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THE CREED

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MARIJUANA MADNESS

by Rev. Ian Goligher

Marijuana madness is happening across North America. It's only a matter of time now before marijuana is legalized in Canada, as is already the case in Colorado, California, and several other American states. This is an alarming turn of events which flies in the face of its shady history and scientific evidence which show long-term harm to consumers of the "weed."

The Liberal government in Canada, led by left-wing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, voted to legalize the public sale of marijuana on November 27, 2017. This bill is now before the Senate, whose members show little interest in obstructing its implementation across Canada. We fear that many have set their sights on the lucrative taxes they plan to impose on its consumption.

Individual provinces in Canada have been given until July 2018 to have their plans in place for its public sale. Most provinces are choosing to make it available through licensed liquor boards. Meanwhile, growers and wholesalers are madly competing for market share as they position themselves to gain from the massive profits anticipated from an exponential increase in the use of marijuana for medical and recreational purposes.

It is blatantly obvious that giving unrestricted access to marijuana is madness. While Members of Parliament (MPs) deliberated and voted for its legislation, warnings of marijuana's harm were posted on the Government of Canada's website. These warnings are still being posted while they continue to proceed with implementing the sale of marijuana.

Health Canada's website warns:

"Contrary to popular belief, people can

become addicted to cannabis. Individuals who use cannabis can develop a cannabis-use disorder, which at its extreme can result in addiction. Continued, frequent and heavy cannabis use can cause physical dependency and addiction.

Research has shown that THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) in cannabis causes an increase in levels of dopamine, the pleasure chemical, in the brain. This motivates people to keep using it.

Addiction can develop at any age, but youth are especially vulnerable as their brains are still developing. Some people are also more prone to becoming addicted than others. It's estimated that one in eleven (9%) of cannabis users will develop an addiction to it. This statistic rises to about one in six (17%) for people who started using cannabis as a teenager. If a person smokes cannabis daily, the risk of addiction is 25% to 50%.

Problematic cannabis use can include some or all of the following behaviours:

- failing to fulfill major duties at work, school or home
- giving up important social, occupational or recreational activities because of cannabis use
- consuming it often and in larger amounts or over a longer period than they intended
- being unable to cut down on or control cannabis use

People who display most or all of these behaviors over a 12-month period may have cannabis addiction.

Some people can develop a tolerance to the effects of cannabis. Tolerance is characterized by a need for a larger dose of a drug to maintain the original effects. Tolerance to

some of the effects of cannabis can develop after a few doses. In some people, tolerance can eventually lead to physical dependence and addiction."

There is also an abundance of literature on American government sites highlighting the dangers of marijuana use. Nora D. Volkow, M.D., director of the *American National Institute on Drug Abuse*, warned the public against the unwarranted use of marijuana.

"Because marijuana impairs short-term memory and judgment and distorts perception, it can impair performance in school or at work and make it dangerous to drive. It also affects brain systems that are still maturing through young adulthood, so regular use by teens may have negative and long-lasting effects on their cognitive development, putting them at a competitive disadvantage and possibly interfering with their well-being in other ways. Also, contrary to popular belief, marijuana can be addictive, and its use during adolescence may make other forms of problem use or addiction more likely."

Knowing the widespread harm caused by marijuana, any government that legalizes its sale for recreational use is acting irresponsibly. Remember that today's product is many times stronger than its earlier forms. Since the 1960s, when scientists made breakthrough discoveries on how to extract the drug for its THC, value, the strength of each gram of marijuana prepared for sale has multiplied. The higher the THC content, the more growers can charge for their product. We tremble, therefore, for the future of our nations as marijuana sales escalate along with its potency.

Any right-thinking person will avoid this current madness. Christians especially, who trust the Lord for their good health and sound mind, have strong reasons to avoid marijuana use altogether. Knowing then the physical and mental harm this drug causes, let us remember the exhortation of the apostle Paul: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"



AN ENCOUNTER AT THE EMPTY TOMB

John 20:1-18

Of all the doctrines within God's Word, there is none more vital to the peace and joy of the believer than the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul declared that "if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14). The very success of Christ's atoning death stands or falls upon this truth, because neither His perfect life nor His sufferings and death mean anything if He didn't rise again from the dead. We are still in our sins, God is still angry with us, and the only thing that awaits us are the agonies of an eternal hell. But the Bible's teaching is emphatically clear about this. The angels told the women at the tomb, "He is not here: for He is risen, as He said."

As is true with every Biblical doctrine, simply believing it is not enough. The doctrines of the gospel must always be the basis for our experience, but it is the *experience* of those doctrines that is the principal thing. If all we ever possess is an understanding of the doctrine and a belief that it's true, but never see the effects of God's truth worked out in our lives, then all we possess is a dead orthodoxy. The apostle James put it this way, "Faith without works is dead."

While we must *believe* in the doctrine of Christ's resurrection, the great end of the doctrine is to *know personally* that He is risen, to know it by having fellowship and communion with the risen Christ and to have His life in you. As the hymn writer put it: "You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart."

Perhaps there is no better exposition of this truth than what occurred that resurrection morning between Christ and Mary Magdalene. This passage in John 20 clearly affirms the doctrine of the Lord's resurrection, but it also shows that truth worked out in the life of Mary. Before us is a very simple yet moving account of a believer who came to enjoy some very intimate, sweet communion with the risen Christ. There are four great things that arise from this very touching scene.

A GREAT PASSION

First, take a look at Mary. There she stands outside the tomb weeping profusely. What's the reason for all these tears? Christ asks, "Woman, why weepest thou?" In response, Mary utters those tender words, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." As you stand there and watch Mary weeping at the tomb, one thing is clear: she was passionate in her love for Christ. "They've taken away my Lord. He's gone. And I'll never see him again." Only a deep love for Christ would move her to such sorrow. She had lost touch with the One she loved and now there is an emptiness in her heart that only Christ can fill.

When the Lord asks her whom she seeks, she replies, "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Does that not remind you of the question asked by the Shulamite in Song of Solomon? "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" Mary, Mary! How you loved the Lord! If all you could

get was the corpse of Christ, somehow you felt it would ease your sorrow! If you could just hold His lifeless body in your arms and speak to Him again, somehow the pain wouldn't be so great.

Many years ago I saw this same deep love in my mother on the day of my father's funeral. I watched her stand over his casket as she said her last goodbye. I watched her bend down and kiss his lifeless face and saw her tears fall upon his cold cheeks. Sorrow filled her heart because she didn't want to say goodbye to the man she loved. She couldn't bear to think of life without him.

Mary felt so deeply indebted to Christ for all the love that He had shown her! This is the kind of love for Jesus that we must ask the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts. One thing is for sure: Christ is worth loving, and He is worth missing when we've lost touch with Him. It is when our hearts grow cold in love toward the Savior that we get used to living without Him, without a sense of His presence. We get used to living without hearing Him speak to us through His Word. We get used to our cold, dead, empty lives. Pray for grace to love Him more!

A GREAT PERPLEXITY

Notice that Christ did not immediately reveal Himself to Mary. He let her go on in her sorrow and tears for a while. Why did He do that? It certainly couldn't be because He didn't love her! Mark tells us that she was given the privilege of being the very first one to see the risen Christ! If the Lord Jesus loved Mary and if He really wanted her to be full of joy and not full of sorrow, why did He let her go on in her sorrow for a time?

That question brings us to the mysterious ways of Christ to deepen the spiritual lives of His people. In Matthew 15 we read the account of that broken-hearted Canaanite woman coming to the Lord and pleading with Him to heal her demon-possessed daughter. But Christ “answered her not a word.” He seemed to turn a deaf ear to her pitiful cries for help. Isn’t that strange?

In John 11 we read of how Jesus, when he heard that Lazarus was sick, “abode two days in the place where he was” just so that Lazarus would die. He knew full well the grief that would flood the hearts of Martha and Mary. He knew the pain that would rack the body of Lazarus as he suffered on his death bed. And yet He deliberately didn’t come to heal him. Why did He do that?

And now we come to Mary Magdalene weeping and the Lord doesn’t immediately do the very thing that would remove her sorrow of heart! What a great perplexity! How true are those words of William Cowper: “God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform!”

But there are certain infallible and immutable truths that every believer must stand upon when he is completely perplexed about the way Christ is dealing with him.

1. Christ is too wise to make a mistake and too loving to cause a needless tear.

We only add to our confusion and sorrow of heart when we fail to remember this simple truth. Christ never does anything without a specific purpose and plan for the good of His people, and that plan is always carried out with infinite wisdom and boundless love.

The Canaanite woman learned the all-important lesson that there are some things that Christ doesn’t give without perseverance in prayer. John tells us that it was because Christ loved Martha and Mary that he abode two days. They needed their minds lifted to a higher view of Christ and what really matters in life than what they had at present.

And here’s Mary seeking for Christ, but the Christ she was looking for would never be found. She was looking for a

dead Christ instead of a living Christ! Like Martha and Mary, her heart was too bound up with the temporal instead of the eternal.

2. Christ had something better for Mary than what she was wanting.

Mary thought that if she had found the dead body of the Lord, it would be a good thing. But Mary wasn’t thinking right. So, the Lord took away something she thought would be a good thing and replaced it with something infinitely better. It’s better to find a living Christ than a dead Christ, is it not?

Sometimes the Lord takes away things from our lives, things that we think are good and often very precious to us. Like Mary, our hearts are filled with sorrow. But He always does this to give us something far better in its place. It was a hard thing to watch Lazarus die before their very eyes, but Martha and Mary received their brother back from the dead and saw a glorious display of the power of Christ that powerfully deepened their faith.

A GREAT PROBLEM

Beating at the heart of Mary’s sorrow there was also a great problem. Beating at the heart of almost all of our troubles in this Christian life there is the same great problem: unbelief concerning the Person, the Work, and the Word of Christ.

Had Mary been expecting to see Christ, I believe she would have recognized him, but unbelief got in the way and hid the Lord from her eyes. She would not have been so overcome with sorrow if she believed what Christ had already said on numerous occasions, that after His death He would rise again. Those two men on the Emmaus road had the same problem. Because of their unbelief, they never dreamed that the One who started walking and talking with them was the risen Christ! So, Jesus said to them, “O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.”

Note this peculiarity of Mary’s unbelief: she looked for Christ in the wrong place. She looked into a grave for the living Christ. Oh, how she loved him! And when we are plagued with unbelief, we

also look for Christ in places where he will never be found!

We may look for Christ in our *feelings*. We imagine that we have to be carried away with deep feelings of conviction and many tears before we can truly find the Savior. Or we imagine that we have to be ecstatic with joy before we’re convinced that He’s near us.

Yet—to take that scene from Elijah’s life—the Lord is not in the wind, and He’s not in the earthquake, and He’s not in the fire. He will be found in that still small voice, and He will be found by those who look for Him with a simple child-like faith in His Word.

A GREAT PROMISE

The promise is not so much written in words as it is in actions. As I look at this scene, I learn one simple yet thrilling truth: *Christ will be found whenever He is truly sought.* That is a great promise for you!

There was much wrong in the way that Mary went about seeking Christ. But underneath it all there was a heart that desperately wanted to find Him. And she found Him! She found Him because the Lord Jesus loves to be wanted. He loves to be sought for. He loves to be found.

Mary had turned away from this man whom she thought was the gardener and was about to leave. It is *then* that Christ spoke just one word that changed everything: “Mary.” He wouldn’t let her leave until she had found Him whom her soul loved. She recognized that voice when she heard Him speak her name. She spun around with joy unspeakable and full of glory and cried out, “Rabboni!” Master!

This little scene at the garden tomb on the morning of His resurrection is Christ’s promise that if we seek Him, we *will* find Him. Let us go away from this passage with a renewed faith and joy in the risen Christ, the lover of our souls. ❧



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THE SUNDAY SCHOOL: PLAN TO SUCCEED



In recognition that the children before us are either saved or lost, we must aim at bringing the Word of God to them in a manner that seeks both to evangelize and edify. Both of these aims are addressed by bringing Christ to their hearts: Christ who is presented in all the Scriptures. When the Lord taught the disciples after His resurrection, He began at Moses and all the prophets, and “. . . expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27). Later, when Philip dealt with the Ethiopian he “preached unto him Jesus” beginning in Isaiah 53 (Acts 8:35). Therefore, we must deliberately teach the children in our churches the whole counsel of God; it will not happen by accident.

Thus, we must set out to present Christ Jesus as He is presented in all the Scriptures. That aim should include the teaching of the Bible stories and the doctrines of the Word. It has been the typical routine in our churches to include time studying the Word as well as time learning the Catechisms. (We’ll consider the issue of Catechisms in more detail in the next article.) Let me suggest some ABC principles that should govern our teaching of the Scriptures.

Aim for repetition and progression

Over the course of a child’s time in the Sunday School program they should cover the breadth of Scripture: Old Testament history, psalms and prophets, gospels and epistles. The Bible contains wonderful stories. Who couldn’t be inspired by the character of Joseph or the courage of David? The tendency might be to cover the same,

best-known stories year after year. Good learning requires repetition of information previously studied, but there should also be a desire to cover lesser known parts of Scripture in an age-appropriate manner. Furthermore, as the children get older there should be a determination to develop their knowledge and stretch their ability to study the Scriptures for themselves. It is my conviction that such will not take place without deliberate planning in the form of a curriculum which addresses the full scope of Sabbath School teaching. No curriculum is perfect and there are various models. The Ulster Presbytery developed a curriculum that aimed to quickly overview the whole Bible in the first five years before returning to particular portions and themes for more in-depth study with the older children.

Bring Christ-centered, gospel application

If we say that we believe that Christ is in all the Scriptures, then we should demonstrate that to the children. As we recount the victory of David over Goliath, we should remind the children of David’s greater Son, who came to fight with Satan and defeated him on Calvary. As the people entered into David’s victory so we enter into Christ’s. We can rejoice in the gospel revealed on Mount Carmel as the fire of God’s wrath consumes Elijah’s sacrifice and not the people. The Old Testament stories reveal God and His character, and they also point us to the Savior. We ought to ask ourselves where we see Christ and then seek to communicate that to the children. As the children learn of Christ, they see their need of Him and see One who is mighty and able to save. It is not enough for us to recount the facts of the

Bible stories without applying those facts to the heart and consciences of the hearers.

Consider your hearers

All teachers, whatever their subject, will not be content to faithfully relay information without that information being understood by the hearer. What good is it to explain profound truth while the hearer has no idea what we are talking about? We acknowledge that true understanding is a spiritual matter, but we should aim at our message being understood in form, grammar, and words. Sunday School teachers should consider the age, background, and educational ability of their students. That will govern the volume of content delivered and the words used to explain the content. It might help to ask questions during and after to ensure the students understand the lesson.

These principles are common sense. They serve as a reminder to us all that we must actively plan to succeed in the realm of Sabbath School teaching. If we fail to plan, we plan to fail. The evangelism and edification of our children demands our best efforts, both from church elders and those appointed to serve as teachers. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). ❧



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MEETING TO PRAY



To say that Christians should meet together to pray seems to state the obvious. The more crucial issue is, “Why are meetings for prayer either non-existent, poorly attended, or considered optional in many churches? We need answers if we are going to experience healthy, meaningful seasons of corporate prayer in a true Biblical manner in these days.

When Jesus came to the Temple and found it full of salesmen lining their own pockets, He drove them out with this question, “Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves” (Mark 11:17, quoting from Isaiah 56:7). If Jesus considers God’s house a “house of prayer,” should not His people consider prayer a priority? Everything in the work of God must be founded on prayer. Yes, our churches must proclaim Christ and win souls for whom He died, and encourage and build up the saints, and teach children in the ways of the Lord. But all this important work must be surrounded by the effectual, fervent, intercession of God’s people.

C.H. Spurgeon said, “Beloved, let every church learn the value of its prayer-meetings in its darkest hour. When the pastor is gone, and when it has been difficult to find a suitable successor; when, it may be, there are splits and divisions; when death falls upon honored members, when poverty comes in, when there is a spiritual famine, and when the Holy Spirit appears to have withdrawn himself — then there is but one remedy for these and a thousand other evils, and that one remedy is contained in this short sentence, ‘Let us pray.’”

The devil despises the work of prayer because he knows that a Christian in touch

with God and crying out for the Lord’s deliverance and the defeat of evil is a powerful force. If this is true of one believer, how powerful will be a gathering of two or three or many believers gathered in the Lord’s name? William Cowper wrote this haunting thought, “Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees.”

It is no surprise, then, that more than anything our adversary desires to hinder prayer. Zechariah spoke of Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. The evil one attends more prayer meetings than many Christians and he is on time too! But when Christians fervently express their heart, calling on God for cleansing from sin, personal reviving, and the Holy Spirit’s direction in prayer, much work will be done for God’s kingdom and only then can the local church be strengthened.

It is not only Satan who hates our praying, but our own flesh resists this vital spiritual business. Our flesh rebels against that which should be our greatest desire. We cannot overcome by self-convincing arguments which will only bring us into bondage when we try and fail. Labor for prayer must be done by the power of the Spirit of God, influencing, enabling, breathing His life into us, so that our words are the true expression of a heart in touch with God.

Time constraints may also interfere with our need to meet for prayer. Legitimate concerns can vie for our time and attention. Family-oriented or business-related pursuits become badly misplaced when they replace the prayer meeting. Mr. Spurgeon said, “It is one of the truest signs that God is with his people when they pray, and it is one of

the darkest signs that he has departed when prayer is lacking.”

Two prominent Bible prayer meetings show us the Lord’s pattern: the upper room before Pentecost and the Church praying for Peter’s release from prison. In both cases God answered beyond expectation. This is what we should expect in our prayer meetings, but we must take care to focus our praying and not to grieve the Spirit of God.

Sadly, some Christians come to the prayer meeting for the wrong reasons. They expect to be entertained instead of being prepared to wrestle, so they conclude that the prayer meeting does not satisfy them. It is recorded of the New Testament saint Epaphras that he labored “fervently” in prayer. Prayer is not an easy work, but it is a most blessed work. E.M. Bounds said that prayer is the most serious work of our most serious years. Yes, the little prayer meeting may be despised or ignored, but it is the place where God promises to meet His people (even two or three of them) who gather for prayer in His name.

By the grace of God let us be in our place to pray, to pray for the glory and power of Christ in our churches, in our families, and in our own lives. Our Savior said, “Men ought always to pray and not to faint.” The time is short and we must be about our heavenly Father’s business by meeting to pray. ❧



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The Creed

Excerpt from “Introductory Essay to The Westminster Confession of Faith”

by Robert Shaw

Religious truth is the revelation of God’s will to man—whether that revelation be conveyed orally, or in a written record. As it comes now to us, it is in a written record. This we believe to be the very Word of the very God of truth. In this respect, it is to every soul the only and the all-sufficient rule of faith, with regard to “what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.” But the question immediately arises, as above suggested, whether all to whom this revelation of God’s will has been made understand it in the same sense? If any man say, that his only rule of faith is the Bible, every man who believes the Bible to be the Word of God will agree in this sentiment; but still the question returns, “What do you understand the Bible to teach.” It would be no answer to this question, merely to repeat a series of texts; for this would give no information in what sense these texts were understood. This must be manifest to everyone who reflects for a moment. All who even profess the Christian name, however discordant their opinions may be, at least assume to believe the Bible; but each jarring sectarian gives his own construction to the language of that sacred book; and it is only in consequence of the statement in his own words of what that construction is, that it can be known whether his sentiments accord with, or differ from, those of the majority of professing Christians. This, as before remarked, arises not out of the nature of the truth revealed, but out of the nature of the minds to whom that truth is presented. The question is not, therefore, one respecting God’s truth, but respecting man’s truth—not respecting, the truth of the Bible, but respecting man’s apprehension of that truth.

Another element now comes into view. The Bible not only contains a revelation of eternal truth, which it is man’s duty to receive and to hold; but it also appoints a body of men to be the depositories and teachers of that truth—a Church, which is not a voluntary association of men who have ascertained that there is a harmony of sentiment sufficient for a basis of union, but a divine institution, subject directly

to God, and having no authority over conscience. And, to complete this idea, let it further be observed, that God, in instituting the Church, has promised to bestow upon it the Holy Spirit, to lead it into the knowledge of the truth. This promise, further, is not to the Church in an aggregate capacity alone, but also to every individual member thereof, so as both to preserve inviolate his own responsibility, and to secure his personal union with God. The realisation of this great promise provides what in no other case exists, or can exist—an infallible umpire for the decision of all questions that can arise respecting Christian faith. For it may be confidently maintained, that whenever jarring Churches or individual Christians have been enabled to seek the light and guidance of the Holy Spirit in a sincere, humble, and earnest spirit, they have obtained such a decision of the point in dispute as to put an end to contention, and to secure the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace: and further, notwithstanding all the various aspects in which Christianity has, during the course of many centuries, been externally disguised, there has been still an amount of real harmony of belief, such as none but an infallible teacher and arbiter could have secured.

The Christian Church, as a divine institution, takes the Word of God alone, and the whole Word of God, as her only rule of faith; but she must also frame and promulgate a statement of what she understands the Word of God to teach. This she does, not as arrogating any authority to suppress, change, or amend anything that God’s Word teaches, but in discharge of the various duties which she owes to God, to the world, and to those of her own communion. Since she has been constituted the depository of God’s truth, it is her duty to him to state, in the most distinct and explicit terms, what she understands that truth to mean. In this manner she not only proclaims what God has said, but also appends her seal that God is true. Thus, a Confession of Faith

is not the very voice of divine truth, but the echo of that voice from souls that have heard its utterance, felt its power, and are answering to its call. And, since she has been instituted for the purpose of teaching God’s truth to an erring world, her duty to the world requires that she should leave it in no doubt respecting the manner in which she understands the message which she has to deliver. Without doing so the Church would be no teacher, and the world might remain untaught, so far as she was concerned. For when the message had been stated in God’s own words, every hearer must attempt, according to the constitution of his own mind, to form some conception of what these words mean, and his conceptions may be very vague and obscure, or even very erroneous, unless some attempt be made to define, elucidate, and correct them. Nor, indeed, could either the hearers or the teachers know that they understood the truth alike, without mutual statements and explanations with regard to the meaning which they respectively believe it to convey. Still further, the Church has duty to discharge to those of its own communion. To them she must produce a form of sound words, in order both to promote and confirm their knowledge, and also to guard them against the hazard of being led into errors; and, as they must be regarded as all agreed, with respect to the main outline of the truths which they believe, they are deeply interested in obtaining some security that those who are to become their teachers in future generations shall continue to teach the same divine and saving truths. The members of any Church must know each other’s sentiments—must combine to hold them forth steadily and consistently to the notice of all around them, as witnesses for the same truths; and must do their utmost to secure that the same truths shall be taught by all its ministers, and to all candidates for admission. For all these purposes the formation of a Creed, or Confession of Faith, is imperatively necessary; and thus it appears that a Church cannot adequately discharge its duty to God, to the world, and to its own members, without a Confession of Faith. ■

Q & A on Bible Study

With Rev. Andrew Foster



Why is it important to study diligently the use of Bible words?

Words are the building blocks of intelligible communication and knowledge. Necessarily, they must have clear and precise meaning. We can never clearly understand the word of God as a whole without paying attention to the component words.

Diligence is demanded because each word of the sacred page is verbally inspired. They are no ordinary words, and they form no ordinary book, because they are the very words of God. Therefore, there are profound ramifications to our attitude toward the words of Scripture. By these words the Spirit of God works to regenerate sinners (1 Peter 1:23), saints are sanctified (John 15:4), and equipped for spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:17), and the disobedient are condemned (John 5:45-46). God Himself demonstrates tremendous care over the words of the Bible. The Divine process of inspiration pays attention to every single letter (2 Timothy 3:15), where the words “holy Scriptures” are literally, “the holy letters.” The Savior spoke of God paying attention to every “jot and tittle” of His word (Matthew 5:18). The “jot” is the smallest Hebrew letter and the “tittle” is just a tiny part of a single letter.

The simple rule that the Scripture interprets itself (2 Peter 1:20) demands that we carefully consider how each word is used in the Biblical context. Language changes over time, even within different cultures using the same base language, but the words of God are fixed in their meaning within their original Biblical context. The Bible student needs to carefully ascertain the meaning of each word when it was given by the Holy Spirit to the Biblical writer in the time period and culture in which it was given. Idioms require particular care as they are often specific to people groups.

Does grammar matter in Bible study?

The rules of grammar are the science that

governs the correct use of words. There is a precision to the correct use of language. God is a God of order and this applies to His word. Paying little attention to the grammar of Scripture will at best rob the words of their vitality, power, and clarity. At worst, it will lead into serious error. Sadly, we live in a time when precision in the use of language carries too little importance. All too often this results in erroneous interpretation or much of the Bible being a closed book.

What is meant by looking for the historical context in Bible study?

To consider the context is to take into account the historical background of the speaker, or writer, and identify those to whom he speaks. One example of the importance of this consideration is seen in the differences in worship between the Old and New Testaments and how lessons from the Old Testament are applied to New Testament believers. Identifying the historical context is an important aspect of establishing the correct interpretation of a passage.

What is the difference between discovering the meaning of a Bible passage and making its application, or are they the same?

Interpretation and application are not the same but are closely connected. Correct interpretation must always precede proper application of the truth. Interpretation involves establishing the precise meaning and purpose of a passage. A Biblical example of this process is seen in 1 Peter 1:10-11 where the prophets themselves are said to have inquired precisely what the Spirit meant by His words and when exactly those words would be fulfilled. Application involves making use of the truth of Scripture in our own context or situation. We are encouraged to do this by the Scripture itself. All that has been written in time past has relevant application to saints in the present, for “all these things . . . are written for our

admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Corinthians 10:11).

Scripture prophecy that is yet to be fulfilled also calls us to make application of its truth. When the apostle John stated, “But we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2), he proceeded to make the application, “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:3). Only when the truth of Scripture is rightly understood will it lead to personal application.

What Bible software program would you recommend for a beginner in Bible study?

In the final analysis, Bible study requires very few tools: software that provides access to the text of the Authorized Version; some of the classic Bible commentaries like Matthew Henry, John Gill, Albert Barnes, and other reformed writers; *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* and Strong’s dictionaries to give information on the original languages of Scripture are very helpful. Apps like this are commonly available on various platforms and often free of charge, or at very low cost. Expensive software is not a prerequisite! An audio version of the Scripture may be useful too. I use an app that gives me access to the Scripture text and Scourby’s audio version which I find helpful since Bible study always begins with a familiarity with the text of the Bible itself. Ultimately, however, the study of Scripture is a work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. Software or other study aids can never replace the humble devotion that says, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart.” ☞



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Church Heritage Building



Youth Fellowship



Minister and Elders



Rev. Phil & Mrs. Tonia Owen

Focus on Boston Free Presbyterian Congregation

Boston, New York, U.S.A.

The Church's Scripture Text for 2018

"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

Revelation 1:12-18.

History and Ministry

The church building was constructed in the early nineteenth century when many similar quaint meeting houses were built throughout the northeastern States, having bell towers and balconies. Many were owned by Universalist Unitarians but were taken over during a revival of true religion, as was this one in Boston, New York. The building was used as a town hall and antiques store before the Berean congregation bought it in 1988, ironically from a Unitarian gentleman, who eventually agreed to hold the mortgage. At first, he adamantly refused to sell it, but after much prayer and fasting, the Lord fulfilled the truth of Proverbs 21:1, "The king's heart *is* in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."

Some souls have been saved over the years and the Lord has raised up elders and a flock of Reformed believers who are prayerful and

evangelistic, though not without the chronic struggle of complacency and discouragement in a materialistic and post-Christian world.

So, the minister, elders and congregation would appreciate prayer for a renewed first-love for the Lord, Spirit-filled lives, and a judgment-day mentality to confidently reach sinners with the power and hope of the gospel of the Prince of the kings of the earth, the Lord Jesus Christ. ☞

Consider the Lilies

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.



The Hebrew word לַשִׁיט and the Greek κρινον are generally translated *lily*. The white, sweet smelling, long trumpet-shaped flower of the modern Easter lily, *Lilium longiflorum*, is not what the Bible writers were talking about. Our Easter lily is a native of Japan and from the early 1900s to World War II, bulbs of these lilies were imported. Today, over twelve million bulbs are grown along the US Pacific coast to supply the annual demand for Easter decorations. These lilies are popular because they are beautiful, easy to grow, and hardy enough to withstand shipping.

Indigenous to remote wooded areas of some Bible lands is the similar but tenderer Madonna lily (*L. candidum*). According to many biblical-botanical scholars, this plant is not directly referred to in Scripture.

Often the Bible uses modifiers such as “of the field,” “of the valley,” or “among thorns” suggesting “lily” does not mean a single plant. In fact, it is likely that some Biblical lily references do not relate to plants in the genus *Lilium* at all. In His sermon illustration comparing the lily to Solomon’s glory, if Christ were referring to a nearby floral display, He may have been indicating a type of tulip, hyacinth, buttercup, anemone, iris, or other flower common to Palestinian hillsides (Matthew 6:28-9; Luke 12:27-8).

White Lily Traditions

White lilies symbolizing purity can be traced back to ancient pagan sources. “Christian” white lily legends probably sprouted from those stories. Supposedly, as Gabriel came to Mary, he recognized her purity by bringing her white lilies. In time, virtually all artistic depictions of Mary featured a white lily display.

In legends, white lilies also came to represent repentance. Eve shed tears of

repentance as she left the Garden of Eden and supposedly each tear sprang up a white lily.

In so-called “Christian” circles, white lily stories combined and grew as fast as lilies sprout. Christ’s sweat drops in Gethsemane and His blood drops at the base of the Cross (as well as Mary’s tears at the cross and the tomb) apparently sprouted lilies. They all bloomed white on resurrection day. Hence, Easter lilies and today’s multi-million-dollar horticultural business.

Biblical Flowers

Many flowers spoken of in Scripture, like the almond and pomegranate blossoms, are on plants that have other values (food, building material). Allotting garden space for these plants was practical as well as beautiful. The lily and the rose, however, serve only to delight our senses. Scripture uses their ephemeral beauty and delightful fragrance to teach spiritual lessons.

The Song of Solomon is set in a garden and its flowers are repeatedly used to symbolize the relationship between the two lovers. In this love poem, the beauty, fragrance, freshness, and tenderness of lilies and roses describe both the Shulamite woman and her beloved.

Flower references in Scripture often speak of flourishing. For instance, Hosea compares the results of Israel’s repentance to watering a lily. But some flower references stress their brevity. Flowers fade, are cut off, and are even trampled. This often illustrates the temporary success of the unrighteous and their coming judgment. Lilies and roses, however, are not specifically used in these illustrations.

Images of flowers adorned the Mosaic Tabernacle and lily designs were used in the columns and the massive “brazen sea” of the Solomonic Temple. Scripturally there are no specific meanings for the floral ornaments

of these worship centers. The floral and other ornamentations were to add beauty, sanctity, and a reflection of the divine (Hebrews 8:5) prompting a proper attitude for corporate worship.

Easter Lilies

In the most extended reference to lilies and their only New Testament mention, Christ teaches that God will meet our needs. After pointing out that “Solomon, in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these,” Jesus says, “If then God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?” (Luke 12:28)

Solomon had to work at adorning himself. But the best he could do did not compare to the beauty of a common flower. The lily’s beauty was not something it worked to achieve. Its magnificence is given to it by God. What a beautiful picture of God’s grace adorning His children with the beauty of Christ, rather than our being clothed in our self-righteous “filthy rags.”

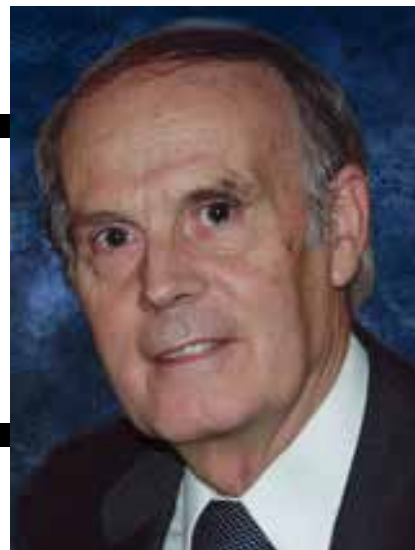
Most likely, white lilies will adorn the front of my church this Easter. Rather than being upset that these lilies can have extra-Biblical associations or that they are not native to Palestine, I will delight in their fragrance and admire their beauty. Considering them, I will thank God for His faithful, bountiful provision of my needs. I will also pray that the grace that Christ has shown me will be evident to those that consider me, just as the lilies’ God-given glory is visible to all who see them. ❏



Mr. William Pinkston teaches science at Bob Jones Academy in Greenville, South Carolina. He is a member of Faith FPC.

My Testimony to Salvation

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Romans 10:13



I was born the eldest of four sons in the city of Belfast; however, I lived most of my early years with my family in the country, where my father earned his living as a gun-dog trainer. My father had the great honor of training dogs for Sir Winston Churchill and my mother supported him in his work, while lovingly caring for us at home.

My parents were not church-goers, but they did insist that we attend Sunday school and church every Lord's Day, morning and evening. In preparation for Sunday, we had to clean our shoes every Saturday night, and on Sundays, we were not allowed any outdoor activity nor removal of church clothes until we were going to bed that night. It was not a Christian home, yet my parents insisted that we keep the Sabbath Day as best we knew how.

In my early teens, I moved with my family to the little village of Laurelvale, a few miles from the town of Tandragee, County Armagh. After I left school, I began to serve my apprenticeship as a fitter/welder. That was the era of Rock and Roll music and Elvis Presley became my idol. I bought all his recordings, saw every one of his films, and purchased every magazine that had his photograph.

In Laurelvale, I met and married a young woman named Doreen Milligan and together we set up home in Tandragee, where we attended the local Anglican church. A Gospel Tent Mission came to the neighboring town of Scarva, to which Doreen was invited. She came home one night with the news that she had accepted Christ. I am very thankful now for what the Lord did in her life through the faithful preaching of the evangelist, Rev. William McCrea.

A year later, another local Gospel Mission was held in the Temperance Hall in Tandragee, with Dr. Ian Paisley as the evangelist. I had heard a lot about this Protestant loyalist, but I had never heard him preach. At that mission, I heard the gospel of saving grace for the first time. The Lord truly blessed the faithful preaching of His servant, because fifty souls publically professed faith in Christ, but I was not one of them.

As a result of that mission, Tandragee Free Presbyterian Church was established and Doreen and I began attending this new church. Before the church had its own minister, a church member, Mr. Tommy Ryans, began conducting a Monday night Bible study for the youth in the congregation. I went along to listen as Tommy led us through the Scriptures. After three months, the Lord convicted me of my sin and I realized my need of salvation. As Tommy closed in prayer, I prayed silently, “Lord, don't let me leave this meeting tonight without getting saved.” When I got to the door, Tommy shook my hand and said, “Reggie, why are you not saved?” I knew why I wasn't saved. What would I do about the Rock music that I loved so much? But the Holy Spirit prevailed and before I left the church that night, Tommy led me to Christ and then read Psalm 34:6 to me: “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all of his troubles.” That was Monday, May 5, 1969 after which I was able to recite from my heart the words of this hymn:

O what a wonderful, wonderful day-
Day I will never forget;
After I'd wandered in darkness away,
Jesus my Savior I met.
O what a tender compassionate
Friend,
He met the need of my heart.

The Lord began to deal with me about full-time service through His providence and a sermon preached on Matthew 4:19 by Dr. Frank McClelland, who became the minister of Tandragee. In June 1974, I was accepted as a student for the ministry by the Presbytery of Ulster and placed as a student minister in the Omagh FPC congregation until the completion of my studies in 1978. Subsequently, I was called to Newtownabbey FPC where I spent over 13 years. During that time, we built a new church building and opened a Christian school.

Finally, the Lord took us overseas to Canada, to the fledgling church in Barrie, Ontario and from Barrie to Port Hope, where we have been ministering for almost 25 years. I thank the Lord for the blessing of a good wife, four sons, their wives, and children. With the apostle Paul, I humbly say: “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Timothy 1:12). ❧

Rev. Reggie Cranston is the minister of Port Hope FPC, Ontario



NEW Reapers Needed in Western Kenya

How quickly these past twelve years have passed. It has been an amazing journey with my faithful Guide and Friend. Not an easy road, but a good one. It has shown me much of my own weakness, but most importantly much more of Christ's goodness, grace, and mercy.

I arrived in Kenya in May 2006 to a very warm welcome by the missionary team and the BCFC church. Much gratitude goes to Margaret, Gillian, and Noreen for their willingness and kindness in helping me to adjust. And not only did I begin to learn a new foreign language, Swahili, but I also had to relearn some of my English expressions and terms which differ between the two continents!

Much of the early days were spent working with the school and church choirs. In the school this involved teaching many new hymns and even recording a CD in 2009, *Be Thou Exalted*. The students enjoyed preparing also for the concerts we held at different times. Each time, the Lord sent assistance through visitors from America and Northern Ireland. A special blessing came during a church meeting when a former BCFCCA student came to me and shared how that many of the former choir members were teaching the hymns they learned to others in their universities. May this witness continue to spread. The church choirs were more difficult to oversee as they are so spread out and it was not easy to keep them going. We tried a number of choir training sessions which were very well attended and received, but saw little actual working out of what had been taught. But we trust that God will still use what has been learned to His glory. Since I moved to Kakamega, the choir there has been able to meet regularly each Sunday before the morning service and are learning many new hymns in Swahili.

Those early days also included working with the two BCFC bookshops in Kitale and

Kapenguria. I enjoyed working with the staff and was encouraged many times by the comments of those visiting the shops. Most of my work was behind the scenes in the office. Now that I am in Kakamega at Beulah Christian Literature, I have many more opportunities to interact with the customers. I am so very thankful for my current assistant in the shop, Josephine Kisia.

The following comments will show how much the literature ministry is needed and has been appreciated here in Western Kenya: Lina says, "Coming to Bible study makes me want to search the Bible for myself. I hate it when I have to miss."

Anton, saved out of a Catholic background from eastern Kenya, ministering at MMUST (local university) says, "I didn't understand why God would lead me to this different tribal area, but now I know he led me here to be encouraged in my walk with and service for God" (here for a year: August 2017 to 2018).

After encouraging the Bible study students to write out Scripture daily (something shared with me by Barbara Mooney), one came and said how much it has helped him.

A young Indian girl has purchased a child's catechism to learn.

Another comment from a man in the shop really encouraged my heart, "When you read the old biographies and writings of the earlier Christians, you realize that today we are lacking in understanding and commitment. Do people realize that this bookshop is gold? (Patrick Mwanchi, August 2017. He purchased *Reformation Heroes*, and put Berkhof's *Systematic Theology* on layaway.)

My heart's desire is that the Lord will call

someone new to take over this vital work as I retire. The opportunities available go so far beyond the little I have shared. Will you consider God's work here in Africa?

"The Lord of the harvest" told a certain group of men that they were His reapers, saying, 'I sent you to reap' (John 4:38). The men were confused, for anyone could see that it was not yet harvest time. It would be another four months before the crops would change color to show that they were ripe for harvesting. However, the Lord Jesus Christ – the New Testament Boaz – insisted that His harvest was ready. He told them, 'Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest' (John 4:35). To begin with, Ruth did not know that she was in the field of Boaz. It was his reapers, that she followed. But as she followed them, so she came to meet Boaz himself. This is the Lord's usual way with sinners. He directs them in the first place to His reapers, His servants who preach the gospel. But then, for His chosen ones, the time will come when Jesus Himself will draw near – through the preaching of His Word" (*Ruth, Her Story for Today*, Keith Watkins). Where will the gleaners go? Whom will the sinners follow, if there are no reapers? Will you be a reaper for Christ in His field? Will there be any "wisehearted man, in whose heart the Lord had put wisdom, even (one) whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it"? (Exodus 36:2) ❏



Miss Kathy Walker is retiring from her work in Kenya and returning to her family and home church, Orlando FPC, in May 2018

Emmanuel Christian School in Nsaalu, Uganda, Reopens as Free Presbyterian Mission in January 2017

With our North American readers in mind, we include this recent report from The Free Presbyterian Mission Board In Northern Ireland on their new venture in Uganda. The Lord has opened an exciting door for mission work in a needy part of Africa.

The school was founded in 2005 by English missionaries, Rev. Noel and Mrs. Kelly, who requested that the Ulster Presbytery take it over with a vision to continue a faithful gospel ministry in the area.

Emmanuel Christian School and Church were legally transferred to the Free Presbyterian Mission Society Africa on January 1, 2017. The months following the handover permitted preparations for the official reopening of the work on Sunday, April 30, 2017. Great excitement greeted the special delegation from Northern Ireland who had come to view the work and conduct the official re-launch.

The special reopening service was led by Rev. Stephen Miller and was well attended by pupils, parents, staff and neighbors.

There was a sense of expectation as Rev. John Gray opened the service in prayer. Miss Noreen McAfee's welcome on behalf of Emmanuel Christian School was followed by messages in song from the children and young people who participate regularly in the weekly services.

Pray that the light of God's Word will beam brightly from the reopened Mission Station at Nsaalu into the surrounding darkness.

In Uganda, a child who has lost one parent is considered an orphan. The number of true orphans (those who have lost both father and mother) is just under 5% of the total enrolment at Emmanuel Christian School.

Another issue is the widespread abandonment of children by one or both of their parents. Grandparents often appear to



carry the burden of bringing up these children, sometimes with no contact or financial support from the parents. This means they can struggle to manage our heavily subsidized school fees. What little they can earn is needed to feed themselves and the children.

Rather than children from such homes having to miss out on their education, guardians are encouraged to pay whatever they can afford, if anything.

The school supports many such children by cancelling their school fees and only requiring that they bring their own exercise books and pencils to school.

We trust that while at Emmanuel Christian School, these children will have their greatest need met by receiving Christ as Savior and will grow up to be a godly influence in their community.

During our recent visit to the school, we observed the installation of the water harvesting system which had been recommended by *Fields of Life*. Old concrete storage tanks which had been leaking were replaced with new plastic tanks to store water collected from the roofs of the adjoining buildings.

On our journey home, Rev. Park, Mr. Hamilton and myself visited a company in Kampala which specializes in drilling boreholes.

After satisfying ourselves about the company's ability to do the job, we asked them to carry out a hydrogeological survey at the school. Their subsequent report indicated that they were confident of sourcing a suitable yield from a borehole within the school grounds.

After further negotiations, we commissioned the company to drill a borehole. We hope that we will be able to pump water from this borehole to storage tanks on a high metal stand. This will gravity-feed water to other areas of the school and give a supply of quality drinking water to the school children and staff.

UPDATE: BOREHOLE SUCCESS!
We are pleased to report that the drilling rig arrived at Emmanuel Christian School on Saturday, June 17th and drilling commenced the following week. While the task proved challenging and difficult due to the type of soil and rock formation, the drilling team's hard work and patience was finally rewarded when they struck water a week later.

It took a few more days, of course, to complete the installation of the submersible pump, generator, water pipeline, drinking water cylinder, overhead water storage tanks and stand pipes, but the process was soon complete.



It was wonderful to see the reaction of the children and staff who had been observing the whole operation with great anticipation and dreaming that each day might be “the last time they would have to carry water from the swamp”!

When they were finally called to come and collect their first “bore-hole” water, there was no need to repeat the invitation. There were smiles and giggles all round and some lay down to “feel” and “listen to” the water coming through the pipe.

We can hardly describe what it means to have water available on site for drinking, cooking, washing, cleaning, bathing, etc. and how much it has helped us in the day to day running of the school. Previously, children had spent many hours per week trudging up and down the steep hill to the swamp with their 10-litre jerrycans and oftentimes they had to make several trips per day.

We are sincerely thankful to those who helped to finance the borehole, to those who prayed over it and, above all, to the Lord Himself who was pleased to grant a successful outcome.

Our new work in Uganda has been set up and is managed through the Free Presbyterian Mission Society Africa. This is a legal company structure that we have registered in both Kenya and Uganda and is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Mission Board.

In 2016, Uganda passed new laws relating to charity-based organizations which required that we also register our company as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO).

In April 2017, work commenced to provide all the necessary documentation including a five-year work plan and budget. The challenge was that our workers could not apply for long-term work permits until this registration was approved. We were told it could take three to four months and their temporary passes were due to expire in two months!

When we visited Uganda at the end of April, we planned to meet with our advocate in Kampala on the way home to urge him to try to accelerate the registration process. Then, on the morning that we were due to travel, we got a message to say that the application had been approved and that we could pick up the certificate later that day. It was with an extra spring in our step that we set off to visit the NGO director and his team, to sign the release forms and accept the NGO Certificate. This truly was an answer to prayer and we praise the Lord for His hand in this matter. Since our visit and approval of our NGO status, we are pleased to report that work permits have now been issued for Rev. and Mrs. Miller.

Having realized the need for solar power at the mission station in Nsaalu, the Free Presbyterian churches in Toronto and Dromore [N. Ireland] provided the necessary finance to purchase the equipment. Mr. Andrew Graham and his son travelled out in February 2016 to do the initial installation. He returned in August and, with the help of men from Northern Ireland and Uganda, they got power installed throughout the complex.

The solar panels are providing a good level of power to the mission station. They are used to provide light in the teachers’ houses, classrooms, dormitories and our missionary accommodation. They provide power for fridges, mobile phones and laptops, and also run electric lighting and fans in the main church building.

Before the solar panels were installed, evenings were very dark with the only light coming from torches and solar lamps. Laptops and mobile phones could only be charged once a week when the petrol generator was switched on. Fridges were an unimaginable luxury!

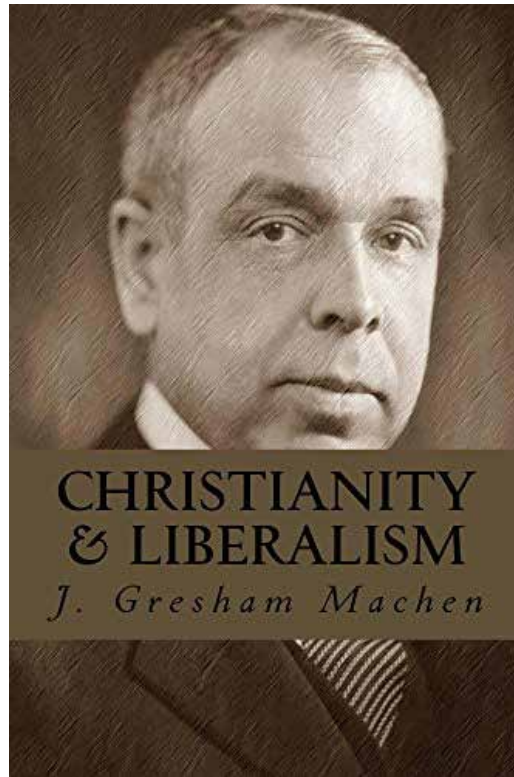
Solar power works very well in Uganda due to the high level of sunshine throughout the year. It was great to see first-hand how the missionaries, teachers and children are benefitting every day from the solar power which is such a blessing to them.



Christianity and Liberalism

Jude, one of the half brothers of our Lord Jesus, eagerly desired to share encouraging words to the other members of Christ's church, but the Holy Spirit moved him to warn the saints about false teachers who had covertly slipped into the church. All faithful ministers of Christ want to build up fellow believers by declaring to them the glories of our Savior's person and work. But there are times when a faithful note of warning must also be sounded. *The Banner of Truth Magazine* (Issue 156) contained an article by R. A. Finlayson, which detailed the fall of the original Free Church of Scotland into liberal apostasy. The new church dared to send her young ministers to the Bible-denying universities of Germany for the purpose of earning their doctorates under professing scholars in order to become eminent scholars themselves. The young men returned with their prestigious degrees and unbelieving scholarship to ruin the Free Church. Only one generation passed before that promising denomination was neutralized by heterodoxy. Every generation of preachers faces the same temptation because of the popularity of unorthodox scholars. Those subtle salesmen are quite adept at handling crowds of disciples; however, they handle the Word of God deceitfully (2 Corinthians 4:2).

Dr. J. Gresham Machen of Princeton endeavored to protect the seminary students of his day as he saw his Presbyterian denomination sliding into apostasy. Therefore, he wrote *Christianity and Liberalism* in 1923. The foremost spokesman for the liberal position in the 1920s was Harry Emerson Fosdick, who lived his adult life in open opposition to his fundamental Christian upbringing. A footnote on page 120 in Dr. Machen's book refers to Fosdick and his fellow ministers who eloquently scorned the fundamentals of the faith. They dared to employ traditional Christian terminology only to deceive the multitudes. This characteristic subtlety is also observable in the popular false teachers of the present day. The younger generation, lacking a thorough acquaintance with church history and the



methodology of false teachers, have become an easy prey for such deceivers. *Christianity and Liberalism* exposes the false teaching of the men known as liberals. As the late Dr. Ian Paisley rightly declared, "The liberals are only liberal with those things that don't belong to them."

In the present century and in the previous two, liberal apostasy has followed basically the same pattern. Dr. Machen's book shows that the apostates downplay doctrine, opting rather to "just believe in Jesus and practice the Sermon on the Mount." Yet they choose to ignore the vast amount of doctrine in that grand sermon. The modernists' view of human nature propounds man's basic goodness, rather than his total depravity which Scripture teaches. Of course, the plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture was and is denied by liberalism. Concerning Christ, the liberals regard Him as an Example of faith rather than the Object of faith. Salvation to the liberal is simply a life lived according to the teachings of Jesus. Never would the imputed righteousness of Christ be the theme of a sermon series in a church having a liberal minister. Dr. Machen ably refutes all of these untenable positions of liberalism in his book. His work is perfectly up to date and applicable for countering the current heretical views of Anglican Bishop, Dr. N.

T. Wright, and his *New Perspectives on Paul*. Dr. Wright is wrong about traditional theological reasoning. Paul used logical arguments as did the Protestant Reformers and the Westminster Divines. Wright accuses the Reformers of forcing Greek categories onto the Hebrew Scriptures in order to define justification in terms of the courtroom where the judge declares a man to be righteous. Dr. Wright in his Rome-ward march reaches for any straw to undermine the *Solas* of the Reformation. Wright concurs with the liberals of the two preceding centuries who minimized human sin. According to Wright, mankind as amiable creatures do not require a substitutionary atonement. Wright makes it clear that he is wrong about the Bible and abhors the very thought of plenary inspiration. Finally, since Wright is promoting justification by a person's own works-righteousness, what need is there for a Savior? Like the liberals of prior centuries, Wright presents Christ as an Example of faith rather than the Object of faith. Wright goes to great lengths to show his distaste for imputed righteousness.

Dr. Machen's little book deals decisively with all of this falsehood. Rev. Phil Johnson, in his excellent critique of N. T. Wright, called *What's Wrong with Wright*, concludes with a most appropriate prayer: "May God raise up men who will take the Word of God and the problem of sin seriously, and refute this error for the heresy I am convinced it is." Dr. Machen's *Christianity and Liberalism* needs to be read and applied by all of Christ's faithful servants today in order to refute the subtle heresy that is deceiving many.

Dr. Machen's book, *Christianity and Liberalism*, is available from many online sources: Paperback, \$11; Hardback, \$25.



Rev. Myron Mooney is minister of Trinity FPC, Decatur, Alabama. He presently serves as moderator of the FPCNA.



Free Presbyterian International Congress

Monday July 30 through Friday August 3, 2018.

Meetings each evening at 7:00 p.m. in Malvern FPC with preachers from Ulster and North American Presbyteries.

Hotel rooms have been reserved in The Desmond at a competitive rate. \$115 per room per night (Room options are King or double queen).

Booking requests can be made by emailing Dr. Pollock at malvernfpcc@yahoo.com Daily tours are also being arranged to visit the sites of historic and beautiful Pennsylvania.



Dr. Billy Graham, the World's Best-Known Evangelist, Dead at 99

Christians around the world have been saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. Billy Graham. His ministry spanned the lifetime of most people still alive today. He lived in an era that moved into jet-propelled travel and mass communication by radio and television, all of which made his worldwide ministry possible.

Dr. Graham commenced his ministry within the Fundamental Baptist fold including Bob Jones University, which stood firmly for the inerrancy of Scripture and the deity of Christ. That influence grounded him in the message of the gospel and its defense. By 1957, however, he was invited by liberal-minded churchmen to conduct a gospel campaign in Madison Square Gardens in New York City, which lasted sixteen weeks.

With the support of 1,700 different churches from various denominations, Dr. Graham began to associate with liberals, Jews, Roman Catholics, and even those who denied the inerrancy of Scripture.

He was motivated, either by expediency to increase the numbers of people attending his meetings or by the craft of liberal churchmen, to cooperate with apostate Protestant leaders and Roman Catholic Churches who offered to support his vast city campaigns. In return, assurances were required that Roman Catholic people who professed faith at the campaigns would be redirected back to their own religion. With such an arrangement, Dr. Graham failed the Roman Catholic people, who needed to hear how to be saved through Christ alone, and how to worship without priests, the Mass, or Mary. By doing this, he set a precedent of compromise for evangelicals that continues to this day. His visits with

Pope John Paul II, whom he claimed to be one of the world's greatest evangelists, showed a total lack of judgment and outright deception.

To learn more about the ministry and compromise of Dr. Billy Graham, you may go online to <http://www.fpcnamissions.org?p=1923>, where you can listen to a radio program aired in Liberia by Rev. David DiCanio. You will hear live interviews which Dr. Graham gave with Larry King on the CNN's *Larry King Live* show and with Dr. Robert Schuller of Crystal Cathedral. He shocked many by stating that people who don't know the name of Jesus will still be in heaven. You will also hear the testimony of Dr. Bob Jones III, Chancellor of Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina, regarding the history of Dr. Graham's rise and fall as an evangelist.



torment no longer and chose to forsake his faith and go into the house. A Roman centurion, who witnessed the men's bravery on the pond, thought to himself, "There must be something in this religion which can make these men bear all this agony, and go to the death for the sake of Christ. There must be something in it that is quite true. I will go and join them."

So the centurion, who commanded a company of soldiers, went and joined these faithful, courageous men in the place of the poor man who had left. Still the prayer went on: "Forty wrestlers have come forth to fight for Thee. Grant, O Lord, to the forty wrestlers the victory!"

When the sun arose the next morning, even though there were forty lifeless bodies on the ice, victory had come! For there in Heaven was a legion surrounded by every comfort and delight. There was a legion that had fought bravely. There in Christ's presence was the "Thundering Legion."

We may not be persecuted for our faith as these godly men were, but may we stand for God's honor even when our friends around us do not. May we remember this last, honorable battle of the Thundering Legion and pray that God would give us courage in our day to put God's honor first, even before our own life. ✠

Taken from: *The Expositor's Treasury of Children's Sermons** by James Vaughan, edited by Robert Nicoll and Jane T. Stoddart, published by Hodder and Stoughton: London, 1912 pp. 454

Do you like "once-upon-a-time" stories? I'm sure, like most kids, you grew up with them. Even grown-ups enjoy them every now and then. Stories of romance and brave deeds can fire up our imagination. But when these kinds of stories are true, they thrill us even more—especially when they involve heroes and heroines of the faith. Such is the story of the "Thundering Legion."

A long time ago, there was a Roman emperor, Constantine the Great, who had an army that came to be known as the "Thundering Legion." Christianity had just begun to spread throughout the world under this emperor. The army occupied a very important place, something like an elite force in the military today. The regiment had a total of forty soldiers, and amazingly, *all* of the members became Christians! These soldiers openly declared their faith, and for this, were severely persecuted. When they could not be persuaded to give up believing in Christ, they were sentenced to a particularly brutal treatment.

One night, they were forced out naked upon a frozen pond. A fierce wind was

blowing. Near the pond stood a beautiful house, all lit up with fires and candles. The soldiers were told that inside there were warm baths and a great supper, everything that could comfort and delight. A commander spoke to the men and said: "If you will give up Christ—any of you, who ever will—he may at once leave the ice, and the cold, and go into that warm house, and have that supper, that warm bath, that bed, and be happy. But going into that house means *giving up Christianity*. If you stay upon the ice you will die before morning. Nobody can survive through the night here." The forty men decided to honor God and stay upon the ice, and this is what they said in prayer: "O God! Forty wrestlers have come forth to fight for Thee. Grant, O Lord, to the forty wrestlers the victory!"

The Thundering Legion continued to pray. As the night wore on, some of the soldiers felt like sleeping. This was the kind of sleep that a person sleeps who is dangerously cold, but will never awaken. Some of the men walked around very fast to keep themselves warm; some gazed at the house with all its comforts. One poor soldier could bear the



A WORD WORTH KNOWING

cen·tu·ri·on

ruler of an elite force of soldiers in the days of the Roman Empire



Winter 2018

★ **Jonathan Trimble**
FPC of Malvern, Malvern, PA

★ **Talitha Trimble**
FPC of Malvern, Malvern, PA

Kids' Crossword Puzzle

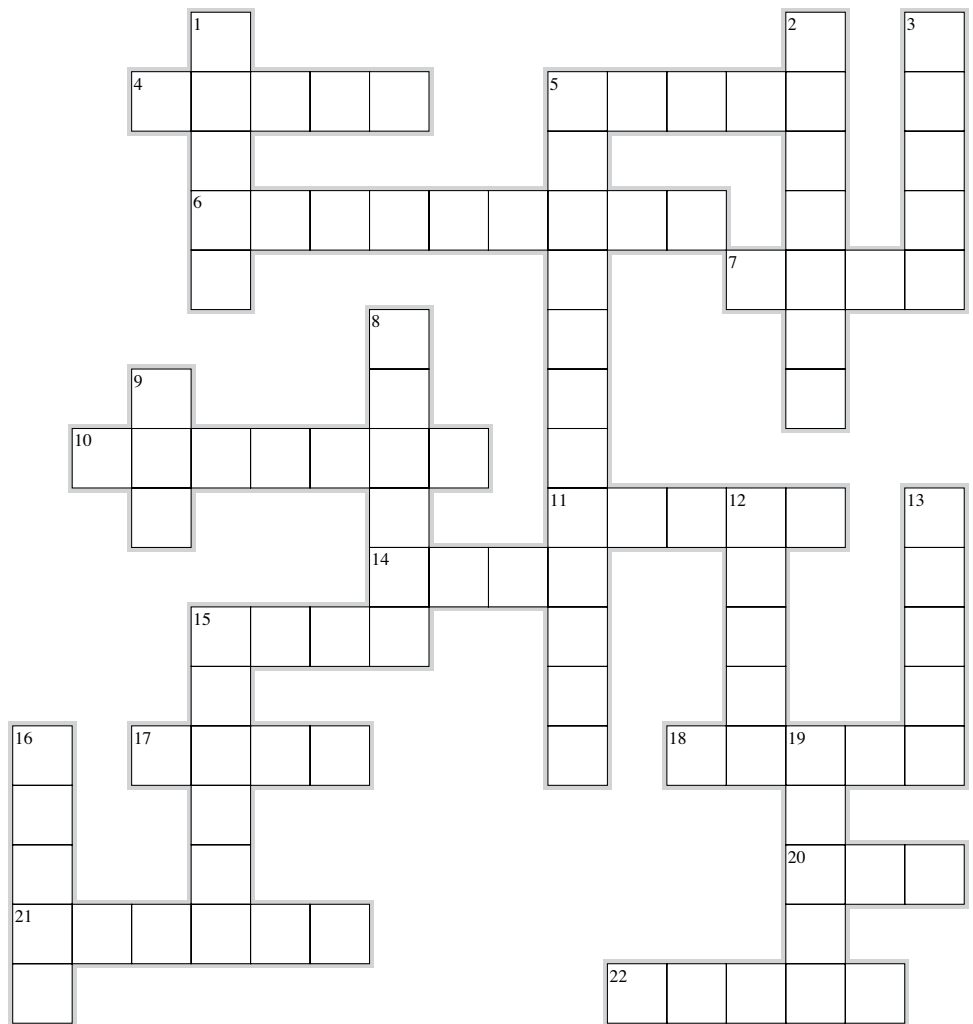


Across

2. "Peter followed ___ off."
(Luke 22:54)
5. "___ you like men."
(1 Corinthians 16:13)
6. "Keep them from the ___."
(John 17:15)
7. "___ are they which are persecuted."
(Matthew 5:10)
11. "Blessed is the man that ___ temptation."
(James 1:12)
12. "If I ___, I perish."
(Esther 4:16)
15. "Let us straitly ___ them."
(Acts 4:17)
18. "These all died in ___."
(Hebrews 11:13)
20. "They are men ___ at."
(Zechariah 3:8)
21. "Thou hast girded me with ___ unto the battle."
(Psalm 18:39)
23. "Through God we shall do ___."
(Psalm 60:12)
24. "Our God whom we ___ is able to deliver us."
(Daniel 3:17)
9. "By the three hundred men ... will I ___ you."
(Judges 7:7)
10. "Not accepting ___."
(Hebrews 11:35)
13. "___ following the LORD your God."
(1 Samuel 12:14)
14. "For the work of Christ he was nigh unto ___."
(Philippians 2:30)
16. "The Lord ___ the righteous."
(Psalm 11:5)
17. "Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil ___."
(Proverbs 23:6)
19. "Present your ___ a living sacrifice."
(Romans 12:1)
22. "Thine enemies ___."
(Psalm 74:4)

Down

1. "I have set my affection to the ___ of my God."
(1 Chronicles 29:3)
3. "Let no man beguile you of your ___."
(Colossians 2:18)
4. "These be the names of the ___ men."
(2 Samuel 23:8)
8. "The ___ your God is he that goeth with you."
(Deuteronomy 20:4)



PLEASE NOTE: Please send your completed puzzle to *Current Kids' Corner*, Attn: Mrs. Rachel Carper, 3 Elmira St., Greenville, SC 29615, or by email to rcarper@bju.edu by May 30, 2018. Include your name, address, age, and the name of the church you attend. Five winners will be drawn from all correct submissions received. The contest is open to young people ages 5–12, and winners will receive a \$10 cash prize.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH 27 - 31

Second annual FP Youth camp in Mexico City

APRIL 2018

Election of deacons in Winston Salem FPC

JUNE 1

Geneva Reformed Seminary Graduation Service (Friday Evening)

JULY 14 - 21

Free Presbyterian Youth Camp, Rock Mountain Bible Camp, Scranton, PA

JULY 30 - AUG. 3

International Congress of Free Presbyterians, Pennsylvania, USA

When This Passing World is Done

I was blessed to grow up in a home and church where hymns were beloved companions to life and worship. I have fond memories of Sunday-night singspirations, bonfire hymn-sings, and joyful singing from the top of a mountain while enjoying the view on a church hike. Our favorite hymns were sung quite often. As children we easily memorized all the stanzas to many of the hymns by frequently singing them. My brother became so familiar with our "old red hymnal" that if you mentioned the name of a hymn he could immediately tell you its number. Hymns were, and still are, an integral part of my life. We sang hymns because we loved to praise the Lord, but also because we loved their words and their meaning. The deep theological truths expressed in them challenged and strengthened our faith.

One well-loved and often-sung hymn, which I remember from my childhood and still cherish today is "When This Passing World is Done." Written by Scottish preacher Robert Murray McCheyne, this hymn beautifully speaks of our glorious state when we are with Christ.

*When this passing world is done,
When has sunk yon radiant sun,
When I stand with Christ on high,
Looking o'er life's history,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,
Not till then, how much I owe.*

The repeating phrase "Not till then, how much I owe" is like an old familiar friend coming alongside encouraging me to

remember that all I am Christ has done in me, and all I have Christ has given me. My whole life story is planned for my good by my gracious Lord; it is all of His grace! How amazing it will be to understand this perfectly in glory!

*When I stand before the throne,
Dressed in beauty not my own,
When I see Thee as Thou art,
Love Thee with unsinning heart,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,
Not till then, how much I owe.*

*When the praise of heav'n I hear,
Loud as thunders to the ear,
Loud as many waters' noise,
Sweet as harp's melodious voice,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,
Not till then, how much I owe.*

Two of these verses about longing to be with Christ in eternity call me back to the life I am called to live now. They challenge me to dwell upon God's grace towards me and then to demonstrate that grace to others.

*Oft I walk beneath a cloud,
Dark as midnight's gloomy shroud;
But, when fear is at its height,
Jesus comes, and all is light;
Blessed Jesus, bid me show
Doubting saints how much I owe.*

*Chosen not for good in me,
Wakened up from wrath to flee,
Hidden in the Savior's side,
By the Spirit sanctified,*

*Teach me, Lord, on earth to show
By my love how much I owe.*

As I have sung and meditated on these words over the years, I have grown to love them more and more through each season of life. I have fearfully walked through gloomy seasons, but Jesus always comes and makes everything light. I have seen my own ugly sinfulness more than I ever wished, and so I rejoice all the more that I have been chosen of Christ, awakened to flee to Him, and hidden in my Savior! Oh what grace!

In response to this grace, Robert Murray McCheyne's hymn challenges me to show others how much I owe Christ. I must love much because I am loved much. I am compelled to share Christ's light because He has shown it to me. The hymn perfectly includes the reminder that it is the Lord's teaching and bidding that enables me to do anything for Him. This hymn contains both amazing truths and hard challenges.

I am thankful for God's grace in blessing me with a godly home and a church that cherished precious hymns and taught me to love them from my earliest years. Grace upon grace.



Lydia Bowman is the wife of Rev. Derrick Bowman, associate minister of Grace FPC, Winston Salem, NC.