us to, “believe the Scriptures to be divinely inspired (2Tim. 3:16). Who but God could reveal the great doctrines of the Trinity, the atonement of Jesus Christ for sinners, the resurrection? Whence should the Scriptures come if not from God?” Unbelief destroys the effectuality of the Word read and causes us to profit nothing from it. “If you will profit by the Word, you must believe it to be of God. Some skeptics question the verity of Scripture; they have the articles of religion in their creed, but not in their belief.” Remember, that the Israelites in the wilderness perished because they did not believe, “The Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith.” (Heb. 4:2)

11. “Highly prize the Scriptures.”

David declared, “The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.” (Ps. 119:72) What greater possession have we as Christians than God’s Word? It is better to lose a kingdom than the Scriptures. The Scriptures are the breeder and feeder of our graces, the hope and strength of our faith. What else do we have but Christ, and where else do we meet Christ but in the pages of Scripture?

12. “Get an ardent love to the Word.”

“Consider how I love Thy precepts.” (Ps. 119:159) He who loves his business shall have great success in it. He who loves his study will master his subject. Watson writes, “The Spirit is God’s love token; the Word, His love letter; how doth one rejoice to read over his friend’s letter! The Word written is a divine treasury or storehouse; in it is truth scattered as pearls to adorn the inner man of the heart. The Word written is the true manna which has all sorts of sweet taste in it; it is a sovereign elixir; it gives wine to them of a heavy heart.” The Bible is our only comfort, our best guide. David said, “This is my comfort in my affliction: for Thy Word hath quickened me.” (Ps. 119:50)

13. “Come to the reading of the Word with honest hearts.”

Namely, to come to the Word with a heart “willing to know the whole counsel of God. A good heart would not have any truth concealed.” We must be willing to take God at His Word, and His Word in its entirety. We cannot pick and choose what we wish to receive, but must rather receive it in whole. We must read the Word with a heart that is honest, a heart which reads that it might be made better by the reading. “The Word is a medium and method of sanctification,” says Watson, “and we come to it not only to illuminate but to consecrate us.”

14. “Learn to apply Scripture; take every word as if spoke to yourselves.”

Do not read the Scriptures with someone else in mind, thinking, “So and so would really benefit from this passage.” Rather, Watson tells us, “When the Word thunders against sin, think thus: God means my sins; when it presseth any duty, God intends me in this. Many put off Scripture from themselves, as if it concerned only those who lived in the time when it was written; but if you intend to profit by the Word, bring it home to yourselves. A medicine will do no good unless it be applied.”

15. “Observe the preceptive part of the Word, as well as the promissory.”

We must not only give attention to those portions of the Bible which give sweet promises to us, but also those parts that tell us our duty. “The precepts carry duty in them, like the veins which carry the blood; the promises carry comfort, like the arteries which carry the spirit. Make use of the precepts to direct you, the promises to comfort you.”

16. “Let your thoughts dwell upon the most material passages of Scripture.”

Although all Scripture is profitable for us, “yet some parts of it may have a greater emphasis, and be more lively and pungent.” The book of Second Chronicles, though being divinely inspired and profitable to our soul, is not equal in liveliness and application to the book of Romans. “Reading the names of the tribes or the genealogies of the patriarchs, is not of the same importance as faith and the new creature. Mind the great things of the law (Hos. 8:12). They who read only to satisfy their curiosity, do rather busy than profit themselves.”

Children's Corner



Dear Children

Now we are coming once again to the end of another year. This month will also have another ending for us because this is going to be my last letter to you in our newsletter. I have been writing to you now for eight years so it is time you had a change and have someone so much younger writing to you from now on. I am sure that these articles will be something to which you can look forward in the year to come. I want to assure you that I will not forget any of you but will continue to remember you all in my prayers. Children have always had a special place in my heart as they have had in my life over all the years that I have worked with children in School, Sabbath School, Youth Fellowship and Campaigners. Each one of you is precious to me.

I now want to leave you with the words of Ecclesiastes, chapter 12 and verse 1: “Remember **NOW** your Creator in the days of your youth.” Your young days are very precious. It is a time when you want to enjoy the best **in** life and also give your best **to** life. What is that best? It is the best that God can give you and, in return, the best you can give to God. I have been a Christian from my young days in school, trusting in the Lord as my Saviour and serving Him as my Lord. I can, therefore, wholeheartedly commend to you the Christian life and service as the very best.

Francis Ridley Havergal was a gifted Christian poetess and hymn writer who was born in 1836. She was converted at the age of 14 and wrote many beautiful pieces of poetry. My favourite one is “The Consecration Hymn” which she wrote five years before she died at the age of 42.

Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord to Thee

Take my moments and my days; let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of Thy love.

Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice and let me sing always, only, for my King.

Take my lips and let them be filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold; not a mite would I withhold.

Take my intellect and use every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will and make it Thine; it shall be no longer mine.

Take my heart, it is Thine own; it shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love, my Lord, I pour at Thy feet its treasure store.

Take myself, and I will be ever, only ALL for Thee.

The first time I read these words I felt she was expressing my own desire to serve the Lord. I pray that each one of you will also have that desire to serve the best of masters and do so as best you can with God's help.

The first question in the Shorter Catechism asks the question: **What is the chief end of man?** The answer given is: **Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.** That is our chief purpose in life and our happiness is inseparably linked to fulfilling that purpose. Ask the Lord to make you one of His own children. You will then have a friend for life and what a difference that will make! You will also be secure for time and for eternity no matter what you meet with in this world. That is the life that I wish for each one of you and that is because I know from experience that it definitely **is** the best.

The Lord bless each one of you with the blessings of salvation.

With my love and prayers.

Granny M