

The Young People's Magazine

**Issued by the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland
Reformed in Doctrine, Worship and Practice**

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” Ecclesiastes 12:1



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Cover Picture: *A barge being pulled along the River Thames in London.* See page 150.

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Editor: Rev Kenneth D Macleod BSc, F P Manse, Ferry Road, Leverburgh, Isle of Harris, HS5 3UA; tel: 01859 520271; e-mail: kdmacleod@gmail.com. All unsigned articles are by the Editor.

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Volume 79

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Number 8

Nothing but Christ

John Naylor was old. He was now ill. He had some outward religion; for instance, he had prayed three times every day for as long as he could remember. But he did not know the way of salvation.

One day Thomas Bradbury, a preacher, came to see him and tried to show him his need as a sinner. Naylor found what he had to say “rather puzzling”.

Bradbury went on to show that a perfect God demands “perfect obedience to His holy law – an obedience of the thoughts and intentions of our hearts, as well as of our words and actions. . . . We have all sinned and come short of God’s glory, and the sentence of His law . . . is *death*.”

Naylor was disturbed by the thought that the punishment which must follow sin is eternal death. He exclaimed pitifully, “Then we are shut out of heaven altogether”.

“It is a very good sign when a soul finds out that truth”, Bradbury replied. And he went on to emphasise that “the law of God – which is holy and just and good – tells us what to do, but aggravates our case by showing that we are unable to do it”.

Naylor noted sadly, “That’s worse than all”.

Bradbury then spoke somewhat like this: If you have found out that all your attempts to do what is right are only adding to your sin, then you will long for Christ. He is “the One in whose name, and through whose merits, peace will be yours and a good hope of enjoying God’s presence for ever”.

“That’s just what I do want.”

Two days later, Bradbury called again. Naylor referred to his visitor’s words on his last call: “I thought you were robbing me of all that gave me a bit of comfort. But I think I see it all now: nothing but Christ will do.”

He had now come to “see that, because of what Jesus has done, He can be just and take my soul to heaven. His blood was shed for such sinners as me.” In the past, Naylor had been trusting in himself – that he could do something that would persuade God to save him. Now he knew that this was a vain hope, for “nothing but Christ will do”. He had begun to trust *in Jesus alone* as a Saviour suitable for sinners like himself.

A few days later John Naylor passed away to a better world. What a mercy that he discovered in time – though just in time – that nothing but Christ will do for a sinner on his way to eternity! Unless sinners – you and I included – will find Christ *before* life ebbs away, they will perish for ever in the awfulness of a lost eternity.

We have noticed already that Naylor used to rely on his prayers. He confessed, “I was looking to my honesty and thinking my prayers would get me to heaven”. But how could he or anyone else expect God to hear their prayers apart from Christ? When we pray, we need Him to stand between us and God – to be a Mediator. Our prayers have no value in themselves; when we pray, we are seeking God’s blessing; we are asking Him to help us. But we have nothing to pay Him with. Not our prayers, for they are stained with sin. Nor our honesty – even if we can claim to be honest – it too is imperfect.

Nothing but Christ will do; we dare not look to our honesty; we dare not trust in our prayers; they are no foundation to rest on when approaching God. To trust in anything we can do is to insult God, who has provided a salvation suited to our needs; it is to reject Christ and all He has done. Only if our prayers are sent up to God *for Jesus’ sake*, can they be answered. To ask for blessings for Jesus’ sake is to acknowledge that He, the God-man, who is completely sinless, must present our petitions to God on our behalf.

This is true even if we are asking for salvation. If we are concerned about our sins and the terrible punishment that they deserve, let us remember that nothing but Christ will do. Suppose we are totally honest in everything we do for the rest of our lives, how can that deliver us from the guilt of our past lies and other forms of dishonesty? Nor can we be saved through keeping any of God’s commandments. The awful fact is that we can never keep any of them perfectly.

For instance, the First Commandment tells us to worship only the true God, and to do so with all our heart, with perfect sincerity. That is completely beyond any sinner’s power. Many sinners trust, not only in their prayers, but also in reading the Bible and attending church services. Yet it would be worse not to do these things. Yes, we sin as, for instance, we read the Bible, because we may do it half-heartedly and not give to God the glory that we ought to give Him as He reveals Himself in the words we read.

But it would be more sinful not to read the Bible, to ignore God’s revelation completely. However sinful our prayers may be, it would be more sinful to ignore God and not pray. However sinful we may be during public worship – not listening properly, rejecting the commands of God, not treating the gospel seriously, having low thoughts about God and His glory, and refusing to adore Him with our whole soul – it would be even more

sinful to stay away. Yet nothing we can do will save us from our sins; nothing but Christ will do.

Now think of the Third Commandment. It forbids us to “take the name of the Lord in vain”. Suppose you do not use any of God’s names or of Jesus’ names as a curse, yet can you consider yourself free from breaking this commandment? Absolutely not. You still have to ask yourself: Have I always been “holy and reverent” (words from *The Shorter Catechism*), not only in using God’s names but also in thinking and speaking about God?

For instance, do you always make a holy response to the words, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”? If you are to say, Yes, to that question, you must trust wholeheartedly on Him as the Saviour of sinners; you must love Him with total sincerity; and your heart must go out to Him in a sense of wonder and true worship. But that perfection will only be possible in heaven. In this life, the solemn fact is that we go on breaking the Third Commandment. We cannot claim to keep that part of God’s law satisfactorily. Nothing but Christ will do for the salvation of our souls.

Let us think also about the Fourth Commandment, which directs us to “remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy”. How poor the human memory is when it comes to remembering to keep the Lord’s Day holy! How difficult to keep control of our words so that nothing unnecessary is spoken! And it is even more difficult to control our thoughts so that they are all to the glory of God. Clearly no one can keep this Commandment in such a way that they can set their obedience before God and claim acceptance on that basis. Surely it is obvious that nothing but Christ will do for our salvation.

But how perfect is all that Christ has done! He kept the law as the Substitute for sinners; He kept all God’s commandments and He did so perfectly. So all who believe in Him are treated as if they themselves had kept all these commandments perfectly, for Jesus’ sake. So they will be brought to heaven to enjoy its perfect blessedness. And one of the most wonderful things about heaven is that they will never sin again when they get there; they will always do God’s will perfectly.

Let us remember also the wonder of Christ’s sufferings and death; in all these also He was the Substitute for sinners. He endured the whole punishment that was due to everyone who will ever believe on Him. So, because of Christ’s perfect work in their place, they will never perish. But let us always bear in mind that nothing but Christ will do. He still calls *you* to believe in Him, to trust in Him. But do not delay. Come to Him at once. John Naylor entered the kingdom of God at almost the last moment of his life. But do not presume that this will be possible for you. Do not harden your heart against the Saviour. Look to Him now.

For Junior Readers

“He Has Gone to His Rest”

A man came back to the village where he was born. He had been away for a long time. He asked about a man he used to know, a man called N. This was not his full name, of course – just the first letter of his surname.

“He has gone to his rest”, came the answer.

Have you ever noticed the verse: “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God” (Hebrews 4:9)? It speaks of a rest after this life is over – a rest in heaven, from all the difficulties, sadness, troubles and sin in this world. But notice carefully: who will enter into that rest? The people of God: those who love Him and trust in Him and want to do what pleases Him. These are the people who will get to heaven.

N was a poor man. He worked hard, but people often noticed how worn his clothes were. He just had very little money, and he had a wife and many children. It was very difficult for him to provide food and clothes for them all. Yet the children never went hungry. But N sometimes did.

Sometimes he could not find anyone to employ him. When that happened, he spent his time making brushes and baskets. He did not want to be idle, and he would earn some money in any honest way. But often, when N came home in the evening, he would have to spend a lot of time watching at his wife's bedside because she was unwell.

Yet no one ever heard him complaining. Instead, he often said he had many reasons to be thankful. And when he prayed at the prayer meeting, he always took care to give thanks to God for His goodness. A worldly man heard him pray and was amazed. The man said about N: “He seems to be honest in his prayers as he is in everything else, but I can't see what he has to be thankful for”. The man had never understood the goodness of God in little things and especially in providing salvation.

A rich man lived nearby, but N felt sorry for him. N felt that really this man was poor. Why did N think like that? Because the rich man was unconverted; had laid up no treasure in heaven. He was not ready to die. N was also sorry for the man because he had no friends, although he had lots of people around him. But what did N really mean? He meant that the man did not have Christ for his friend. So when the man would die, he would be left with no friends at all – unless, before then, he would trust in the Saviour.

Many people wondered how a man who was so good could be so poor. Some suggested that N could not be so good as he seemed to be. It was not that N claimed to have any goodness. He just thought of himself as a saved sinner. But it was obvious that he lived a holy life

Once a man started telling lies about N, accusing him of some very serious sin. A lot of people believed the lies, but N said nothing about it to anyone. He just prayed about it to God. It must have been very difficult for N and it often kept him awake at night. But at last God answered N's prayers. The man who told the lies confessed that what he had said was false. He told the lies because N was a godly man. The man must have hated God and anyone who was in any way like God.

In the end N died; he went to his rest. How different heaven would be for him. No longer would he have to work hard for very little money; he was now resting from all his struggles. No longer would he have to go hungry; he was now resting in a place where no one will ever be hungry again. No longer would he be upset to hear about people who told lies about him; he was now resting from all the nastiness of this world. No longer would he sin – and that was the most important thing – he was now resting in a state which is free from sin.

Now he could serve God perfectly. Now he could love Christ with his whole heart. N had trusted in Jesus Christ in this world. If he had not done so, he would never have been a godly man.

Have you ever thought about what will happen to you when you die? Will you be fit for heaven? Only if you trust in Jesus Christ will you be able to follow N to the rest which remains for the people of God.

Regeneration and Conversion

3. What God Does and What Sinners Do

Rev K M Watkins

This is the final part of a paper given at this year's Youth Conference. Its subtitle was: "Make the tree good, and its fruit will be good". Regeneration is the Holy Spirit changing an evil tree into a good one. Conversion is the good fruit that comes immediately from that now-regenerated tree.

By nature, sinners are evil "trees" which can only bring forth the evil fruits of sin and unbelief. Only when they have been regenerated can they bring forth the good fruits of conversion – faith and repentance.

Regeneration, the change of the soul from evil to good, is not something that a sinner can do for himself. Who does it then? Regeneration is something that God does, something that God *alone* does. Regeneration is all of the Lord. Specifically, it is done by the Spirit of God. The Lord Jesus taught Nicodemus that no one can enter into, or even see, the kingdom of God without being born again. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born

again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). He repeated the same thing in different words in verse 5: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”. You can see that the new birth is brought about by the Spirit. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (verse 6).

The passage in Ezekiel, “Then will I sprinkle clean *water* upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new *spirit* will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:25-26), helps us to understand this. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit cleanses the soul spiritually, as water cleanses the body physically. Paul joins these twin themes in Titus 3:5, when he says that God saves “by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost”.

The Lord Jesus said that the heavenly wind of the Holy Spirit “bloweth where it listeth” – that is, where He wishes – (John 3:8), meaning that the Spirit acts sovereignly in giving regeneration. Unconverted sinners are like the dry bones in Ezekiel’s valley. As they learn, by experience after experience, the power of spiritual death within themselves, they almost despair if these bones can ever live, and repent and believe. But see what happened. Ezekiel went on preaching, he then prayed for the wind to come, to blow upon these slain that they might live. And the wind – the Holy Spirit – did come. And life came into the bones – they were regenerated. “They lived.” And being converted, they rose up and “stood upon their feet” – they believed and repented.

Think about that. To avoid hell torment for ever, you must repent and believe the gospel. But repentance and faith, the acts of conversion, can only be done when you are regenerated. And only the Lord can regenerate you, by the wind of the Holy Spirit coming in sovereign grace. If you took that to heart, would it not produce an urgency in you, crying to the Lord to create in you a new heart? If you were in a burning building and the exit door was locked, but you had the key, perhaps you would take your time, collecting your belongings before leaving. But if you did not have the key, and had to get the attention of someone outside, you would not delay for a moment, but you would be crying out at the top of your voice for someone to come and unlock the door for you. If you really understand regeneration and conversion, surely that is what you will be doing!

Conversion is different from regeneration. In both its parts, faith and repentance, the sinner himself acts. Faith and repentance are gifts from God

and the sinner is persuaded and enabled to do them only by the Lord's gracious power, yet the sinner himself does them. Regeneration is what God does to the soul. Conversion is what the soul itself then does, enabled by God. Regeneration is a dead soul being given life; conversion is the first activity of that now-living soul. Regeneration is the evil tree being made into a good one; conversion is the good tree bringing forth good fruit in believing and repenting.

There is no delay between regeneration and conversion. Conversion follows regeneration immediately. As soon as the sinner is born again he is converted. He believes in Christ and repents of sin straight away. "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). When you are born again, immediately you are in a new world. The old life has gone; the new has begun. Regeneration never lies dormant, without faith and without repentance. A good tree brings forth good fruit.

Sometimes you might be told that if you are praying for grace you must already have grace. But desiring grace and seeking grace are not always the same as having grace. Faith and repentance, these are the two saving graces, the two activities of the soul immediately produced by regeneration. If your soul has been made a good tree by regeneration, these are the two fruits that will immediately follow. God has joined them together when applying salvation to His elect, and we put them asunder at our peril.

Many things often take place in the soul's experience before regeneration and conversion: legal fears, wishes for salvation, cries for mercy, leaving off some sins, becoming more diligent in using the means of grace. But in themselves these are *preparatory*; they are not saving. None are proofs of saving grace. Every one of them can be and is produced by the *common* operations of the Spirit. They are called *common*, because they are experienced by both the elect and the non-elect – they are things common to them both. They can and do happen, not only to those who come to the Lord Jesus for salvation, but also to others under the gospel who in the end are never saved. Therefore you must never rest satisfied in them. They are not the good fruits produced only by regeneration.

So, how can you know if you have experienced regeneration? How can you know if the tree of your soul has been made good? Only by the fruits of faith and repentance, the twin exercises of conversion. Pray over the *Shorter Catechism's* definitions of the two saving graces.

"*Faith* in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the gospel". You are not looking to see if you wish you had Jesus for your Saviour, and have made

a few prayers for that, but whether you have actually embraced Him in the arms of faith, trusting Him alone for all of your salvation.

“Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after, new obedience.” You are not merely looking to see if you have been troubled by sin, or wished you had not done it, or tried to stop it. You are looking to see whether you have so felt sin’s grievousness, along with Christ’s mercy, that you are turning your back on sin once and for all, in favour of a life of gospel obedience.

Regeneration and conversion. Make the tree good and its fruit will be good. Never rest until you have experienced the great change of regeneration, shown by your believing and repenting.

“Them that Honour Me”

The Lord’s Supper was to be observed the next Sabbath in a London church. So the minister told the congregation that those who wanted to speak to him about going to the Supper for the first time should come to his house the next Thursday evening. When the minister came home that evening he found several people waiting for him. Among them was a little old man. As the minister entered the room, the man called out, “Here’s Jonathan Brown, that can neither read nor write”. He had come in answer to the invitation “to hear what you have to say to me”.

Seeing Jonathan was the oldest of those who came, the minister spoke to him first. Jonathan was sure the minister had looked specially in his direction when he gave the invitation. But there were many people in the congregation and the minister did not know Jonathan. But that did not matter; Jonathan was as welcome to come as anyone else.

Jonathan hoped that the minister would help him “to steer right in his way to heaven, which was the thing I most earnestly desire”. He assured the minister that he was “as honest a man as any in the parish”. But he had found out that this was not enough to bring him to heaven, and he wanted the minister’s advice.

Jonathan wanted to tell the story of his life. He asked the minister not to interrupt him until he was finished, because, he said, “if you put me out, I shan’t know how to go on where I left off, but must begin again”. The minister was impressed with Jonathan’s earnestness, so he brought him to another room, where they could speak together privately. And he promised

not to interrupt until Jonathan was finished. Then he would give him “some advice that, with the blessing of God, might do him good”.

Jonathan began by saying that he could not remember his father and his mother. The woman who looked after him when he was very young put him in the care of a barge master when he was just 6 or 7 years old. He grew up on a barge that sailed along a canal running north from London. The barge master was kind to him; he fed him well and provided him with the clothes he needed. But Jonathan never had the opportunity of attending school. The barge master gave him various little jobs to do.

Jonathan hated lying and found something inside him (his conscience) often telling him that he should keep from the wicked things he heard and saw around him each day. Yet he was uneasy; he felt that his own efforts to keep from doing wrong were not enough. But he did not know what he needed; no one had ever taught him from the Bible. He had no idea of worshipping God; he had only heard the name of God when others around him were cursing and swearing. He never heard anything worthwhile about Christ. He did not know that any day was different from the others; so he knew nothing about keeping the Sabbath.

Jonathan felt very unsatisfied with his life and decided to go to live somewhere else. First he went to see the lady who had looked after him when he was very young. She gave him a row for leaving his master, as he had no one else to look after him. But he told her that he could not live that kind of life any longer; so he could not go back, whatever would happen to him. In the end the lady directed him to a cousin of his in London. The cousin was a pipe maker and took Jonathan on as an apprentice.

One Sabbath morning he was walking aimlessly about the streets. He saw a lot of people going into a building and he followed them; he thought they were going to see something interesting. When Jonathan went in, he saw a lot of people sitting in pews, and one man in black clothes standing high above the others. The man was speaking very earnestly to the people, telling them that they had souls as well as bodies, and that there was another life after this one. The man told them that all who were not careful to serve and please God in this life would be miserable in the other life, which would go on for ever.

The man went on to speak about Jesus Christ, who was so kind as to come from heaven to earth, to show the way from earth to heaven. And it was only through Him that anyone could have God’s favour and be happy in the other life. Jonathan was so impressed by what he heard that he decided firmly that he would never live anywhere unless he could hear about Jesus Christ. He wanted to have his soul saved through Him.

When he went back to his cousin's house, Jonathan told him what he had heard about Jesus Christ and what he had decided to do. To his surprise, this cousin said that he knew about these things long before then. He had not told Jonathan because he assumed that he knew already. Clearly the cousin did not care about his soul when he did not trouble to go to church.

At last the barge master, sorry to lose a good worker, came looking for Jonathan and, after a lot of searching, found him at his pipe-layer cousin's place. The master asked Jonathan what had made him go away.

Jonathan promised to tell him later and first asked, "Can you charge me with doing you any wrong?"

"No," answered the master, "you never wronged me, Jonathan, of a farthing [the smallest coin at that time], but you have been the most honest and faithful servant that I ever had."

He insisted that Jonathan come back to the barge with him. "I cannot do without you", he explained. He willingly offered to pay Jonathan more wages, as much as he wanted.

"No," Jonathan told him, "no wages will tempt me."

Then the master offered Jonathan a share in the barge; so he would have a share in the profits also.

Jonathan refused that too. When the master pressed him to explain, Jonathan told him that, while he did not lack anything necessary for this body, yet his soul – which was the better part – was totally neglected. He had been brought up like an animal, he said, without knowing anything about the worship of God or hearing about Jesus Christ. He now understood that by Jesus Christ he could be saved and made happy.

All the barge master's efforts proved useless, and he had to go away without Jonathan. Throughout his seven-year apprenticeship, Jonathan worked for this cousin. He made a point of going to church every Sabbath to hear more about Jesus Christ. When the seven years were over, he went back to working on barges, as he did not like pipe making.

God prospered him and he was able to buy a barge of his own, and then a larger barge. But he still made sure that he was able to go to church every Sabbath to hear about Jesus Christ. God has said, "Them that honour Me I will honour" (1 Samuel 2:30). Jonathan gave up the opportunity to get better wages by going back to the barge master, because he would not have been able to go to church and worship God.

God does not always reward outwardly those who honour Him; sometimes He leaves them poor but honours them by making them spiritually rich – in giving them much grace. But when God gives some outward prosperity to those who honour Him, He makes it easier for worldly people to see that He

has kept His promise: "Them that honour Me I will honour". Make sure that you make it a priority in your life to be able to go to church Sabbath by Sabbath, and to prayer meetings too, so that you can hear about Jesus Christ and salvation through Him.

Jonathan Brown received a blessing for this life, and he seems to have received God's favour for the next life also, and the perfect happiness that comes with God's favour. He did not lose by turning down what seemed a very generous offer from the barge master.

Through the Alphabet with the Bible

Here are five verses from the Bible using the word:

Remember

And thou shalt *remember* all the way which the Lord thy God led thee (Deuteronomy 8:2)

Precept. *Remember* now thy Creator in the days of thy youth (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

Promise. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I *remember* no more (Hebrews 8:12).

Prayer. *Remember* me, Lord, with that love which thou to Thine dost bear; With Thy salvation, O my God, to visit me draw near (Psalm 106:4).

Encouragement. I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not *remember* thy sins (Isaiah 43: 25).

The Bible's Teaching on Professing Religion

1. Why Christians Should Profess Christ Publicly

Charles Hodge

Here is the first section of another chapter from Hodge's book, *The Way of Life*. It has been edited. One feels that Hodge might have noted the difficulties that some of God's children experience with assurance – they fear that they have never truly come to Christ.

A great part of religion is secret communion of the soul with God: including worship, thanksgiving, trust and submission. No one else can see these things. But because they control outward behaviour and supply motives for acting humbly and kindly, other people must notice them. But to display them unnecessary before others is like the offence which the Saviour condemned in the Pharisees. Our alms are to be given in secret;

when we pray we should pray in secret; and when we fast, we should not appear unto men to fast, but unto the Father, who "seeth in secret".

In these words Christ does more than condemn hypocrisy. He not only forbids us to carry out religious duties so that others will see us; He teaches that true religion does not make a display of itself. It is holy, solemn, secret, rejoicing in not being noticed.

Yet true religion does have a public side to it, which makes it impossible for a true Christian to wish to keep secret from the world the fact that he is a Christian. Those whose faith is weak, and who dread the reproach which often follows a profession of religion, may indeed try to hide it. Others may know little of the trial to which people are exposed when their parents or friends view all real religion with hatred, contempt or mockery.

Many of God's people have to endure this trial; they are often tempted to ask, Can we not be religious without letting it be known. But Christ said, "Whosoever . . . shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father which is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven". Paul also writes to Timothy: "Be not . . . ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. . . . If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us (2 Timothy 1:8; 2:12).

The same truth is taught in all those passages which assert that baptism is necessary, because baptism involves a public profession of the gospel – for those who were not baptized as infants. Thus the Saviour told the Apostles: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). And on the day of Pentecost, the people were convinced that it was a sin to have rejected Christ, and asked what they should do. Peter answered, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38). It was not enough that they should retire to their houses and repent before God; they must also acknowledge Christ publicly.

There is no condition of discipleship more clearly laid down than this. If we do not confess Christ, He will not confess us. If we do not acknowledge Him as our Saviour, He will not acknowledge us as His disciples. If we are not willing to share with Him in the reproach of sinners, we cannot share in the glory which He has received from the Father.

If Christ is our king, we must acknowledge His authority publicly. In the kingdoms of this world, no one is allowed to become a citizen without making a profession of allegiance. And in the kingdom of Christ those who refuse to confess Him as Lord declare that they are not His people. The Church is also often compared in Scripture to a family. Can a child live in

his father's house without acknowledging his parent? May he receive the blessings of a mother's love and not acknowledge her to be his mother? May he pass her in the street without speaking to her and then slip in, under cover of night, to eat at her table and to be protected by her care? Also Christians are worshippers of Christ. Paul salutes the Corinthians as those who call on the name of the Lord Jesus. But what kind of worshipper is he who is ashamed or afraid to acknowledge his God?

For Younger Readers

God Is Everywhere

A diver was busy at work at the bottom of the sea. As he worked, he was thinking about something else, as well as his work.

He had heard people say that God is everywhere. He said to himself: "They tell us that God is everywhere. I don't believe it! I don't believe He is at the bottom of the sea!"

Just then he saw something white among the seaweed near him. He bent down and pulled out an oyster. On the oyster was a piece of paper with words on it. What did the piece of paper say?

On that piece of paper were words from the Bible: "Thou God seest me". They are from Genesis 16:13.

God was telling the diver that He could see him even at the bottom of the sea. Yes, God really is everywhere.

I hope the diver realised that his thoughts were wrong. I hope he realised that there truly is a God. I hope he realised that this God is everywhere and that He can see everything that happens.

So remember that God sees *you* wherever you go. And remember that God sees whatever you are doing.

Here are some other words from the Bible: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3). These words mean that God sees people everywhere, whether they are doing what is good or doing what is wrong. To do what is wrong is to sin against God.

Try to learn these words from the Book of Proverbs by heart. And try to remember them always, wherever you are. When you want to do what is wrong, remember that God sees you. Then ask God to

keep you from doing what is wrong. Always ask God to keep you from sinning.

Samuel Rutherford and Prayer

6. Closing Days

Matthew Vogan

The last three articles have been explaining what Rutherford, the godly Scottish minister of the 1600s, had to say about prayer. This is the last article in a series which was originally a paper at the 2013 Youth Conference.

Prayer denied. Sometimes it appears that prayer is answered with a resounding No. Rutherford knew sore trials both in Church and state. When Oliver Cromwell resoundingly defeated the Scots army at Dunbar in 1650, Rutherford found it an extreme affliction: “I have suffered much,” he wrote, “but this is the thickest darkness”. It is very interesting that Rutherford was having to come to terms with his own teaching – on prayer that is apparently denied. He had taught that what we may call lost prayers are not lost. We are heard when we ask in faith according to God’s will.

“I may pray for victory to God’s people in a battle; they lose, yet I am heard and answered because I prayed for that victory, not under the notion of victory, but as linked with mercy to the Church and the honour of Christ. The formal object of my prayers was a spiritual mercy to the Church and the honour of Jesus Christ. The Lord hath shown mercy to His people by humbling them and glorifies His Son in preserving a fallen people; He hears what is spiritual and not the errors.”

There was a further, even more crushing, defeat at Hamilton. On hearing the news, Rutherford “longed to have the weather-beaten and crazy bark safely landed in that harbour of eternal quietness”; in his desires for the safety and rest of heaven, Rutherford was comparing himself to a ship damaged by the waves of the stormy seas of this life that needs to get to a safe harbour. Yet it was still possible for him to humble himself submissively and to see it as “a merciful defeat”.

During the 1650s Cromwell proceeded to keep Scotland under his control. He interfered in the affairs of the Church, such as ordinations of ministers, and he did not allow general assemblies. There was also a division in the Church among the Covenanters. Although he was invited to become a professor at Edinburgh University and also in Holland, Rutherford believed that his place was at St Andrews, seeking to uphold the cause of Christ in Scotland.

It seemed as though the covenanted reformation that Rutherford had laboured for was in jeopardy in both Church and state. All his teaching on prayer was now very much needed in his own experience. "Our darkness is great and thick, and there is much deadness"; he said, "yet the Lord will be our light; hoping, believing, patient praying, is our life." It was "better to believe than prophesy; and quietly to hope and sit still (for that is yet our strength) than to quarrel with Him, that the wheels of this chariot move leisurely". He counseled submission to the providence of God at this time and said that the duty of the Church was to persevere in prayer: "If we could but weep upon Him, and in the holy pertinacity [holding on] of faith wrestle with Him, and say, 'We will not let Thee go', it may be that then He who is easy to be entreated, would yet, notwithstanding of our high provocations, condescend to stay and feed among the lilies."

In the Lord's providence, which is beyond our understanding, a true reviving work was progressing at this time. Looking back, years later, one writer remembered the glory of that spiritual harvest-time: "Every parish had a minister, every village had a school, almost every family had a Bible, yea, in most of the country, all the children of age could read the Scriptures. Every minister was obliged to preach thrice a week, to lecture and catechise once, besides other private duties wherein they abounded, according to their proportion of faithfulness and abilities. None of them might be scandalous in their conversation, or negligent in their office, so long as a presbytery stood; and among them were many [who were] holy in conversation and eminent in gifts.

"In many places, the Spirit seemed to be poured out with the Word, both by the multitude of sincere converts, and also by the common work of reformation upon many who never came the length of a communion [of professing faith in Christ]. . . . I have lived many years in a parish where I have never heard an oath; and you might have ridden many miles before you had heard any. Also you could not, for a great part of the country, have lodged in a family where the Lord was not worshipped by reading, singing, and public prayer. Nobody complained more of our church government than our taverners [inn-keepers], whose ordinary lamentation was, their trade was broken, people were become so sober." Then was Scotland, he says, "a heap of wheat set about with lilies . . . this seems to me to have been Scotland's high noon".

Conclusion. When Charles II was restored to the throne of Great Britain in 1660, various prominent Covenanters were marked out for punishment. The Committee of Estates in Scotland issued a declaration against Rutherford's book, *Lex, Rex*, which had been written in opposition to absolute monarchy.

Copies of the book were burned in Edinburgh and outside New College in St Andrews. Rutherford's position in the University was taken away, as were his position as minister of the congregation in St Andrews and his salary; he was also confined to his own house.

He was told to appear before Parliament on a charge of treason, and his friends feared that he might well face execution, like some of the other more prominent Covenanters. But early in 1661 Rutherford fell seriously ill. When the summons came later that year, charging him with treason and demanding that he appear on a certain day, Rutherford answered from his deathbed: "I have got summons already before a superior Judge and Judicatory, and I behove to answer to my first summons, and ere your day come, I will be where few kings and great folks come".

His exhortations to the company of ministers that gathered around his deathbed could be taken as a summary of his own life: "My Lord and Master is chief of ten thousands of thousands. None is comparable to Him, in heaven or in earth. Dear brethren, do all for Him. Pray for Christ. Preach for Christ. Do all for Christ; beware of men-pleasing." Three ladies came to see him and, after exhorting them to read the Word of God, to be often in prayer, and much in communion with God, he said, "My honourable Master and lovely Lord, my great and royal King, hath not a match in heaven or in earth; I have my own guiltiness like another sinful man, but He hath pardoned, loved, and washed, and given me 'joy unspeakable, and full of glory'. I repent not that ever I owned His cause."

Before he died, Rutherford said, "This night will close the door and fasten my anchor within the veil". His last recorded words were, "Glory, glory dwelleth in Immanuel's Land".

One of his sayings was: "We take nothing to the grave with us, but a good or evil conscience". We believe that he took to the grave a good conscience toward God, in relation to a life of prayer. But what about yourself? Will you take to the grave a good or bad conscience in the things of God, and especially in relation to the exercise of prayer?

In a time of spiritual blessing, Rutherford was one of the Lord's richest gifts to His Church in Scotland. He is remembered for his loyalty to the Person and to the kingship of Christ; he is also remembered for his gifts as a scholar, which were employed in the same cause. What we have sought to learn from him as to the true nature of prayer should encourage us to persevere in prayer and it should rebuke us for our lack of prayer. Prayer is a blessed privilege and a mighty means under the sovereign wisdom of God. Do not grow weary. "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Looking Around Us

Prayer and Aircraft Safety

The governments of various countries, including the United Kingdom, have announced stricter searches for passengers on some flights. Many found the previous searches annoying and may be even more annoyed if it takes longer to get through security. Clearly none of this would be necessary if it was not for the danger that terrorists – most likely Muslims – would try to set off explosives on a plane, or even take over an aircraft and fly it into a building.

Obviously governments cannot stand by and do nothing in the face of serious threats to safety. So we must be patient, for governments have God-given authority if they do not go against His commands.

When we go on a journey, we should always pray that God would keep us safe. And when there is the possibility of danger, we should be even more careful to commit ourselves into God's care.

But one thing is missing when governments put measures in place to protect people. You never hear a government minister calling on people to pray that God would prevent terrorists from causing injury and death to passengers. Certainly we must take all lawful precautions, even if we do pray. But we should have far more confidence in the power of God to keep us safe than all the precautions that governments and others can put in place.

They Sing the Song of Moses

A poem by Robert Murray M'Cheyne about the Children of Israel crossing the Red Sea when God brought them out from Egypt.

Dark was the night, the wind was high,
The way by mortals never trod;
For God had made the channel dry,
When faithful Moses stretched the rod.

The raging waves on either hand
Stood like a massy tottering wall,
And on the heaven-defended band
Refused to let the waters fall.

With anxious footsteps, Israel trod
The depths of that mysterious way;
Cheered by the pillar of their God,
That shone for them with favouring ray.

But when they reached the opposing shore,
 As morning streaked the eastern sky,
 They saw the billows hurry o'er
 The flower of Pharaoh's chivalry.
 Then awful gladness filled the mind
 Of Israel's mighty ransomed throng;
 And while they gazed on all behind,
 Their wonder burst into a song.
 Thus, Thy redeemed ones, Lord, on earth,
 While passing through this vale of weeping,
 Mix holy trembling with their mirth,
 And anxious watching with their sleeping.
 The night is dark, the storm is loud,
 The path no human strength can tread;
 Jesus, be Thou the pillar-cloud,
 Heaven's light upon our path to shed.
 And O, when life's dark journey's o'er,
 And death's enshrouding valley past,
 We plant our foot on yonder shore,
 And tread yon golden strand at last.
 Shall we not see with deep amaze,
 How grace has led us safe along;
 And whilst behind, before, we gaze,
 Triumphant burst into a song!
 And even on earth, though sore bested,
 Fightings without, and fears within;
 Sprinkled today from slavish dread,
 Tomorrow captive led by sin.
 Yet would I lift my downcast eyes,
 On Thee, Thou brilliant tower of fire,
 Thou dark cloud to mine enemies,
 That hope may all my breast inspire.
 And thus the Lord, my strength, I'll praise,
 Though Satan and his legions rage;
 And the sweet song of faith I'll raise,
 To cheer me on my pilgrimage.

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