

CURRENT

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THE CREED

BECAUSE WE ARE LOOSING
FREE SPEECH

THE DEATH OF THE CHRISTIAN
AND THE **ATHEIST**

SAVED BY
**GRACE
ALONE**

THE LILY AMONG
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BECAUSE WE ARE LOSING OUR FREE SPEECH

by Rev. Ian Goligher

Recently, a Canadian newspaper posted the headline: “We are living in a country where you daren’t be anything but gay-friendly.” Lobbyists for a gender-free-for-all have moved from seeking freedom, to being left alone, to demanding positive engagement by all. These days, those who don’t embrace the full spectrum of gay and transgender life are often silenced.

Weekly news reports cite incidents of Christians who have been censured for failing to align themselves with the gay agenda. Diabolical world-wide forces are at work demanding full endorsement of the LGBTQ agenda from all government staff and their citizens. In many quarters the “right” to object to their philosophies and practices is not a right, but a mark of intolerance and sufficient reason to deny positions of employment and participation in public life.

Let it be pointed out that, while it is a crime to break the law of the land, it is not a crime in democratic countries to speak against government laws, nor to work toward changing them. A politician has no right to expect all citizens to adopt all of his or her personal views no matter how sacredly or dearly he or she holds them. Yet this is what is happening through government agendas today. So, what are Christians to do in these times of deepening hostility to Christ and His truth?

Remember that the Lord warned His disciples of opposition from the world. He said, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). The apostle Paul also warned, “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse,

deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:12-13).

So, we must not think it strange that the world will push its ungodly agendas while they are intolerant of the godly. Today, the Christian is called to patiently endure scorn from the world, because he or she chooses Christ, as opposed to courting the favour of men.

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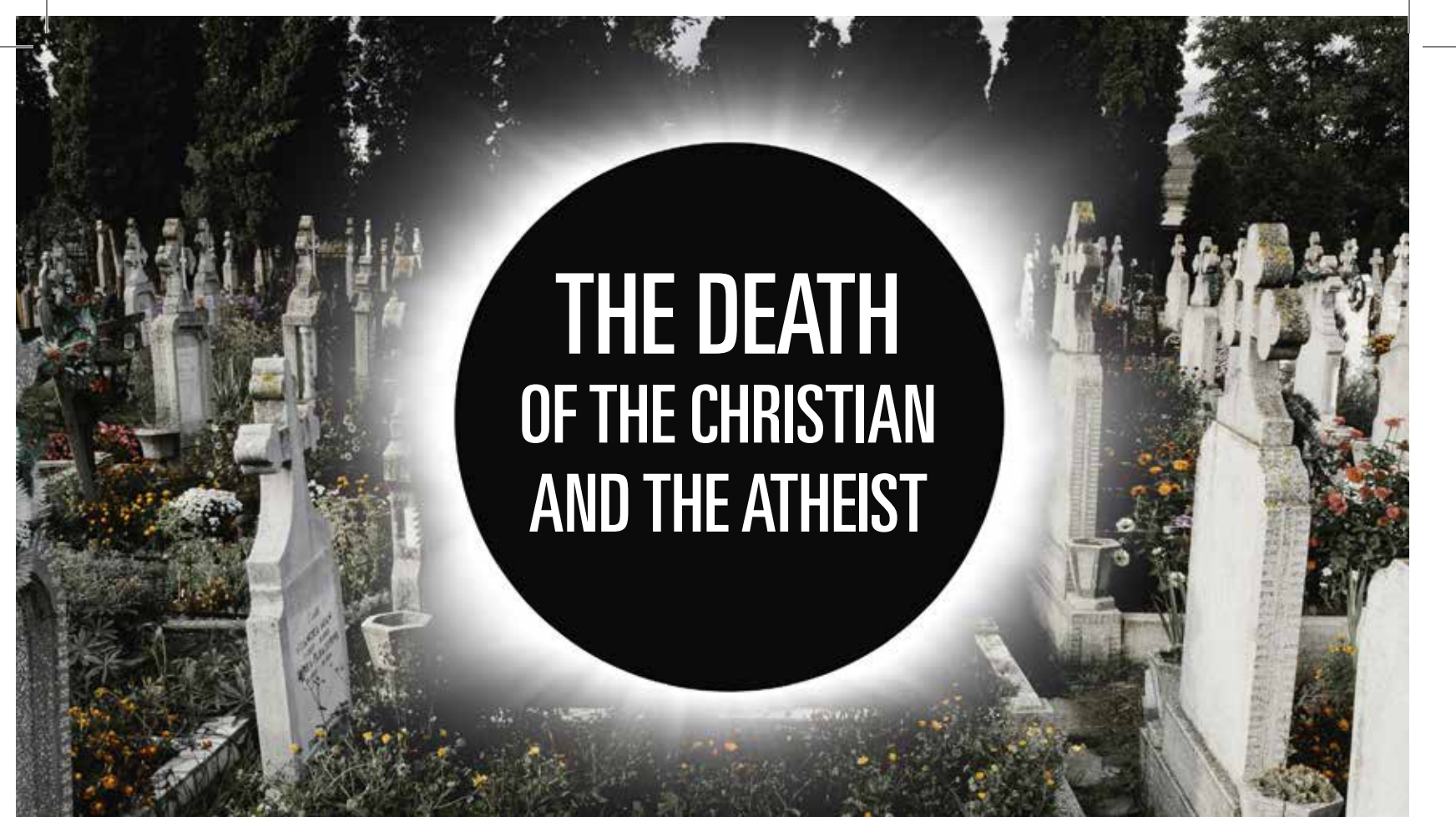
We can no longer rest on the assets of a Christian heritage. Sadly, the tables have been completely turned so that the heritage of truth and righteousness is looked upon with disdain. The Bible warns, “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isaiah 5:20). Social norms have been turned upside down.

Christians must urgently labour to sow the gospel in the world. The hour is coming when no man can work. Doors of opportunity will close. Children especially need to be taught the gospel and be grounded in the faith, lest they fall prey to the wicked agendas of the ungodly. Fathers and mothers must not waste the valuable years of childhood to fortify their sons and

daughters with God’s truth. Children need to learn what is good and what is evil in God’s sight. If Christians don’t teach their children, the devil will. Each day’s efforts to instruct children in the truth is another faithful step toward, “pulling them out of the fire.”

As society sinks further into the sea of sin, Christians must stand firm on the Scriptures of truth. We need to lay hold upon God’s law as the rule of life. The ten commandments, which are the summary of God’s moral law, are the bedrock of our faith and practice, so they need to be firmly fixed in our minds and hearts. Today, the chasm between God’s law and the immoral social agenda of the modern man is deeper and wider than at any time since the first century. Yet we can be encouraged that in the first century, Christianity grew out of paganism amidst moral corruption and horrible persecution. This is a tribute to the power of the gospel and a beacon of hope for us today.

Christians should highly regard the ministry of the local church as a place of refuge. Your workplace may be a place of grief to your soul, but your church will be an Elim to your soul. Christians need to stand shoulder to shoulder with fellow believers who are warring a good warfare and fighting the good fight of faith. Then the church will be a place of refreshment to the world-weary saint, and totally unlike the world. Believers will happily enjoy the safety of fellowshiping with like-minded and heavenly-minded people. ■



THE DEATH OF THE CHRISTIAN AND THE ATHEIST

Who says so? God does (Psalm 14:1)

Death. It's not a pleasant subject, yet it is one that we all must face. As surely as we were born to life on Earth, we must leave it one day through the vehicle of death. None of us can escape. Sooner or later we must face the "last enemy." We don't like to talk about it. It is said that King Louis XV of France banned the very mention of it in his presence. We wish we could avoid it, but we all must face the reality of death.

What happens to me five minutes after I die? We need an answer. We have all stood around the open grave grieving the loss of a loved one. Not one of those loved ones has ever come back to tell us what lies beyond death. But Jesus Christ did come back, so we need to listen and learn from Him.

There are only two options in death: either we die like a dog, are buried, and just cease to exist. Or, when our body dies, our soul lives on beyond the grave. Some say we cannot know anything certain of life after death. But Jesus Christ built the doctrine of the immortality of the soul on the tense of the verb 'to be'. He said, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matthew 22:32).

When Jesus spoke those words, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were long dead, yet very much alive.

Death poses many serious questions for the believer in God, and also for the atheist. Before the latter gets to the subject of death, he must face the question of life. Denying the existence of God as the great Creator, the atheist must explain the origin of life. To him, some primordial form of life appeared. But he is faced with the question, How did an animate (living) organism come out of inanimate (dead) matter? And how did that organism recognize the need to develop a digestive system, a desire to procreate, and a means of locomotion, etc?

We are told that minute changes, or mutations, took place over millions of years as the organism evolved to the complexity of today. There is one serious problem with that theory. All of their experimental organisms die, and in some cases in short order. Present observation shows that all species have "a time to be born, and a time to die" (Ecclesiastes 3:2). And each species has its own lifespan — from insects that live only a few hours to animals that may live as many as one hundred years. Therefore, it

would be impossible to transmit any mutated gene for the next generation to carry on the evolutionary process.

WHY DO ALL LIVING CREATURES DIE?

That is a question that the atheist has trouble to adequately answer. Surely, given their millions of years of evolution, some creature would have broken the bonds of mortality to live an undying life? Or at least shown some evidence of going in that direction by extending the lifespan of its species? But that has not happened.

The Christian, on the other hand, has no such difficulty explaining life and death. He turns to the Bible and learns: "In the beginning God created the heaven and earth" (Genesis 1:1). He discovers that organic life has its beginning in God (Genesis 1:11). Man was made by God from inanimate matter, "the dust of the ground" (Genesis 2:7) by an act of sovereign creation. God also set regulations to govern the life of man who, under satanic influence, disobeyed God, and brought the curse of God upon the whole world (Genesis 3).

Why does man die? The answer is simple and clear. "Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and

so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12). Death comes to all because we all are sinners.

THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH

"To everything there is a season . . . a time to be born and a time to die" (Ecclesiastes 3:2). We are not here on earth forever. In fact, we are here for a very limited time; therefore, having been born to physical life it is wise to make spiritual preparation for the end of life. We are going to die. Death is absolutely certain for every one of us. The only exception is at the second coming of Christ when those "which are alive and remain shall be caught up . . . to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

Why is death certain? Because it is ordained by God. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Some earthly appointments we may miss by design or accident. But when the angel of death comes calling, we must obey. There is no escaping the appointment with death.

Death is certain because it is the "wages of sin" (Romans 6:23). God is not unrighteous. By our sin we have earned death and God will pay our wages in due time. Death is also certain because it is irresistible. No exercise of the power of self-preservation will prevent it. No modern medical advancement will annul it. When God calls, we shall keep the divine appointment to the precise second. At God's command, our heart will register its last beat, and our lungs will exhale their last breath.

The only uncertainty of death lies in the fact that we do not know when it shall come. It may seem beneficial to know precisely how long we have on earth, and which day will be our last one. But God has mercifully veiled that from us. Psalm 90 tells us that, barring accident or fatal illness, the biblical norm is seventy years, but even that is not a guarantee. The same Psalm tells us that it may come later, or it may come earlier.

We go to bed at night and fully expect to awaken the next morning as we have always done. But we are warned, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou

knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Proverbs 27:1). We never know when our last day will be. For instance, when we are travelling by car at a modest 30 mph, we are doing 44 feet per second, which means that we are potentially only half a second from death at any time should an accident occur.

It is wise then to add the phrase "God willing" or the Latin abbreviation DV (deo volente) before our plans. The rich man in Luke 12:20 did not regard God's will and instead heard the dread words, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." In the midst of his godless festivities, Belshazzar also did not realize that his death was imminent with the army of king Cyrus of Persia breaching the walls of the mighty city of Babylon at that very moment. The Bible records, "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain" (Daniel 5:30).

How do you know that the vehicle of death is not already working to bring you to the divine appointment sooner than later? The disease that will eventually terminate your life may be at work in your body at this moment.

THE ATHEIST IS A FOOL

This universe comprises billions of heavenly bodies, proven by the observations of modern equipment like the Hubble telescope. It is estimated that there are 200 billion stars in our Milky Way galaxy, and about 100 billion galaxies. If a computer counted them at the rate of 10 million per second, it would take 63 million years to count them all! And that is as much as can currently be seen in space. The Bible tells us, "He [God] made the stars also" (Genesis 1:16). Compared to the known universe, Earth is but a speck of dust in the vast ocean of space, and we are mere specks of dust on the Earth. Well does the Bible describe the nations of the world as the "small dust of the balance" (Isaiah 40:15).

When faced with such evidence, how unspeakably sad it is that an atheist like Stephen Hawking will face death and meet the eternal God, whose existence he denied. What an unspeakable horror

to hear those dread words, "I never knew you: Depart from me." (Matthew 7:23). The Bible rightly declares: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalm 14:1). The atheist's statement requires the attribute of omniscience, for the whole universe would have to be searched to support his opinion. The atheist engages his relatively tiny brain to declare to the world at large, "There is no God." Others observe the myriad evidences and declare, "God is, and a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Remember the former Russian premier Nikita Khrushchev who gleefully sported that their cosmonauts did not find God after they sent their tiny satellite *Sputnik* into space in 1957? Their 200-mile leap into space was nothing compared to the astronomical distances of the universe.

Some years ago, I was conducting a funeral for a man who used to attend our church. At the visitation, one of his young sons, about twenty years of age, came up to speak with us. He told us proudly that he did not believe in the "stuff" we had taught him at Sunday School, and that he was now an atheist. My response to him was simple and straightforward: "Young man, if there is no God, we have nothing to fear, for we will die like a dog. But if there is a God, you have everything to worry about." How unspeakably sad it is that the atheist like Stephen Hawking will face death and meet the eternal God, whose existence he denied. What an unspeakable horror to hear those dreadful words, "I never knew you: depart from me" (Matthew 7:23).

David penned the immortal words, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me" (Psalm 23:4). David faced death confidently with the knowledge that the God whom he served would carry him safely over the Jordan of death and into His everlasting presence. This is the hope of every believer in death. ■



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DO I HAVE TO LEARN THE CATECHISM?



I grew up as a Baptist in a town full of Presbyterians. In elementary school I wasn't aware of the various differences regarding the sacraments or church government. But I was aware of one thing. My Presbyterian friends would talk about how they had to learn something called a catechism! I had never heard the word, let alone tried to learn it — whatever that might involve!

Since the beginning of the Free Presbyterian Church, it has been common practice to encourage children in the Sunday school to learn the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*. In some quarters that practice is being questioned, even discouraged. It is looked on, by some, as being too difficult or unnecessary. Should elders continue to ensure it is part of the Sunday School curriculum? Should parents encourage their children to learn the Catechism and indeed reinforce the teaching at home.

We should remember that catechization is simply one way of learning. The method uses questions and answers to teach information. The student is asked to respond to the question; their response requires remembering the information. It is a method of instruction that has biblical warrant. Luke wrote to Theophilus that he might know with certainty those things wherein he had been “instructed” (Luke 1:4). The word “instructed” is the Greek word from which our English word catechism was derived. Romans 2:18 uses the same word when it describes how the Jews were “instructed out of the law.” The question-answer model was used by the Jewish rabbis to teach the law. We see that in the example of our Lord in the temple (Luke 2:46-47). We ought to be slow to dismiss a method of learning that God was pleased to use to instruct generations of Jewish children.

The Catechism presents an opportunity to teach our children a summary of sound doctrine, along with the principles of the Ten Commandments and a guide to praying the Lord's Prayer. In one hundred and seven brief questions, the framers of the *Shorter Catechism* did a masterful job in producing a compendium of Christian doctrine and practice. In the language of Question 4, they present in summary what man is to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man.

Our children need to have a grasp of the fundamental doctrines. How precise, brief, and clear is the answer regarding the person of Christ: “The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, forever.” The Catechism presents them with the truth that men are sinners. “All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death, and to the pains of hell forever” (Question 19). But the Catechism also presents our children with the gospel. Questions address the atonement as well as the nature of faith and repentance. By teaching these fundamentals we look to the Lord to bless His truth unto the salvation of children. We also trust that they will come to love the truth they learn. It is also vital that our children learn truth because a knowledge of the truth is the greatest antidote to the evil of error. I appreciate that teaching the Catechism is not the only way to convey truth. It is, however, a most helpful way for truth to be taught in brief, memorable form.

In a lawless world, we long for catechized children to grasp the importance of the Ten Commandments for today. The gospel that

frees us from the penalty of the law, brings us into a desire for obedience to its precepts. Our children see in the Catechism the breadth and depths of God's law. But they see that to be sanctified they are enabled by God's grace “more and more to die unto sin and to live unto righteousness” (Question 35). The Catechism presents a balance often missing today. As God's children we are to keep God's law; but we will only keep it by the enabling of God's grace.

In its aim to be brief, the Catechism admittedly contains terms and consists of some long sentences. Thus, as teachers and parents we must be prepared to take on the task of teaching the doctrines presented. C.H. Spurgeon, (a Baptist!), helpfully comments: “For my part, I am more and more persuaded that the study of a good scriptural catechism is of infinite value to our children . . . Even if the youngsters do not understand all the questions and answers . . . , yet, abiding in their memories, it will be of infinite service when the time of understanding comes, to have known those very excellent, wise and judicious definitions of the things of God. If we would maintain orthodoxy in our midst, and see good old Calvinistic doctrines handed down from father to son, I think we must use the method of catechizing, and endeavor with all our might to impregnate their minds with the things of God.”



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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PRAYER MEETING



Of all the meetings a church conducts, the prayer meeting is perhaps the most challenging for the church family to attend. Christians who work long and hard during the week feel very keenly what Christ Himself said of His disciples when He admonished them: “Watch and pray, ... the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew. 26:41). I can easily tell myself, “Tomorrow is another work day, another day in which I must rise early and apply myself diligently to my employment with all its demands. If I decide that I should pray, should I go through the added trouble of attending the church prayer meeting? Wouldn’t it be more convenient to simply pray at home?”

Where did the practice of the church prayer meeting come from?” The church prayer meeting dates back to the Early Church itself: “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren” (Acts 1:14). The disciples of Christ obeyed His instructions to remain in Jerusalem and, “Wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me” (Acts 1:4). That promise came in answer to their prayers when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost. Following that manifestation of power which brought many souls to Christ, we read of the Early Church, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).

Prayer meetings were an essential part of the Early Church. The next time you read the book of Acts, pay attention to the number of prayer meetings that took place and the number of instances in which prayer is mentioned. You’ll discover that the believers

prayed often, and in every kind of situation, whether it was to choose the next apostle in Judas’s place or seek the Lord for protection against the threats against the church by the Jewish authorities. Christians in the Early Church prayed before choosing men to serve as deacons, and they prayed before sending forth Paul and Barnabas to evangelize the

You’ll discover that the Early Church prayed often, and in every kind of situation.

Gentiles. It is with good reason that prayer meetings are referred to as the *life-breath* of the church as they often indicate the spiritual pulse of the church. So, the next time you are feeling the weight of the flesh hindering you from coming to the prayer meeting, remember the power of the Lord enjoyed by the Early Church on account of their earnest prayers.

With this precedent in mind, remember that it is always best to keep the prayer meeting simple and focused on prayer. The prayer meeting is a time to bear one another’s burdens. Too often prayer meetings can become mere social gatherings, or taken up with lengthy Bible studies. Fellowship and Bible study have their places, but the purpose of the prayer meeting is to pray! Even the hymns sung at a prayer meeting

should focus on prayer. Time in the Word is also good, but the focus of the Bible study should be to prepare the people of God to pray.

The prayer meeting is also a time when church members should begin to anticipate the coming of the Lord’s day. Let the prayer meeting be the time when the congregation prays for its minister that divine help be given him in his sermon-preparation and for God’s power in preaching. Pray that the Sunday meetings will be well attended and that visitors will be drawn to the meetings. Pray for the salvation of children who have wandered away from the Lord so that families are united in Christ. The prayers of God’s people should be kept simple and short to allow everyone the opportunity to pray, even children.

It is a sad testimony of the spiritual condition of many churches today when they cease to hold prayer meetings, or they are poorly attended. In some cases, prayer meetings might be reduced to what Isaiah refers to as “a bruised reed and smoking flax” (Isa. 42:3). In such cases, may the Lord gently breathe life into our prayer meetings and cause them to become blazing flames of holy devotion to Him. If the church is able to accomplish anything at all in these days, it will only be by giving special attention to the church prayer meeting. ■



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The Creed

Excerpt from "Introductory Essay to The Westminster Confession of Faith"

by Robert Shaw

There never has been a period in which the Christian Church has been without a Confession of Faith, though these Confessions have varied both in character and in extent. The first and simplest Confession is that of Peter: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." That of the Ethiopian treasurer is similar, and almost identical: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." This Confession secured admission into the Church; but, without this, admission could not have been obtained.

THE EXISTENCE OF A CONFESSION OF FAITH IS EVER A STANDING DEFENCE AGAINST THE DANGER OF ANY CHURCH LAPSING UNAWARES INTO HERESY.

It was not long till this simple and brief primitive Confession was enlarged; at first, in order to meet the perverse notions of the Judaizing teachers, and next, to exclude those who were beginning to be tainted with the Gnostic heresies. It then became necessary, not only to confess that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, but also that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh in order to prevent the admission, and to check the teaching, of those who held that Christ's human nature was a mere phantasm or appearance. In like manner the rise of any heresy rendered it necessary, first, to test the novel tenet by the Word of God and by the decision of the Holy Spirit, and then to add to the existing Confession of Faith a new article, containing the deliverance of the Church respecting each successive heresy. Thus in the discharge of her duty

to God, to the world, and to herself, the Church was constrained to enlarge the Confession of her Faith. But this unavoidable enlargement ought not to be censured as unnecessarily lengthened and minute; for, let it be observed, that it led to a continually increasing clearness and precision in the testimony of what the Church believes, and tended to the progressive development of sacred truth.

Further, as the need of a Confession arises from the nature of the human mind, and the enlargement of the Confession was caused by the successive appearance and refutation of error, and as the human mind is still the same, and prone to the same erroneous notions, the Confession of Faith, which contains a refutation of past heresies, furnishes, at the same time, to all who understand it, a ready weapon wherewith to encounter any resuscitated heresy. The truth of this view will be most apparent to those who have most carefully studied the various Confessions of Faith framed by the Christian Church. And it must ever be regarded as a matter of no small importance by those who

seek admission into any Church, that in its Confession they can obtain a full exhibition of the terms of communion to which they are required to consent.

The existence of a Confession of Faith is ever a standing defence against the danger of any Church lapsing unawares into heresy. For although no Church ought to regard her Confession as a standard of faith, in any other than a subordinate sense, still it is a standard of admitted faith, which the Church may not lightly abandon, and a term of communion to its own members, till its articles are accused of being erroneous, and again brought to the final and supreme standard, the Word of God and the teaching of the Holy Spirit, sincerely, humbly, and earnestly sought in faith and prayer.

Quitting the subject of Confessions of Faith in general, we direct our attention to the Confession of Faith framed by the Westminster Assembly of Divines. The first thing which must strike any thoughtful reader, after having carefully and studiously perused the Westminster Assembly's Confession of Faith, is the remarkable comprehensiveness and accuracy of its character, viewed as a systematic exhibition of divine truth, or what is termed a system of theology. In this respect it may be regarded as almost perfect, both in its arrangement and in its completeness. Even a single glance over its table of contents will show with what exquisite skill its arrangement proceeds from the statement of first principles to the regular development and final consummation of the whole scheme of revealed truth. Nothing essential is omitted; and nothing is extended to a length disproportioned to its due importance.

Nor do we think that a systematic study of theology could be prosecuted on a better plan than that of the Confession of Faith. Too little attention, perhaps, has been shown to the Confession in this respect; and we are strongly persuaded that it might be most advantageously used in our theological halls (seminaries) as a textbook. This, at least, may be affirmed, that no private Christian could fail to benefit largely from deliberate and studious perusal and re-perusal of the Confession of Faith, for the express purpose of obtaining a clear and systematic conception of sacred truth, both as a whole, and with all its parts so arranged as to display their relative importance, and their mutual bearing upon, and illustration of, each other. Such a deliberate perusal would also tend very greatly to fortify the mind against the danger of being led astray by crude notions, or induced to attribute undue importance to some favourite doctrine, to the disparagement of others not less essential, and with serious injury to the harmonious analogy of faith. ■

WHAT IS COVENANT THEOLOGY?

Q & A on Bible Study

With Rev. Reggie Kimbro

Covenant Theology (CT) is a title given to a system that officially stems from the post-Reformation period. The system of CT is a very simple system which closely follows the Bible's teaching regarding the Two Adams (cf. Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15). CT views the whole of history and of man's relation to God under two covenants, usually called the "Covenant of Works" and the "Covenant of Grace." The Covenant of Works refers to man's original relation to God and his obligation to fulfill the Moral Law (which is summarized by our Savior as loving the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and loving our neighbor as our self (Mark 12:30-31), or as Paul phrased it, "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13: 10; Galatians 5:14). Adam failed in this great obligation, casting all of his race into a state of sin and inability to merit righteousness, since all of his posterity sinned in him and fell short of the glory of God. Instead of consigning Adam and his race immediately to hell, God initiated a new covenant, commonly called the "Covenant of Grace." CT sees all of God's gracious dealings with fallen man coming under this covenant, which was made with Christ as a new Federal Head. ("Federal Theology" is another name for CT).

It's important also to recognize what Covenant Theology is *not*, because in the debate with Dispensational theology, many people get confused on certain points. CT does not dictate a particular view of baptism. Many people wrongly assume that CT forces its adherents to hold to infant baptism. That is not the case. Also, many people wrongly assume that CT demands an amillennial view of the end times. It does not.

What are the main benefits of seeing the Bible as having one plan of redemption from Genesis 3 to the end of history?

This is indeed one of the chief benefits of Covenant Theology. While there are different ages or "dispensations" in the Scripture, the differences between these ages are outward and ceremonial, not inward and spiritual. We don't sacrifice animals today in a temple with a Levitical priesthood. But the OT people who did were still being directed by that system to look forward to the same Christ and the same message of grace and faith that we embrace today with the fuller light of Christ's finished work. CT clearly emphasizes Christ and grace at the heart of every age. Even though there are significant differences between the Old Testament and New Testament dispensations, I like to phrase it this way, "Greater light is not different light."

Did the OT saints enjoy the same gospel as NT believers?

Absolutely. The sacrificial system (which really started outside the gates of Eden and not at Mt. Sinai) contains the message of the promised seed (Genesis 3:15) in a nutshell. Just take one beautiful example among many. When the OT offeror brought his offering to the priest, before the animal was slain, the offeror would lay his hands upon the head of the lamb to symbolize the transfer of guilt from himself to this appointed substitute. Think of the impact as John the Baptist announced, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world!"

Does the Westminster Confession of Faith teach Covenant Theology?

Yes, like the other major Reformed Confessions, the WCF sets forth CT very clearly in chapter seven. There, the framers of the Confession even indicate that what they were putting into that Confessional framework was the general understanding of God's people. They speak of what is "commonly called the Covenant of Grace."

Does Covenant Theology create a unity of interpretation?

Yes, that's perhaps the greatest strength of

CT. It's a very simple and basic framework for understanding Scripture. There may be some matters that are difficult to determine, like the mode and subjects of baptism, or the different views of the millennium, but these are all intramural debates underneath the clear outline of Scripture with regard to the gospel itself. All men sinned and died in Adam, the first man. In order to be saved, one must flee by faith to Christ, the second man. This is the fundamental point at issue.

What comforts or assurances can a believer gain from covenantal views of the gospel?

I have known many believers who have come to greater depths of assurance and peace when they were investigating the system of Covenant Theology. At the heart of the doctrine of justification is the imputed righteousness of Christ. Virtually every believer is aware of the teaching of Christ's substitutionary death in paying the penalty of our transgressions of God's law, but many modern believers have had little teaching with regard to Christ being their representative in fulfilling the positive demands of God's law and actually meriting life for them. There is an overwhelming peace that flows from the knowledge that God didn't lower or change His standard of holiness or perfection when He saved me. Christ was placed under the very same law as Adam and all His posterity, only Christ "fulfilled all righteousness" as my new Representative and that perfect righteousness is counted as belonging to every one of His believing people. ☞



Rev. Reggie Kimbro
is minister of Grace FPC
in Winston Salem, NC

THE CEDAR OF LEBANON

Behold, . . . a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. . . . Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth. (Ezekiel 31: 3, 5)

The cedar of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*) is the most common non-edible plant specifically identified in Scripture. An evergreen pine, it does not lose its dark green needles until new ones have grown. The young *C. libani* is shaped like a Christmas tree. Its rosettes of inch-long needles are attractive but it makes poor decorations. Unlike popular holiday pines, *C. libani* drops its needles easily.

Cedars of Lebanon reach 125 feet high. Although taller than most trees, pines in many regions reach twice that height. In the western US, giant sequoia redwoods are triple the height of *C. libani*. Lebanon's cedars, however, were the tallest trees Scripture writers would have known.

As it matures, *C. libani* loses its conical shape. Massive horizontal branches support large shelves of needles and cones. Once mature, trees do not usually get much taller, but they continue to grow in diameter. One *C. libani* is estimated to be about 2000 years old and has a circumference of 40 feet.

Cedars for Building

The cedar of Lebanon was used extensively in building the Solomonic Temple. David had used Lebanese cedar for buildings and had been stockpiling it for Temple construction. But when the seven-year building project began, Solomon made a pact with Hiram king of Tyre (a sea coast city of Lebanon) to supply the needed lumber. Hiram's foresters were to be assisted by 30,000 of Solomon's servants in cutting and moving the trees.

Today, after a tree is felled it is trimmed and milled to standard lumber sizes (2x4, 4x6 etc.) close to where it grew. The lumber is then transported to the building site. In Bible times, however, building materials were not standard and lumber transport was considerably different.

After a cedar was felled for building the

Temple, its branches and bark would be removed. A trench would be dug and water added. Using human and animal muscle the tree would be pulled along the muddy rut to a river where it could be floated downstream. Lebanon drops from 8000 ft. high forested mountains to the Mediterranean Sea in about 30 miles.

At the coast, logs would be tied together and floated 100 miles. Moving the logs upstream and in muddy ruts to Jerusalem (30 miles inland and 2500 feet above sea level) took massive amounts of muscle power. Once there, the wood damaged in transit was removed and the lumber cut to fit the building's needs.

The cedar of Lebanon's wood is an ideal building material. It is dense, strong, and lacks knots. It is impregnated with chemicals, which make it fragrant and protect it from insects and rotting. The wood is a richly-grained, deep reddish color.

Cedar was not used only for beams and supports. The Temple was lined with wood paneling; not one stone was visible. This was not a smooth, thin plywood-type layer. It was richly carved with cherubim, palm trees, and flowers. Much of the wood was covered with gold, but in other areas some people think the wood was visible and decorated or highlighted with gold (1 Kings 6).

The Temple's porch was made of cedar pillars and roof. Solomon used Lebanese cedar for other building projects. One of his palaces is called "the house of the cedar of Lebanon" because so much of this costly wood was used in building it (1 Kings 7:2).

Israel was not the only nation to use Lebanese cedars for buildings. The high quality wood was also used to build boats, chariots, bridges, and other things. In ancient times, when a Lebanese king was threatened by an invading army, he would sometimes buy them off with lumber.

Cedar of Lebanon Today

Although frequently mentioned in the Old Testament there is no reference to the cedar of Lebanon in the New Testament. No reforestation was practiced. The muddy rut-harvesting of trees was hard on the environment. Ecological succession back to a mature cedar forest did not happen. Today large Lebanese *C. libani* are in patches of only a few dozen trees. The Lebanese government has a reforestation program, but it will be hundreds of years before Lebanon has a mature cedar forest.

Since they are grown all over the world, the cedars of Lebanon are not going extinct. A hundred years ago, it was popular for churches in the southern US to plant two *C. libani* by the front door. Many of those country churches are gone, but the cedars are doing fine. In many cemeteries, campuses, and gardens *C. libani* thrive, and a few are reaching their full height, but most have many years to go before they can be considered mature trees.

Symbol of Strength and Security

The cedar of Lebanon is also used in Scripture as a symbol of strength, stability, and security. Consider the parable king Jehoash of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah. "The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle" (2 Kings 14:9).

Amaziah had just won a battle with a weaker nation. Feeling somewhat proud, he sent a challenge to Jehoash: "Meet me in battle, and when you lose—surrender your kingdom to me." Jehoash had a much stronger army and replied with the cedar/thistle parable. Basically he was saying: "Who are you, thistle, to challenge a cedar tree? We don't need to get in a battle to see you trodden down; some weaker nation can do that for us. Cedars don't get upset every time a weed sprouts up."

References to Spiritual Growth and Maturity

The poetical books of the Old Testament often use the cedar of Lebanon to illustrate spiritual growth and maturity. Psalm 92 begins by telling us to sing God's praises. Then the Psalmist points out that the workers of iniquity seem to flourish, but they shall perish. In contrast, "The righteous shall flourish . . . he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall bring forth fruit in old age."

Being in a mature forest causes awe even today. But the massive size, fragrance, expansive branches, and deep shade of a mature forest of *C. libani* would have been a moving experience. Just being near something that has been growing long enough to reach such proportions evokes reverence. That is the experience about which the Psalmist is speaking.

People can be impressive by wearing certain things, adopting certain styles, being loud and splashy, sporting the latest hairstyle or a tattoo. It's easy. But such things are temporary. Then something newer and *splasher* must replace it to keep impressing people. That is how Satan coaxes the world to work and many blindly follow his path.

I have been blessed to have been in the presence of some spiritual giants. They are impressive, but not because of brassy show. In fact, some of them have been demure and not all that attractive. But in their presence you knew that you were with someone who has been walking close to God for a long time.

Trees do not mature overnight—they need slow, steady growth. Likewise, becoming a mature Christian doesn't happen without patient, steady growth in grace. This will involve making God-honoring decisions repeatedly — not just when you have to, or when you feel like it, or when it is convenient. Only then will a Christian flourish in a way that does not fade. Spiritually, he will be like a tree planted in the house of the Lord, bringing forth good fruit. He shall be like a cedar in Lebanon.

"The righteous . . . shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." Psalm 92:12 ❏



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



FOCUS ON KOREAN FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH GREENVILLE, S.C.

In 1992, in the providence of God, five families approached Rev. David Lee to lead a Bible study while he was studying at Geneva Reformed Seminary (GRS). Over the course of one year interest grew in the Free Presbyterian Church and Sunday worship meetings commenced in the church sanctuary at Faith FPC.

In 1997, Rev. David Lee graduated from GRS and the Korean FPC was registered in South Carolina. Three years later, the congregation was able to purchase its own building at its present location in Taylors, near Greenville, and in 2003, Rev.

David Lee was ordained as senior pastor. With God's hand upon Him, he conducted ten years of faithful ministry before the Lord called Him home to glory. His ministry and Christian example live on in the solid foundation laid for the witness of the gospel for the congregation and for many Korean people in the area. The present minister Rev. Sanghoon Han was ordained and installed by the presbytery in 2014. God has also given the congregation elders and deacons who faithfully serve the Lord seeking to minister to Korean people locally and beyond for Christ. ❏

SAVED BY GRACE ALONE

*"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:
old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"*

2 Corinthians 5:17

As a young boy, I did not have the privilege of growing up in a Christian home. I never heard the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. I never heard about John 3:16, or that I was a sinner before a holy God, and needed to be saved. I was a lost soul and didn't know it.

Being Italian, I was raised from childhood in the Roman Catholic religion and partook in many Roman Catholic sacraments, from infant baptism all the way through to confirmation. My parents sent me to catechism classes on weekends because I was attending public elementary school. Roman Catholic priests and nuns taught me according to their religion and beliefs. They taught me that Christ was in the wafer when it was served at the mass, and that Mary was the mother of God along with other RC doctrines. I was encouraged also to go to confession on Friday evenings.

As time went by, however, I became less interested in religion and more interested in finishing up school and getting a job. I was wrapped up in my own little world, and I did not believe in God. He just wasn't real to me.

At age twenty-two, the Lord began to intervene in my life with a desire to know if God really existed. I wanted to find truth and the origin of man, so I began my search by asking different people about their beliefs and opinions on the existence of God. Some

said, "There is no God; there's no proof of God." Others told me, "Man evolved and came from apes," and "It's not important, so don't worry." But I was worried, and was determined to find the truth. I met a Christian who gave me some literature on being "born again" and he witnessed to me about Christ, but it still had little effect on me.

I shared my concerns with my girlfriend, Pina, who is now my wife. Both of us were looking to each other for answers to our questions. For two months, I kept feeling a compulsion to believe in God, but I refused to submit. As the power became stronger, I became more stubborn. I could not accept that God was real, but I became fearful because I realized I was being confronted by my Maker and I was fighting against Him. I was resisting His Spirit who was striving with me. I didn't want God in my life, and I didn't want to be holy. That settled it.

In retrospect, I realize how foolish I was to say "No" to God. He could have easily taken my breath away and cast me into hell in a moment, but I am so thankful He had other plans for me. In that state of rebellion one Sunday night in October 1982, I got into bed and felt very uncomfortable about my distance from God. I was convicted of my sin. At that moment, the Lord gave me the power to believe and I became aware of the sovereign power of God overcoming my own will.

The next morning, I knew I was a changed person. I began reading the New Testament, and for the first time, I understood it. It became real to me. God Himself had delivered me from unbelief. God had saved me. My eyes were open to the fact that Christ had died for me, rose again for me, and was alive forevermore for me. Heaven, hell, and sin became so real as I continued reading God's Word. I realized that a supernatural change had taken place within me. I wanted the things I hated before, and I hated the sins I liked before. My speech changed; my attitude changed. I began to have a new out-look on life. I began to have a love for God and His Word, and a new love for God's people. In other words, the apostle Paul's words described me to a tee: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). God made me a new creature by saving my soul. My sin was under the blood of Christ and my heart was set on knowing and serving God. ■



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THE NUMBER ONE CHALLENGE TO REACHING BOYS & GIRLS IN LIBERIA

“Time’s up!” Most of the children in our tiny, hot Sunday School room looked up with a sigh of relief, but a few kept scribbling frantically. “Ti’ feenish!” I repeated in Liberian English, and the remaining students reluctantly handed me their papers. We had been studying the book of Esther for the last couple of months, and this test should have been pretty easy for anyone who had been paying attention – and could read. As I gathered their papers, I noticed that several of the students, who can read and write at their age level, had finished all twelve questions. Winston*, however, had finished only one, and he got it wrong.

Winston is fifteen years old and has been attending our Sunday School in Paynesville for the past three or four years. He’s now old enough to move into the youth Bible class that Rev. David DiCanio teaches, but he is only in fourth grade in school and reads only at a first grade level, so he would likely end up confused and embarrassed in the youth class. Why is Winston so far behind in school, and especially in his reading ability?

First, he didn’t start preschool until he was nine years old because his parents didn’t have enough money to send him; then he progressed slowly through the grades, often dropping out for a term or two so that his parents could gather up money for another term’s fees. Although primary education in Liberia is purportedly free in government schools, parents still have to pay fees for registration, books, uniforms, building development, and various other add-ons. I have been told that these fees are often the only actual income for the school or for the teachers, because the promised support from the government does not always arrive. A

teacher at Winston’s school told me that he had been teaching in government schools for three years, but had not yet been put onto the payroll. One alleged reason for this delay is that there are many “ghost” teachers on government payrolls – former teachers who have died but their families are still collecting their salaries in their names. Sadly, this lack of wages results in teachers soliciting bribes from students as a source of income; and students and parents are often happy to pay a dollar or two to “pass” a test or not have to repeat a grade.

By the time I started helping Winston with his reading, he was in second grade (after he had been going to school for five years), and he still could only “read” a few words – words that he had memorized, of course. Why? The answer lies in the poor quality of education in many of Liberia’s public and private schools. Classrooms are generally overcrowded and under-resourced, and many teachers are poorly trained. I visited Winston’s second grade class back in 2016 and found 100 children enrolled in his class, ranging from eight to sixteen years old. There was only one teacher, and a mere twenty-six copies of the second grade reading book. Reading class consisted of the teacher copying a page from the book onto the blackboard and the children copying it into their notebooks to take home and memorize. Periodically, the teacher called five or six students to the front of the room to “read” the page that they had been studying.

I began giving Winston reading lessons in 2016, once or twice a week. I began with kindergarten-level phonics material, and we are now about half-way through first grade readers published by A Beka. He is making

progress, but our lessons have stopped and started several times, alerting me to a third challenge in education: the home environment. Winston generally tells time by the sun, and therefore, frequently comes so late that he completely misses the lesson. At times, his parents send him to market to sell, forgetting or disregarding the fact that he’s supposed to be going for a free reading lesson. His father apparently can read, but his mother never went to school and cannot read, and there are no reading books in their home. This is typical of the average Liberian household, and it means that children do not grow up in a culture of reading. They are not read to as toddlers, nor do they ever see their parents sit down and read. Reading is something associated only with school and for a “grade”, rather than with home and for pleasure.

Winston’s case illustrates some of the challenges that face many Liberian children and those seeking to teach them. For several years now, we have been praying about the possibility of starting a Christian school in Liberia to try to meet some of these challenges. The biggest need at the moment is for God to call more missionaries to handle such a project, because there are very few teachable, qualified, conscientious, and godly Liberian teachers around.

Will you pray with us that the Lord will open the door for this ministry? ☛



Joanne Greer is a full-time missionary working under the FPCNA Mission Board in Monrovia, Liberia.



HILLTOP MEETINGS AT ALABAMA WEEK OF PRAYER

For the third time in the last ten years, Trinity Free Presbyterian Church in the Alabama town of the same name hosted the Week of Prayer and regular meeting of the presbytery May 7-11. It was the 60th Week of Prayer to take place in North America, and it was the occasion for celebrating the 30th anniversary of the founding of the church in Trinity. On the evening of May 10, the congregation, visiting ministers, elders, students, and many friends from the north Alabama region gathered in the downtown historic district of nearby Decatur for an elegant anniversary dinner. The church session took the occasion to honor Rev. and Mrs. Myron Mooney for their selfless devotion over three decades to the task of church building. The dinner provided a fitting capstone to the week.

The journey from Decatur's Beltline, where the various guests stayed during the week, to the church facility took about ten minutes each way with the end of the journey being a fairly long and steep hill that ends with the church building at the top. Inside is a beautiful, spacious, and comfortable facility in which the meetings of the week took place. Throughout the week, the people of the congregation labored diligently to provide for the needs of the visitors from

out of town. Every day, there was at least one meal at the church, and those who attended were grateful for the welcome bags of snacks that the host church presented on the opening evening. Among the visitors the first day were GRS students Peter Banfe and Logan Elder, and Rev. Dan Greenfield, Executive Secretary of the American Council of Christian Churches. It was the first time that an ACCC executive secretary visited the Week of Prayer.

Among the first items of business was the election of officers and the appointment of assistants to two of the officers. Because Rev. Mooney reached the maximum of serving two one-year terms as moderator, he was not eligible to be nominated for another term. The same was true of Rev. Ian Goligher as deputy moderator. The presbytery elected Rev. Goligher as its eighth moderator with Rev. Geoff Banister as deputy moderator, after his service the prior year as deputy clerk. The presbytery re-elected Rev. David Mook and Mr. George Robinson to new terms in the offices of clerk and treasurer and elected Dr. Stephen Pollock as deputy clerk. The presbytery reappointed its assistants to the presbytery officers: Rev. Derrick Bowman, associate minister in Winston-Salem, NC, as minute secretary

and Mr. Tim Farr, elder at Faith FPC, as assistant treasurer.

Among the presbytery's major items of business was the consideration of the report of a congregational meeting that took place in Faith FPC, Greenville, SC on March 21. The members voted in that meeting to issue a call to Rev. Armen Thomassian of the Calgary church to become the minister in Greenville. When the presbytery voted to ratify the report of the election, Rev. Goligher, the new moderator, presented the call to Rev. Thomassian and offered him the time allowed in which to respond; however, Rev. Thomassian was prepared to respond at the time, and indicated that he accepted the call. When the details of his move to the United States have been settled, the presbytery will arrange a service of installation for the minister-elect of the Greenville church.

The members of the presbytery received a report from Dr. Pollock, chairman of the Liaison Committee for the International Congress of Free Presbyterians. The fourth meeting of the Congress is to take place, the Lord willing, July 30-August 3, 2018 in the facilities of the Free Presbyterian Church of Malvern. The presbytery appointed Rev.

Stephen Hamilton as the third preacher from the North American presbytery, joining Rev. Mook and Dr. Mark Allison. Dr. Pollock added that the committee was still trying to arrange for Rev. Thapa of the Free Presbyterian Church of Nepal to attend the Congress, but his ability to obtain a visa was uncertain. The presbytery of Ulster has appointed Rev. Thomas Murray, outgoing moderator, and Rev. Peter McIntyre as its preachers.

A major highlight of the week was the presence of Mr. Richard Craig from Little London, Jamaica, who was on his first visit to the United States. Mr. Craig has been a main preacher in the Free Presbyterian mission in Little London since the murder of his close friend and colleague, Mr. Brian Morris, in 2012. During the week, Mr. Craig met the Examination Committee in connection with his application to be received under the care of the presbytery. On the third day of the presbytery meeting, the members voted to adopt the Examination Committee's recommendation that he should be received under the presbytery's care.

The Mission Board reported on the retirement of Kathy Walker after twelve years of service in Kenya. The Seminary Committee provided updates on the students under care of the presbytery, most of them in missionary settings. The presbytery adopted arrangements for the internship of Mr. Peter Banfe (GRS Class of 2018) that will begin in Greenville, with the Banfe family moving to Orlando for the balance of the internship where Mr. Banfe will be the regular supply preacher for the church there. Dr. Pollock will supervise the internship and will, at Rev. Mooney's request, replace him as interim moderator for the church.

As the presbytery adjourned in the afternoon on May 10, the moderator reminded the members of their next regular meeting, to be held in Barrie FPC in Ontario, October 1-5, 2018. ■



Rev. David G. Mook is the minister of Phoenix Free Presbyterian Church in Peoria, Arizona. He serves as clerk of the presbytery of the FPCNA, chairman of the Constitutional Documents Committee, and is an adjunct professor in the field of practical theology at Geneva Reformed Seminary.



PART ONE

"The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it" (Proverbs 29:7).

True Christians want to know why people suffer under poverty. They also want to know how to bring relief biblically. Considering the "cause of the poor" does not mean one replaces the gospel with social justice (what is often termed the "social gospel"); it rather recognizes that gospel grace demands a biblical answer to social problems like poverty, especially when believers have a majority voice in any society.

John Gill, the 18th century English theologian, said that righteous men "will take notice of and regard a poor man's cause, and take a good deal of pains and care that he is not injured." By contrast, he said, a wicked man "does not care to consider it, and look into it, and get knowledge of it, and do him justice; he will not take his cause in hand, or plead it."

When I moved from the United States to Kenya, East Africa, more than ten years ago, I was unaware of this Scripture verse. But I was immediately struck with the great contrast between the wealth of my home country and the poverty all around me in Kenya.

Having previously flown numerous times over the western United States and looked down upon endless farms that dotted the landscape as far as the

eye could see, I now wondered why much of sub-Saharan Africa had so few farms (mostly subsistence farms) surrounded by miles of untouched arable savannah. I continually asked the question, "Why are things so different?"

I was also struck by the difference in housing. For the most part, America has beautiful, level, neat, nicely-painted houses—many mansions even. But if one drives a few miles outside most African cities, he will see thatch-roofed mud huts everywhere. Where houses do exist, they are often sloppily constructed and poorly maintained. Why the difference? That was the question I asked myself over and over again.

Part of the answer started to come to me upon remembering a question that Soviet Union leader Mikhail Gorbachev asked US President Ronald Reagan as they looked down upon all the fancy houses while flying from Andrews Airforce Base in Maryland to the White House in Washington, DC. "Are these houses the homes of your leaders?" Gorbachev asked. Reagan replied, "No, these are the homes of our citizens." Gorbachev was flabbergasted! "Your citizens live like this?"

Gorbachev's assumption was very telling. He assumed the houses were owned by government officials.

[to be continued in next issue >>>>](#)



The Korean Pentecost

by William N. Blair and Bruce E. Hunt

The eyes of the world are looking at Korea today, and so are the eyes of the Lord, for He has much people there. The first Korean convert to Christ was baptized in 1886, and in just 90 years, the church in Korea grew to three million members. The growth of the church was greatly augmented by the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit in January, 1907. For many years the missionaries and the Korean believers had been praying for such a heaven-sent awakening. God does indeed answer prayer!

Dr. William Newton Blair preached a powerful message on being members of the body of Christ on January 14, 1907 to over 1,500 church leaders assembled in the Pyengyang Presbyterian Church. After the preaching, Rev. Graham Lee called for a time of prayer. As they began to pray, the Holy Spirit came down upon the assembly of people, who were melted to brokenness and tears. Repentance, confession of sin, and the Holy Spirit's power were experienced by most who were there. That was the beginning of great expansion and holiness in the whole Korean church.

In 1977, *Banner of Truth* published a book called ***The Korean Pentecost***. The first half of the book was written by Dr. William Newton Blair, the preacher who experienced the Holy Spirit's outpouring. The second half of the book was written by his son-in-law, Rev. Bruce Hunt, who was born in Korea and who personally suffered much of the persecution experienced by the Korean church.

Revival is a great blessing to be sought and to be experienced. Praise God for the millions of souls that have been brought to Christ suddenly by means of such spiritual outpourings! The history of these mighty events reveals that suffering almost always follows such signal blessings. The historical pattern is somewhat startling:

- The persecution of Acts 8 in which the

believers were scattered and Stephen was stoned, followed in the same year as the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2.

- The Protestant Reformation was the greatest revival since the day of Pentecost. Thirty years after Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the church door at Wittenburg, which ignited the Protestant Reformation, the Duke of Alva invaded Germany and killed 7,000 Protestant soldiers causing much destruction over the land.
- The First Great Awakening that occurred in America between 1730 and 1740 was followed by eight years of devastating war with Great Britain in the pursuit of American independence.
- The prayer meeting revival of 1857-1859 brought a million souls to Christ in the U.S., Great Britain, and even in South Africa. Two years later the American Civil War between the states destroyed hundreds of thousands of American lives, and 50,000 died in the Boer Wars between the British and the Dutch in South Africa.

How shameful that countries professing Christ would be killing each other! The Korean Revival was likewise preparatory for the awful sufferings of the Korean church. The Japanese army, which occupied Korea from 1910 to 1945, forced the Koreans to openly and publicly submit to Shinto shrines or be imprisoned, tortured, or killed. Many were the martyrs under Japanese rule. In many ways the Japanese were worse than the Communists in that the Japanese extended torture over many years of a person's lifetime, whereas the Communists simply eliminated opposition outright. When the Communists came before, during, and after the Korean War (1950-1953), thousands of Korean believers were martyred. Many of the accounts of the Korean martyrs are just as heart-rending and

inspiring as the histories of the Early Church martyrs and those from Reformation times.

The question could be posed: If such terrible sufferings often follow marvelous awakenings, why would any conscientious believer pray for revival? It is not revival, however, that causes the suffering. Christ said of a certainty that wars and rumors of wars would be part and parcel of human experience on Earth until the end of the world (Matthew 24:3,6). It is sin that has brought and continues to bring death, war, and suffering into the world. The gospel of Christ is the only remedy for sin, suffering, and death. Gospel work is winning souls one by one. This is blessedness indeed, even to win one soul to Christ. But when a terribly destructive war is looming on the horizon, it is marvelous that God often suddenly pours out His Spirit in gracious abundance to convert thousands so that they will be well-prepared before suffering and death arrive. Christians, therefore, ought to pray for awakening grace, so that the mighty ingathering of souls will prepare multitudes before wars and devastations come.

The church of the Lord Jesus Christ in North Korea in 2018 is still enduring some of the most horrible persecution of any Christians on earth. Those brethren need the constant prayers of all of Christ's blood-bought people. Thankfully, the church in South Korea is not suffering persecution at this time. The Free Presbyterian Church of North America (FPCNA) rejoices to be connected with the Korean FPC in Seoul, South Korea under the ministry of Rev. Seongkyu Lee, as well as the Korean FPC in Greenville, South Carolina, planted by the late Rev. David Lee and currently pastored by Rev. Sanghoon Han. May the Lord bless our Korean brothers and sisters both at home and abroad, and may reading this book help us to appreciate better the movement of God's Holy Spirit among the Korean people. ■

This book is available through *Banner of Truth Publishing* and *Amazon Books*.



Rev. Myron Mooney
is minister of Trinity FPC,
Decatur, Alabama.

FOURTH FREE PRESBYTERIAN INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS



**"Go ye into all the world
and preach the gospel..."**

Malvern FPC Pennsylvania, USA

**Preaching Christ in All His Fulness for
Men in All Their Need**

Monday July 30

Christ as Prophet, Rev. Stephen Hamilton
(Lehigh Valley FPC, Walnutport PA)

Tuesday July 31

Christ as Priest, Rev. Peter McIntyre
(Clogher Valley FPC, N. Ireland)

Wednesday August 1

Christ as King, Dr. Mark Allison (President
Geneva Reformed Seminary, Greenville SC)

Thursday August 2

Christ as Advocate, Rev. David Mook
(Phoenix FPC, AZ)

Friday August 3

Christ as Friend, Rev. Thomas Murray
(Comber FPC, N. Ireland, outgoing
Moderator of the Ulster Presbytery)

There will be missionary reports each evening and light refreshments will be served after the meetings.

The services will be webcast via the FPC of Malvern on sermonaudio.com (7 pm ET, Midnight BST) and will also be uploaded to sermonaudio.com For further information contact Dr. Stephen Pollock by email at malernfpc@yahoo.com



New Members in Lehigh Valley FPC

On Sunday, April 29, three new members were added to the congregation in Lehigh Valley. Each one learned the good news of the gospel while attending Sunday School classes taught by Mrs. June Hamilton. It has been encouraging for all in the church to

see the grace of God at work leading these young believers to remain steadfast in the doctrines of the gospel and to commit to the life and witness of the church.

Seminary Graduation

We congratulate Mr. Jae Bae from Korea, Mr. Andrew Cheptoo from Kenya and Mr.

Peter Banfe, from the United States on their graduation from Geneva Reformed Seminary, which took place in Greenville on June 1. Rev. John Wagner was the guest preacher. A full report with photos of this year's graduation ceremony along with Seminary news for the new school year will be included in our next issue.



Reformation Weekend

Toronto FPC is holding a Reformation Weekend and holding the Annual Dedication of Whitefield Christian Schools from October 18 – 21, 2018. Lord willing the guest preacher will be Dr. John McKnight, Senior Minister of Reformation Bible Church, Darlington, Maryland.



THE LILY AMONG THORNS

Song of Solomon 11:2

A patch of thorns is not the first place you would expect to see lilies growing. No matter what kind of lily you are thinking of – large or small – they are all beautiful, and delicate flowers. They are nothing like bold, hard, and sharply piercing thorns. There is no flower in all the world that is so pleasant in itself or so sweet in its perfume, as the lily of the valley. Modest and pure white, it meekly hangs its slender bells, and sways gently when the warm breath of summer lands upon it. Think of such a flower growing up in coarse thorns! It is like thinking of a dove among vultures or a white lamb among cruel sharp-toothed wolves.

We can't forget from season to season, how beautiful the lily is. But let us also try not to forget how beautiful a Christian girl or boy is in the eyes of Jesus. You see, we haven't a mirror to show us exactly how Jesus sees us. The only mirror that could show us that is Jesus Himself. We can look in a regular mirror and see what we look like. But to see what we *will one day come to be* in Jesus, we

must look at *Him* in God's Holy Word. For everyone who loves--and is loved by Jesus--shall be made like Him. Isn't Jesus beautiful? He is the 'chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely' (Song of Sol. 5:10). There is never a flower on the earth that can compare with Him, and nothing we should delight in more. You may think you are very plain when you look in the mirror, and sometimes other people may fail to see anything very beautiful about you either; but when Jesus looks on any one who loves Him, in His eyes that one is very, very lovely indeed. And when the glad day comes that we are with Him in heaven, we will be like the King Himself in all His beauty. If you love Jesus, never forget what He thinks of you; it will help you when you are cast down. Jesus said that the splendors of Solomon's kingdom could not equal the beauty of God's lilies. And so is the beauty of every Christian girl or boy in the eyes of Jesus—far, far above any man-made beauty. As lilies in this world, you must grow up

among thorns; and may have noticed that thorns don't hurt one another. Because they are hard, they don't feel the barbs of other thorns around them. But thorns can easily wound tender lilies. The more you want to love and obey Jesus, to stay pure, and to please Him, the more often you will feel pained and saddened by sinful things around you. This shows that you are indeed a lily and not a thorn. Never let yourself get accustomed to sin, for the more you feel it, the more you will tremble at it. The more it hurts you, the more you will want to stay away from it. The more you keep from it, the more like the lily you will become. You can't avoid living around those who don't love the Lord, but by refusing to partake of their sins, you can brightly show forth the beauty of Christ. ☞

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. 385



A WORD WORTH KNOWING

love•ly
to be desired with great delight



Winter 2018



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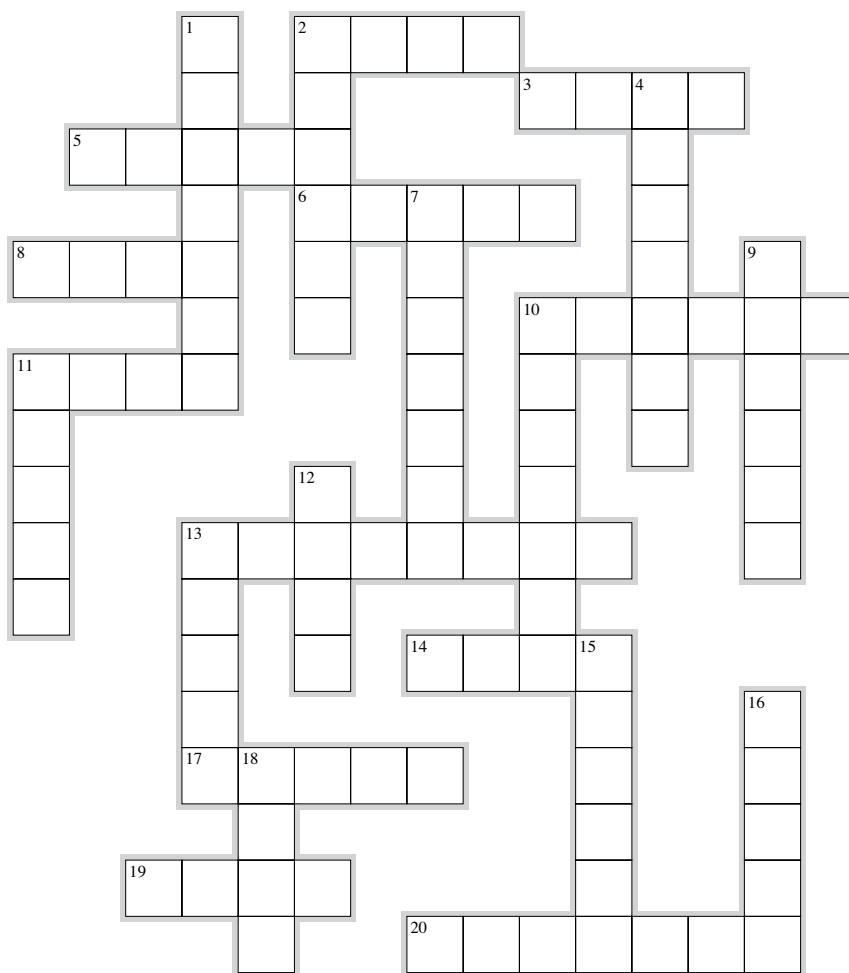
Kids' Crossword Puzzle

Across

2. "He that dwelleth in ___ dwelleth in God." (1 John 4:16)
3. "What things were gain to me, those I counted ___ for Christ." (Philippians 3:7)
5. "Thou shalt ... ___ them in the mountain of thine inheritance." (Exodus 15:17)
6. "Speak to the earth, and it shall ___ thee." (Job 12:8)
8. "A good ___ is better than precious ointment." (Ecclesiastes 7:1)
10. "The midwives ___ God." (Exodus 1:21)
11. "Ye shall be my ___ and daughters." (2 Corinthians 6:18)
13. "Lo, ___ are an heritage of the LORD." (Psalm 127:3)
14. "So the ___ shall be first, and the first last." (Matthew 20:16)
17. "We were reconciled to God by the ___ of his Son." (Romans 5:10)
19. "He shall ___ his flock like a shepherd." (Isaiah 40:11)
20. "For the Lord will not ___ his people." (1 Samuel 12:22)
2. "Whosoever shall offend one of these ___ ones that believe in me." (Mark 9:42)
4. "Remember ye the law of Moses my ___." (Malachi 4:4)
7. "Solomon in all his glory was not ___ like one of these." (Matthew 6:29)
9. "They shall be mine ... when I make up my ___." (Malachi 3:17)
10. "The ___ appear on the earth." (Song of Solomon 2:12)
11. "For now we live, if ye ___ fast in the Lord." (1 Thessalonians 3:8)
12. "We shall be ___ him." (1 John 3:2)
13. "Receive the kingdom of God as a little ___." (Mark 10:15)
15. "But we are bound to give ___ always to God for you." (2 Thessalonians 2:13)
16. "Let us make man in our ___." (Genesis 1:26)
18. "God took the man, and put him into the garden of ___." (Genesis 2:15)

Down

1. "I see the ___ opened, and the Son of man standing." (Acts 7:56)



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 Aug. 15, 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

JULY 14 - 21	Free Presbyterian Youth Camp, Rock Mountain Bible Camp, Scranton, PA
JULY 30 - AUG. 3	International Congress of Free Presbyterians, Pennsylvania, USA
JULY 30 - AUG. 3	Vacation Bible School in Mexico City FPC
OCT. 1 - 5	Fall Week of Prayer and Presbyterian Meetings in Barrie, Ontario
OCT. 18 - 21	Reformation Weekend in Toronto FPC & Annual Dedication Services for Whitefield Christian Schools

To God Be the Glory

Singing has been a part of my life since before I can remember. Music was played and sung in the house when I was a child, and I remember waking up on the Lord's Day to sweet gospel hymns being played on Christian radio. Oftentimes I made a "joyful noise" with my family for special church music when we kids were quite young. Growing up in West Virginia, going to school at Bob Jones University, and being introduced to the reformed faith in later years, the filing cabinet of my mind is filled with quite an assortment of Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs and choruses, all having served to direct my thoughts toward the Savior at various ages and stages of life. Some of my favorites are individual Scripture verses put to music which I have endeavored to pass along to the children in my life over the years. Hence, it would be impossible for me to choose a favorite hymn.

There is one hymn, however, that has occupied a special place in my life and marriage and that is *To God be the Glory*, written by Fanny Crosby in 1875. Why? My husband Phil was raised in New York and brought up in a Roman Catholic home. From a human standpoint, he randomly chose to attend West Virginia University, and during his freshman year was invited

to church by an unsaved football player who had been invited by two zealous Christians to attend my home church in Morgantown, WV. The Lord drew Phil's heart to Himself through the preaching of the gospel and he was born again that morning. Eventually, the two of us met and a relationship ensued. The circumstances God used to save our sinful souls and to bring us together were so precious that after the officiating minister pronounced us man and wife, we sang with the congregation, "To God be the Glory!"

*To God be the glory, great things He
hath done!
So loved He the world that He gave us
His Son,
Who yielded His life
an atonement for sin,
And opened the life gate that all may
go in.*

The Lord called my husband to preach and sent us to western New York to plant a church. God's direction and provision were so distinct that our hearts cried out again, "To God be the glory!" We sang the song on various occasions such as Phil's

ordination, at the dedication of the church building, at the burning of the church mortgage, and so on. God has sustained us in the blessings and trials of the ministry and thus we say,

*Great things He hath taught us, great
things He hath done,
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the
Son;
But purer and higher, and greater will be
Our wonder, our transport, when Jesus
we see.*

We also sang this song at the dedication of our children. What made these times even more special was that we had been told by physicians that we would probably never be able to have children. After waiting for what seemed like a long time, the Lord gave us four children and once again we felt compelled to repeat that familiar line with heartfelt thanks, "To God be the glory!" ❖



Mrs. Tonia Owen is the wife of Pastor Phil Owen, Boston, NY