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February 1, 2016

*[this month commences our 17th year of living by faith in our itinerant work 😊].

“IN WONDER AT WESTMINSTER”



Dear Friends & Family,

A few years ago a friend invited me to accompany him to a 1-day preaching seminar conducted at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. I had heard of Westminster for decades but had never been, only to discover I had lived exactly 40 miles from it for almost 20 years. One of my theo-logical mentors & friends, John Janney, who had attended there in the 60's, told me years ago the campus was “nothing to look at”, et al, as far as grandeur of facilities was concerned. And yet, when I stepped out of the car & looked around, I was instantly in awe. My thoughts went something like this: “So, this is it-this is where some of the greatest & soundest theological minds in American history wrote, taught, preached, & resided decades ago.” Founded in the early 20th century as a “rebuttal” to Princeton liberalism, which was so plaguing that university, Westminster has produced some of the greatest purveyors of truth our country has ever known-truth-that preserves a nation.”

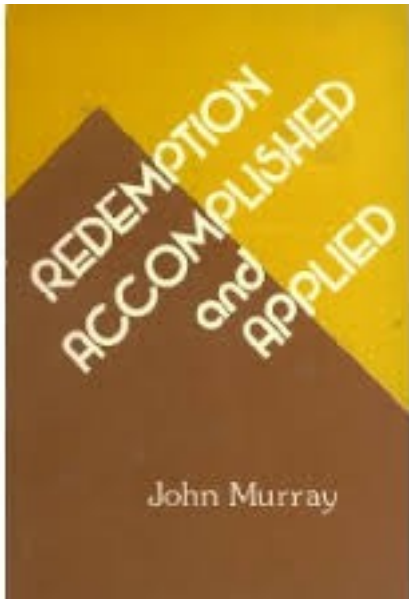
JUST LIKE IN THE MOVIES



I eventually wound up in the library. I was like a young boy in a candy shop. It wasn't so much the plenteous volumes of knowledge of The Holy One on the shelves that intrigued me [though surely if I took to the time to open one they surely would!]. Rather, it was the plethora of pictures hanging on the walls of faculty & staff from decades gone by. One of my all-time favorite movies, probably in the top 5, is *The Human Comedy*, from 1940, starring Van Johnson, Mickey Rooney, & Fay Bainter. In it, Rooney's little brother "Ulysees", had a friend "Lionel", who was the town misfit. And yet, he was very childlike, tenderhearted, innocent, & humble. He & Ulysees wandered into the town library one day, & like me, they were in awe as they walked through the aisles dwarfed by countless books that neither of them could read. That's how I feel around the Westminster divines, & other theologians that I devour & admire. I feel as if I know nothing. And I've studied for 40+ years! This reminds me of an other line from the movie. As the two boys are perusing through the books, the aged librarian comes up to them, wondering what they're doing. When she discovers they can't read yet & that they're there just marveling at the sheer magnitude of knowledge to be obtained via reading, she smiles & says, "I've been reading for 70 years now & it's not nearly enough." Then-there he was-Professor John Murray-dressed in his scholarly robes. I shall never forget it. It was as if I were a child in a movie theater for the first time, seeing my "hero" up on the big screen. Murray-a Scotsman, spoke with a noticeable accent & had a glass eye. Surely, he is one of my top 3-favorite theologians. I shall never forget an experience I had via Dr. Murray while reading his work "Redemption: Accomplished & Applied", from 1955, the year I was born. [An aside: it is a enlightening & fascinating thing to notice the year a book that is influencing you was published-to ponder where you were in your life's journey when it came

out-whether you were on the planet yet, if you were still in the kingdom of darkness, & what was being written, published, & promulgated for The Kingdom of God while you were still enslaved in **Satan's** kingdom, being outside the pale of grace & having no knowledge or interest in such things at that time!].

I READ-IT FILLED MY HEAD, & TOOK ME OFF BED



I was at a conference at Elim Bible Institute. I was lying on a bed in Faling Hall [my former dorm my freshman year in 1976] in the middle of the afternoon reading the above work. As I read Dr. Murray's insights into divine grace, who, unlike so many in American theological circles, doesn't end with God's provision of grace, leaving it up to men to “take advantage of it or not”, but given our helplessness & inability due to our sin, said grace must be applied to men who are dead in trespasses & sins, I became overwhelmed by God's love & grace upon my own life-that this is actually what He did for me. On Sunday, March 31, 1974, at twelve noon, our gracious Father applied the truth of the gospel to my heart, which I had heard all of my life up to that point, but remained in darkness. My heart was struck-& melted with an overwhelming sense of unworthi-ness, coupled with gratitude. I had to get off the bed & lie on my face on the floor. Dr. Murray thus did to me by his insights & writings what I have ached to do in the pulpit every time I preach: to proclaim Christ in such a way via content & His Spirit's anointing that when I am finished [or God willing even before!] people want to get on their faces & “adore on the floor”. O God, may it be so!

[INTER-TRINITARIAN LOVE](#)



In the actual conference that day, I had my 1st encounter with Dr. Carl Trueman. He too comes from the United Kingdom. His message that day that I shall never forget? It was on the love between the 3 Members of the Trinity. Wow. Just the title blew me away. I was overwhelmed & amazed by the very notion that I had never really pondered before—at least not in any depth. How my heart melted as I sat there & listened of this glorious aspect of the Godhead, & how They deeply love & enjoy each Other's fellowship. I was recently reminded of Dr. Trueman's message while studying during the Christmas season. In Matthew 12, the Holy Spirit inspires Matthew to quote Isaiah the prophet, who quotes God the Father, Who is speaking of His Son. Wow. “Behold, MY [Notice the possessive case? A possessiveness birthed by love?] Servant, Whom I uphold” [in chapter 4 of this same gospel the devil [even HE knows about this!] quotes a psalm citing the Father's meticulous love, care, nurture, & protection of His incarnated Son, viz, “He [the Father] will give His angels a commission of protective care over You, so that You won't even stub Your toe against a stone.” [paraphrase mine]. Matthew goes on to say, “MY [there is the Father's loving possessiveness of His Christ again!] Chosen One, in Whom My Spirit is well-pleased...I will put MY Spirit [There's the Father's intimacy with the Holy Spirit] upon Him...” [Mt. 12:18ff].

WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND



This intimate, unfathomable love, care, honor, & protection that the Father lavishes on His Son, & may I say in the light of it?, WOE to those who abused, crushed, & crucified His Darling of Heaven, if they died in their sin! The Father toward them will be like a mother bear who was robbed of her cub. It will be an eternal ferocity unfathomable by human minds. However, but first, wonder of wonders, this same divine “doting” Father will have first handed His Son into the hands of His ruthless enemies-to most effectively glorify Himself & His Son: His love, His holiness, His justice, His hatred of sin, His shrewdness with His enemies, etc., & to save His people. The Father Himself, to do those said tasks, will be “pleased to bruise Him” [Isa. 53:10]. Back to the love of the Father toward His Son-in turn, we see Jesus holding in high esteem, honor, love, & dignity the Person of the Holy Spirit. Watch this-He says, “ANY” [O, wondrous grace!] sin & blasphemy spoken by people will be forgiven ...” [Mt.12:31,32]. Isn't it amazing, Beloved? He could have easily listed some that would be & some that wouldn't be, & have every right to, since forgiveness is based on sovereign choice & mercy, but He says, “any”! He goes on to say, any word spoken against Himself, viz, The Son of Man, will be forgiven, “BUT, whoever speaks a word against the Holy Spirit, he will NOT be forgiven, neither in this age, nor the age to come.” D.A. Carson comments that is that day's way of saying “NEVER”! O God. There are few more sobering words in all of Scripture. And yet, how my heart melted in adoration for Jesus as I saw Him so lovingly respect, honor, & defend the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. Meditation on these blessed truths will bring us, as Dr. Murray once wrote, “to the mountains of God”. It has for me.

MUSLIM TERRORISTS & SCOTS-ALL IN THE SAME



BOAT

My animosity toward Isis terrorists was somewhat tempered recently via a message I heard at our oldest son's church in OH by a guest speaker, a.k.a., Bob Blincoe, of Frontiers USA Missions. He warned the audience to watch their attitude toward the Muslim extremists, & their ruthless, fanatical ISIS ways of executions & beheadings. How so? Blincoe, being a Scott, like John Murray, John Knox, Thomas Chalmers, & me (!). [I myself have Scottish blood in me via my mother's side-her maiden name was "Reid"], said that before the Scots were civilized, this barbarian ethnicity north of the Roman emperor Hadrian's wall, practiced beheading & cannibalism! He then said to ponder what the gospel intrusion into their land produced! He warned us if the bringers of the gospel to the Scots had the attitude many Christians have today? They'd still be cannibals! Who knows but that there may be another Saul of Tarsus hidden among Isis' ranks! Amen.



Ministry/events for FEBRUARY & those not listed in last month's newsletter: **Caboose! on the loose:**

Jan. 27: IC, Wilmington, DE: Tabernacle of David: worship leader

Jan. 28: IC, Wilmington, DE: Via Dolorosa Room Captains' mtg.

Jan. 31: Sunday Breakfast Mission, Wilmington, DE: women & children's chapel

Feb. 2: Petra Church, New Holland, PA: hsc board mtg.//HN pastors' mtg.

Feb. 3: Alice Focht Memorial Methodist Church, Birdsboro, PA: children's mtg.

Feb. 3: Birdsboro Community Center, Birdsboro, PA: community youth mtg.

Feb. 16-19: Hinkletown Mennonite School, Hinkletown, PA: spiritual emphasis week

Feb. 21: IC, Wilmington, DE: "Lincoln & Grant" drama: I'm portraying "Ulyses" : 0)

*Michael is an ordained *Elim Fellowship* itinerant Stateside missionary & is also licensed to preach the gospel by the local church he attends, Immanuel Church. *Caboose!* is also an affiliate ministry of *The Hopewell Network of Churches*. For 14 years he served on various local church staffs as their children's pastor. Since 2000 Kim & he have lived by faith, having no set salary, retirement, etc. to speak of. Yet-this is their calling at this season of their lives. Michael preaches God's Word & systematic theology, using both drama & visual aids, to all age groups, from children to senior citizens, either separately or combined. To help support this work, please make all tax-deductible gifts payable to: **Elim Fellowship**, c/o 1703 Dalton Rd., Lima, NY 14485, marking it "Preferred-Michael R. Guertin" or https://www.denarionline.com/DONORSERVICES/TEMPLATEPAGE.ASPXCOMP_REF=_ELIMFEL&SID=vjywxzcot0d5c5pnrq1f0rnl&CONTENT=MISSIONARY&MISSION_REF=E8668ABEC7

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