

# The Young People's Magazine

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

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*“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*



***June 2015***

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**Cover Picture:** Sydney harbour. See page 119.

## The Young People's Magazine

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# The Young People's Magazine

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## Slaves Set Free

The slave trade was cruel. In the 1700s and on into the 1800s, ships would sail to the coast of West Africa to pick up a cargo of slaves. One African tribe might have been fighting with another and would now sell the prisoners to the captain of the ship. When enough slaves had been brought aboard, the ship would sail away for some part of America, with the slaves crammed tightly and uncomfortably in the ship's hold. It was a long voyage across the Atlantic and, especially if disease broke out, many of the slaves would die before they reached the other side.

When they came ashore, the slaves were put up for sale. It was most unlikely that they would ever be set free. They would have to serve whatever master would pay most for them and then work for him until they died, unless, of course, their master decided to sell them on to someone else. Their master might possibly be kind or, much more likely, he might be harsh and cruel but, day after day, the slaves had to do what they were told – perhaps on a farm growing cotton or sugar cane. And the owner was free to whip them hard if he thought they were not working hard enough, or if they did not do their work properly, or if he just felt like doing so. And if a slave died after being badly treated, nothing would happen to the owner; after all, the slave was his property.

The whole system was wrong, and it is good that it was abolished, though workers are still being treated badly in various parts of the world. It is worth remembering that true Christians were leaders in the movement to get rid of the slave trade and of slavery itself; the best-known of these leaders was William Wilberforce.

Yet when the Bible speaks of people being “the servants of sin”, the idea is *slaves* of sin. None of them are free to give up serving sin and Satan, any more than the slave growing cotton or sugar cane was free to leave his master and start working for someone else. Yes, it was possible for a slave to go free, but normally only if someone paid a ransom. In the same way, sinners – who are slaves to sin and to Satan – have no hope of going free unless a ransom is paid. That is what Christ Jesus did when He suffered in

the place of sinners; He was paying the price that had to be paid so that sinners might go free.

When God created the human race in the Garden of Eden, they were free – perfectly free to serve God, to do exactly what He wanted them to do. Adam and Eve were not forced to obey God, like slaves. They felt perfectly free; they were perfectly willing to do what is right. They were completely happy; they were totally content in the service of God.

But Satan, one of the fallen angels, did not like what he saw in the Garden. He hated God; he did not want anyone to serve his Creator. So he wanted to capture Adam and Eve and make them his slaves. He came into the Garden and spoke to Eve, tempting her to disbelieve God. Tragically she submitted to him, and was quickly eating the fruit that God had forbidden them to eat. And soon she was tempting Adam to do the same; he too took the forbidden fruit and ate it. They had both fallen into sin; they were now Satan's slaves; the devil had, sadly, been successful with his temptations.

God had warned them that, if they ate the forbidden fruit, they must "surely die". They ignored the warning; so they must die; their soul must be separated from their body. And, unless they were set free, they must suffer eternal death. That was not all; when they sinned, they had died spiritually; they were no longer spiritually alive, loving God and serving Him. As Satan's slaves, they were unable any longer to love God or serve Him.

What is more, *we* all come into this world as sinners, for each of us has inherited Adam's sinful nature. We all begin our lives as Satan's slaves; we cannot escape from our sinful nature. No matter how hard we might try, we cannot make ourselves good. We need to be delivered from sin and from its consequences, and Jesus Christ is the only one who has the power and the authority to deliver us from being Satan's slaves. He has done everything that is necessary to make that possible.

The Bible tells us about what the Saviour has done; it tells us that His work makes it possible for us to escape from spiritual slavery and to be delivered from spiritual death and eternal death. The Bible calls us to trust in Christ so that we may be delivered. And preachers who are faithful to the Bible explain its teachings and call sinners to trust in Christ.

But why do so many sinners refuse to trust in Him and so escape Satan's clutches? It is because they are spiritually dead; they do not have the power to escape and, more importantly, they do not want to do so. A life of sin seems so much more attractive than true freedom – being able and willing to serve God and keep His commandments. So it is very easy for Satan to keep his slaves working for him, especially because they do not realise that they are slaves. They think they are free as they are, but that is because Satan

is blinding their eyes so that they do not see the realities of their situation: if they continue as Satan's slaves, they will go on to experience the awful punishment of a lost eternity.

You would expect slaves toiling in the fields to escape if they saw a chance of going free – especially if someone came along and offered to pay to set them free. But Satan's slaves do not welcome the opportunity of being set free. As fallen sinners, their minds do not work properly. They love sin, but they hate holiness. What is more, they do not believe the Bible's warnings about the danger of going on in sin and ending up in a lost eternity.

But the Holy Spirit can make sinners willing to forsake their sins and escape from Satan's clutches. He works in their hearts so that they see the danger of their present position; they are made willing to seek Christ; they realise that they are slaves to Satan and want to be delivered; the Spirit makes them willing and able to believe what the Bible testifies about Christ as the Saviour from sin; they are made able and willing to trust in Him as a Saviour who has done all that is necessary to deliver human beings from their sin and from all its terrible consequences.

Thus the Spirit changes people's hearts. They develop new attitudes; they love the God whom they once hated and they hate the sin they once loved. There is a real change in their lives; so they seek to keep God's commandments and live to His glory.

Samuel Pearce spent 16 years as one of Satan's slaves. Others might think this a short time to enjoy the ways of sin, but Samuel would say it was far too long to spend serving sin. In His mercy, God set him free; he trusted in the Lord Jesus and was saved. After some years, he became a minister in Birmingham. Later he very much wanted to go as a missionary to India, so that others who did not have the gospel might also be set free. But this did not prove possible and he submitted to God's providence.

By the time he was 32 he was very seriously ill, but he still sought to submit to God's will. He could even say, in a letter to a friend, that he felt an undisturbed calmness of soul and was "cheerfully waiting the will of God. My voice is gone, so that I cannot whisper without pain." So he found it difficult to see his wife burst into tears of sadness, as she realised that he would soon die. This was particularly hard for him because he was unable to speak, unable to say anything to comfort her. But he added, "Yet the Lord supports me under this also, and I trust He will to the end".

This was not how one of Satan's slaves could think or write. Pearce was writing as someone who had been set free to seek God's glory in everything. If you are still one of Satan's slaves, plead earnestly with God to deliver you, for Jesus' sake, from the dangerous situation you are in.

## Losing Your Life, or Saving It?

*Rev K M Watkins*

**T**he student was coming up to his final examinations at school. He needed good grades to get to his chosen university. Therefore he was pleased when one of the teachers announced an extra class. To be sure of his grades, he was glad for all the help available. But then the teacher explained that this class would be on what he called “Sunday”. The student now knew that he would not be able to attend. Indeed, the student did not want to attend – not if the classes were to be held on the first day of the week

The teacher had known this all along. So he was not surprised when the student came to explain that he would be absent from the extra class. In the past the student had often made known his Christian beliefs – as all who have Christian beliefs ought to do. Then the atheistic teacher asked a startling question. He asked the student if he realised that his Sabbath-keeping meant that he was “losing 14%” of every week. Of course, the teacher was not just speaking about the loss of study time. He was also speaking of the pleasure time that the student was losing. In a day like ours, when people are “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:4), we should not be surprised that they think that the time spent keeping the Lord’s Day is wasted time. To the teacher, it was foolish to pay such a heavy price for the sake of religion.

In one way the teacher had a point. His arithmetic was correct. Those who keep the Sabbath holy are indeed “giving up” one seventh of their lives. Their Sabbath-keeping does indeed separate one whole seventh of their lives – not just 14% of each week, but 14% of every month and each year. For that proportion of time, the Sabbath-keeper is cut off, not only from the sin that is forbidden every day, but “even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days”, as the *Shorter Catechism* puts it (Answer 60).

Activities that are perfectly lawful on other days of the week are decidedly off-limits for that one day each week. Preparing for examinations is lawful from Monday to Saturday. It is more than lawful. It is an unavoidable duty and part of a student’s calling. But it is altogether unlawful and sinful to study on the Lord’s Day, even before crucial examinations. The first day of the week, the Christian Sabbath, is for completely different activities. *The Shorter Catechism* answer explains: “The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day . . . and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God’s worship”.

The only exceptions are for “works of necessity and mercy” such as maintaining law and order, travelling to and from church services, and caring for the sick. Ordinary work like studying, and lawful recreations like physical exercise, do not fall into any of the three categories of worship, necessity or mercy. Therefore the Fourth Commandment forbids “unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments or recreations” (*Shorter Catechism*, answer 61).

Sabbath-keepers devote the first day of the week to the Lord. It is the Sabbath of the Lord their God. It belongs to Him, not to them. *The Shorter Catechism* lists the reasons why the Sabbath is to be kept holy: “His challenging a special propriety in the seventh [day]” (Answer 62). The word *propriety* is similar to *property*. So God is insisting on His ownership of the Sabbath; it is His own property. In Scripture (Isaiah 58:13) He calls it “My holy day . . . the holy of the Lord”. So He says to all, teachers and students alike: “Turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day . . . not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words”. The day is not ours, but His. It is not for our own ways, pleasures or words – but for Him.

And can we complain? Surely not! He gives us six days of the week for caring about the things of this life. Surely 86% of our lives is enough! God reserves only one day to be entirely devoted to Him. It could have more! No one could have complained at that.

But there is more. Whilst the Sabbath belongs to God, its blessedness belongs to those who keep it. For God not only ordained and hallowed the Sabbath; He also blessed it. That is, He made it a blessing for those who keep it. As the Saviour said, “the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath”. It is not as if God forces man into a day altogether unsuitable for him, as you may sometimes see a person forced into clothes too small for him. On the contrary, the Lord designed the Sabbath, made it to measure as it were, to fit exactly the needs of man. He made it for man’s highest good, and it is totally suitable for all his best interests.

Thus the Sabbath is for man’s highest welfare. It is for his soul. It is for his spiritual life. It is for the life to come. If man was nothing more than a body, made up of chemicals and particles and so on, then the teacher might have been right. To give up a day of study, to miss an extra class, might lead to some loss as far as the things of this world are concerned. But life is more than the body. There is more to life than passing examinations. Man has a soul as well as a body. He is a spiritual being, created to know, glorify and enjoy God. And God has given man the Sabbath day as a gift, to enjoy and to benefit from it.

God's people look on the Sabbath as a blessed gift to rejoice in and make the most of, not a burdensome duty to perform in the most grudging way possible. It is a mark of the ungodly to say of the Sabbath (a mere 14% of the week), as they say of all God's worship: "What a weariness is it!" (Malachi 1:13). In the days of the prophet Amos, they were saying, "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? And the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?" (Amos 8:5). They grudged giving up any of their lives to the worship of God, whether for the monthly ceremonies associated with the new moon or the weekly one day in seven. They could not wait to be back to their worldly business and trade, to the things that they really lived for. The teacher was trying to foster the same grudging attitude in the student towards keeping the Christian Sabbath.

But the Lord's people are no losers by their Sabbath-keeping. Devoting the first day of every week to God's worship is for the welfare of their never-dying souls. They have given up all for Christ and been won by His grace and love in the gospel; so for them to keep the Sabbath holy is "not grievous" (1 John 5:3), but a delight. It is a blessing. They know how the "cares and riches and pleasures of this life" (Luke 8:14) can choke the good seed of the gospel; so they gladly welcome the privilege of being "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" (Revelation 1:10) – a day to put aside all these cares, riches and pleasures. Yes, they miss out on worldly pleasures, and perhaps some worldly profits too, but their Sabbaths are the closest they come on earth to the heavenly pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore. Indeed, by losing 14% they gain all!

Many have learnt that faithful Sabbath-keeping, like all godliness, has "promise" not only for the life "which is to come" but also for "the life that now is" (1 Timothy 4:8). They have not been losers, even in earthly things. Their examination results have not suffered. The weekly rest has so refreshed their bodies and minds, as well as their souls, that they have come to their studies with greater efficiency, sharper memories and clearer thinking.

Unregenerate Sabbath-breakers, on the other hand, try to keep the whole of their lives for themselves, for their own worldly pursuits, profits and pleasure. They refuse to give up 14% of their days for God's worship and their souls' welfare. And in the end they lose everything. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

So who is really losing? It is not the Sabbath-keepers, but the Sabbath-breakers. Refusing to give up one day a week to seek God's blessing, they will have to give up their entire eternity to suffer God's curse. Surely they are the real losers. And we will join them if, in spite of our outwardly



keeping the Sabbath, we do not meet the Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus Christ, and put our trust in Him for the pardon of all our sins – sins against the Fourth Commandment as well as all the others.

Now we see what the Lord Jesus Christ meant when He said that “who-soever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it” (Mark 8:35). If you try to “save” your life by keeping hold of your own worldly life and giving nothing to God, you will in fact “lose” your life in a lost eternity. But if, as a true believer in Christ, you “lose” your life by giving it up to Him and the gospel, you will in fact “save” it – you will have eternal life in heaven for ever. Unregenerate souls, unwilling to devote to God one day of the week, will suffer the endless night of hell’s darkness in unspeakable lostness. But those who obtain saving grace, and as a result are made cheerfully willing to devote the first day of every week to their Lord and Saviour, will be thankful to all eternity for their well-spent Sabbaths.

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## Robert Murray M'Cheyne

### 6. Prayer Answered

*Frank Daubney*

Last month’s article described M'Cheyne’s continuing work in Dundee as the first minister of St Peter’s church. But he continued to be troubled by illness.

***Visit to the Holy Land.*** In the early spring of 1839 there came a new development. The Church of Scotland had decided to send a small group to the Holy Land as a Mission of Inquiry into the state of the Jews. The intention was to send two older men, Alexander Keith, the author of various books on prophecy, and Alexander Black, Professor of Theology in Marischal College, Aberdeen. It was proposed that Andrew Bonar and Robert M'Cheyne should form part of that deputation. M'Cheyne had always prayed for the conversion of the Jews and said that he would dearly love to go. His elders agreed and wrote their minister a most affectionate letter wishing him every blessing.

Before he was able to leave, M'Cheyne needed to arrange for someone to care for his congregation while he was away. As you can imagine, he prayed earnestly over this, and the Lord sent William C Burns, son of the minister of Kilsyth. Burns had only recently completed his studies and was waiting for an assignment to go overseas as a missionary. But when he received the letter from M'Cheyne, he felt compelled to accept the invitation to go to Dundee.

M'Cheyne wrote to him on March 12 in this remarkable way: "You are given in answer to prayer; and these gifts are, I believe, always without exception blessed. I hope you may be a thousand times more blessed among the people than ever I was. Perhaps there are many souls that would never have been saved under my ministry who may be touched under yours; and God has taken this method of bringing you into my place. His name is Wonderful." These selfless words proved to be prophetic.

At the end of March, after making all the necessary arrangements, M'Cheyne and his colleagues set off for Palestine. He did not return to Dundee until November, eight months later.

***Revival in Dundee.*** I do not intend to deal with the trip to Palestine, except to say that, during his time away, M'Cheyne fell seriously ill and, once again, it seemed he might die. At this time he could not write, nor was he able to spend his time reading, but he said, "I had all my time to lay my people before God, and pray for a blessing on them". This was August, and the Lord had already answered his prayers, as a wonderful revival had begun in Dundee and the surrounding districts.

Burns went to Kilsyth assisting his father at the communion there. On the Monday, he preached from Psalm 110:3: "Thy people shall be willing in a day of Thy power". There was such an uncontrollable rush of emotion throughout the congregation that Burns had to end his sermon early. He gave out a psalm and finished the service. He was compelled to stay in Kilsyth for three weeks.

When he returned to Dundee, word of what happened in Kilsyth went ahead of him. He had no thoughts that the same blessing would be seen in Dundee. But when he began preaching there again, it was like a pent up flood, with many weeping under the preaching, and falling to the ground crying for mercy. The revival swept the whole city of Dundee. In Hamburg, when they were returning from Palestine, M'Cheyne and Bonar read in the newspapers that a revival was taking place in Scotland, and what a joy for them to see that Dundee was involved.

The St Peter's congregation were longing for their minister's return and he was eager to hear the news. He wrote to tell Burns of his arrival in London and said, "I cannot rest till I hear from you what has been done among my dear flock; you remember it was my prayer that you might be a thousandfold more blessed to the people than ever my ministry had been".

He arrived home to a tumultuous welcome. It was a Thursday, and he took the prayer meeting. The church was crowded. It was reported that the singing was "tender and affecting, as if the people felt that they were praising a very present God". On the following Sabbath he preached on 2 Chronicles

5:13,14, on the dedication of Solomon's temple: "So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God".

Burns had a great respect for M'Cheyne. He was able to say of his preaching: "His manner is very powerful: so much so that he sometimes made me tremble". Both of these much-blessed ministers of the gospel gave all the glory of their success to God. They both felt they were nothing but unworthy instruments in the hands of the Lord.

The Spirit of revival was by no means restricted to Kilsyth and Dundee. It spread to many other areas, including Perth. In Dundee there were prayer meetings every night of the week for many weeks. Nor did the Holy Spirit pass over the children at this time. Many youngsters were truly born again, and the children had many prayer meetings among themselves.

M'Cheyne was concerned that error might creep in at some of the many meetings, where words of exhortation were added. He also made clear that, among the women, anything like public teaching was condemned in the Word of God.

By the end of December 1839, the first rush of the revival had changed to a steady but constant flow. At the turn of the year, with a rejoicing heart, he admitted nine children, aged between 11 and 15, as members in full communion. There were communion seasons every three months at this time in St Peter's, and M'Cheyne was able to record, for example, that 30 people wished to profess faith in Christ at each of two separate communions.

He was all the more careful as he saw that many people allowed themselves to be led by their feelings. There can be no doubt that, at a time of such high emotions, a proportion of those claiming to be born again would prove to have made a profession of faith although they had not been born again, and would fall away. This had also been the experience of Jonathan Edwards and David Brainerd. God's Word teaches us to expect that there will be chaff among the wheat. Yet the year 1840 brought an abundant harvest to many congregations in Scotland.

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## Greater Pleasure

Johann Oncken was a young German who came to work in Scotland. He then moved to London, where he was employed by a merchant. He lived with a godly couple, John Cottman and his wife. But, though he was pleasant, Johann had no religion. He sought happiness in worldly pleasure.

John held family worship with his wife each morning and evening. But

whenever Johann saw the Bible being placed on the table, he went away. Yet, not long afterwards, Johann was influenced by the couple's friendliness to wait for worship now and then.

One evening Johann came home to put on better clothes before going out to some place of entertainment. "I think you had better go with me", John suggested to him, "and enjoy greater pleasure than that which you are going to."

"Where are you going?" Johann asked.

"To the prayer meeting at our church."

Johann did not understand. "A prayer meeting," he asked, "what is that?"

John explained that they met to sing, to read the Bible, and to ask God to bless them. As Johann hesitated, John added kindly, "You had much better go".

Johann went. He found only about 12 people gathered in the church vestry. But that night God began to soften his heart and this led to his conversion.

Johann Oncken went back to Germany and worked for a body with a rather unmanageable title: "The British Continental Society for the Diffusion of Religious Knowledge over the Continent of Europe"; it was set up to spread true religion in European countries. In 1828 Oncken began to work for the Edinburgh Bible Society. He spent over 50 years distributing tracts and Bibles. By 1879 he estimated he had given out over two million Bibles, in many countries.

We do not know how much spiritual good was done to those who received these Bibles, but surely God blessed His own Word so that at least some people were converted. And Oncken's great work was all the result of John Cottman's few kindly words.

Let no one despise a prayer meeting. Just as God was pleased to bless Johann Oncken at a prayer meeting, He is able to bless you.

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## **Saving Faith**

### **1. The Need of Faith**

*Rev D W B Somers*

This is the first part of a paper given at this year's Youth Conference.

**T**he subject of saving faith is one of the central doctrines in the Christian religion. It connects with every other Christian doctrine, particularly if one considers the believer's life of faith, expressed in the words of the Prophet Habakkuk, "The just shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4). But in these articles we want mainly to restrict attention to faith as exercised at the

time of conversion, because this is what is particularly meant by “saving faith”. There are five aspects of the subject to consider: (1) the Need of Faith, (2) the Object of Faith, (3) the Nature of Faith, (4) the Way to Faith, and (5) the Assurance of Faith.

### **1. The Need of Faith.**

(1.) *We need faith because God is invisible.* Even before the Fall in the Garden of Eden, man needed to live by faith. This is how men have to live in the world. We read in Hebrews: “Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). God is invisible, and though He may appear from time to time, as He did to Adam and Eve and others, the rest of the time men have to live without seeing Him. But they have to believe by faith that He is, and that He can see what they are doing, and that He will judge them for their conduct; He will reward good but punish evil. This necessity for faith will continue to the end of the world, and in particular it continues throughout the Christian’s life in this world. “We walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). The need for faith in God, then, is part of being a human being in this world.

(2.) *We need faith because by nature we lack it.* While we need faith to please God, we do not naturally have faith. On the contrary, there is an extraordinary unbelief or disbelief in God. We are surrounded by some professed and many “practical” atheists, and we find this “evil heart of unbelief” (Hebrews 3:12) in ourselves too. The most obvious illustration of it was at Mount Sinai: God was present, and Moses was up the mountain, which was covered with cloud, and the Children of Israel made a golden calf. So men can have unbelief in the very presence of God, if so much as a cloud covers Him. So we do not naturally have faith, and therefore we do not naturally please God.

(3.) *We need faith to escape the curse and inherit eternal life.* Not only do we not naturally please God, but our unbelief, and the sins that flow from it, put us naturally under the curse of God. In fact, we find that we were already under the curse of God on account of Adam’s unbelief and sin. God often punishes sin with sin, and Adam was given up to sin because of his sin. This affects and infects all his descendants (Christ only excepted). We are all born under the curse. Therefore we need to be saved from the unendurable effects of this terrible curse. The way of salvation – and the only way – is by Christ, and by faith in Him; and so we need to have faith in Him. As Christ says, “If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24). Or as Peter puts it, “There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

There is an absolute necessity and urgency in this matter. Perishing is surely not something that we can consider. "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" (Isaiah 33:14).

At the same time, the effect of faith is to lay hold of the righteousness of Christ, and this makes believers the heirs of eternal salvation. They not only escape from death but they receive life. There is an "imputation": their sins are imputed to Christ, or charged against Him; and His righteousness is imputed, or set to their account. They may say, "Thou hast made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). This righteousness entitles them to many benefits.

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## What the Bible Teaches on Holy Living

### 2. "All Kinds of Excellence"

*Charles Hodge*

This series is taken, with editing, from Hodge's book, *The Way of Life*. In the first section, printed last month, he emphasised that true religion is a new and spiritual life. It will always make progress.

True religion is not only outward service of God; it is also inward. Nor is it just fear and sorrow followed by peace and joy. It is something that lasts; it is what makes us act in a right way; and it grows. But more can be said. True religion is to "be partakers of the divine nature" – the conformity of the soul to God. It is described as putting off "the old man with his deeds" and putting on "the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Colossians 3:9,10). The Bible also speaks of true religion as being "renewed in the spirit of [our] mind", that we may "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:23,24).

These two passages state the same truth. To be "renewed in knowledge" means to be renewed so as to know; and knowledge includes recognising and approving of what is true and good. So it is said in the Bible that to know God and Jesus Christ is eternal life. Such knowledge is the life of the soul; it is to be conformed to God so that one recognises truth and approves of it. No one can have a higher idea of holiness than for the soul to be in harmony with God in judgement and will. The same idea of sanctification – being made holy – is presented in Romans 12:2: "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove [or, approve] what is that good,

and acceptable, and perfect will of God". This is true religion: to approve what God approves, to hate what He hates, and to delight in what He delights in.

It is obvious from this that the whole person has been changed. There are new beliefs, new purposes and new feelings. More and more light enters the mind, the will submits more to God's law, and the desires become more thoroughly purified. Paul's wish was: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

The believer's body is sanctified in various ways. It is the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Corinthians 6:19); so it is holy as set apart to God's service, and hallowed by His presence. Believers' bodies are also members of Jesus Christ, and because of this union they have the benefits of redemption and will yet be made like unto His glorious body.

The body influences the soul in many ways, for good or evil. In our fallen state it is mainly for evil, and much of the work of sanctification consists in opposing that influence. Paul says of himself: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Corinthians 9:27). And he declares that it is a condition of life that believers should, through the Spirit, mortify [that is, put to death] the deeds of the body. Thus its power over the soul is restrained, and it becomes more submissive to the will of the renewed person.

As the work of sanctification extends to every part of the human being, so the image of God restored to the soul includes every moral excellence. The different graces, such as love, faith, meekness and kindness, are different ways in which the one principle of goodness appears. Not that justice and kindness are the same, for they are distinct; but the same principle which makes someone just will also make him kind.

Religion, or the principle of spiritual life, produces all kinds of excellence, just as the principle of life in plants and animals leads all their parts to develop together. The root increases as the branches enlarge; the body grows as the various parts of it increase in size. It is the same in the life of the soul. If life exists at all, it shows itself in every form of goodness. It is a contradiction to say that someone is a good man if he is just but is unkind; because goodness includes both justice and kindness. It is also a contradiction to say that someone is religious who is not honest, because religion includes honesty as well as godliness.

What is meant by religion – or the new man, or the principle of grace or of divine life in the heart – includes within itself all kinds of goodness. Reverence, love, submission, justice and kindness are just different ways in

which the principle of holiness appears. There can be no holiness without benevolence, none without reverence, none without justice. So those who are renewed in the spirit of their minds, after the image of God, have that moral excellence which expresses itself in all the various graces of the Spirit.

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*For Junior Readers*

## **“Suffer the Little Children to Come”**

**D**o you sometimes think that religion is really just for adults? Perhaps you think, because some things are difficult to understand, that you will wait until you are grown up. Only then, you tell yourself, will you pay more attention to the Bible and the worship of God.

But do you know what Jesus said when He lived on this earth? “Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.” Jesus spoke about “the little children” – not just the grown ups or the teenagers, but children like you! And this verse is recorded three times in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke; so there is no excuse for thinking that children like you cannot seek the Lord and come to know Christ!

There was a boy in our Glasgow congregation quite a long time ago called Charlie. When he was very young, he had a real love for the Bible. From the time that Charlie was able to read for himself, he not only wanted to read his Bible, he also wanted to understand it. Although he was so young he would get out Matthew Henry’s *Commentary*. A commentary is a book, or a set of books, that helps to explain what the Bible means. Charlie would look up this *Commentary* to find an explanation of any verse he found difficult.

When he took ill, he had to go into hospital. He was always reading his Bible there. In fact, he even told his mother to tell the shop that sent a daily paper to his room that he did not want it any more. His interest was now lifted off the things of this life and was set on eternity.

From his hospital bed he spoke to one of his visitors about the folly of delaying to seek the Lord. “Never”, he said, “put off till tomorrow what you can do today” – meaning that his visitor should seek the Lord *now*.

As his condition got worse, his thoughts were more and more about eternity. “I might never get home”, he said to his mother one evening, “but if I go to heaven, I will never want to come back here again.”

Another time she asked him: “Where would you like to go?” He told her: “I would like to go to heaven, to be with God”.

His desire was granted after several weeks of suffering. He passed away to be with his Saviour at the age of 8 years and 9 months! Think of that – a



boy less than 9 years old, about the same age as some of you! None of you are too young to seek the Lord. “Suffer the little children to come unto Me”, is what Jesus said!

There was another boy called George who lived in London over 200 years ago. When he grew up, he became a useful minister of the gospel, but he dated his interest in spiritual things to his early years. In his *Memoirs* he described what happened on his tenth birthday:

“It was on the Lord’s day. After tea, and before family worship, my father used to catechise me and ask what I remembered of the sermons of the day. That evening he talked to me very lovingly, and reminded me that I was now 10 years of age, that it was high time I began to seek the Lord and to become truly religious. He particularly insisted upon the necessity of an interest in Christ, and showed me that, as a sinner I must perish without [knowing Christ]; and recommended me to pray for it that night.

“After family worship I went into my room and then, I trust, sincerely and earnestly – and as far as I can remember, for the first time – I poured out my soul to God, beseeching Him to give me an interest in Christ, and desiring, above all things, to be found in Him.” So at the age of 10 he began to seek the Lord, and the Lord blessed him according to His promise, “Those that seek Me early shall find Me”.

What about you? Are you going to follow the example of Charlie and of George? Will you not resolve with David the Psalmist:

“When Thou didst say, Seek ye My face, then unto Thee reply  
Thus did my heart, Above all things Thy face, Lord, seek will I.”

*J van Kralingen*

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*For Younger Readers*

## **The Bible Is for You**

Thomas Boston was a well-known minister in Scotland long ago. One day he sang Psalm 121 at worship with his family.

Why was the Psalm written? Mr Boston did not know. But he knew that the whole Bible was written for him just as if there was no one else in the world. He could read it as if it was all written just for him.

And so can you. You can read the Bible as if it was written specially for you. And when someone else is reading from the Bible, you can listen as if it was all written just for you.

The Psalm says that God made heaven and earth, and that He can help people. Mr Boston would say to himself: God can help me. And you are to say, God is speaking to me too; He can help me as if there was no one else needing help.

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## God Answers Prayer

**D**oes God always give an answer when His children pray? The answer to that question is, Yes. But does He always answer their prayers in the way they expect? The answer to that question is, No.

Long ago, when the United States was expanding westwards, a godly man settled down in a new town. He had just married and the thought of bringing up a family in such a place disturbed him. There was no church; there were no Sabbaths; and all kinds of wickedness went on there.

The man decided that the right thing to do was to go and live somewhere else. But first he must sell his farm. So every day he went away by himself, among some trees, to spend time in prayer. Good man that he was, he knew he needed God's help in everything. Day after day he prayed, but no one wanted to buy the farm. It looked as if God was not hearing his prayers.

Yet God was hearing them. And His answer was far better than the farmer expected.

One day one of his neighbours became ill. The farmer called on him and they talked together. As they spoke, someone else interrupted to say, "If what you say is true, I am lost".

The farmer prayed for him, and he was converted. Indeed this man was only the first of many in whose hearts the Holy Spirit worked. A prayer meeting was started, and more people were converted. Later a church was built, and a minister was called to the congregation.

The farmer changed his mind about selling his farm. He brought up his family there and, before he died, most of them had become members of the church. The Lord had watched over them; He had kept them safe from the wickedness of the place. In fact, much of the wickedness was probably taken away. God heard the farmer's prayers.

No, He did not answer them according to the words of the prayers. But God knows better than we do; He knows everything. He is perfectly wise; He knows what is best to do in every situation; He knows what will be most for His glory. He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20). Let this fact encourage us to pray even for what seems most unlikely.

# Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2014-15

## Names for Exercise 2

**Senior Section.** *Barnoldswick:* James and Rebecca Ross. *Edinburgh:* Annabelle MacDonald. *Glasgow:* Emma Norris, Rachel Smith. *Kyle:* Nathan Whear. *Snizort:* Sarah Macleod. *Stornoway:* Joanna Maclean. *Tonbridge:* Heidi and James Playfoot.

**Intermediate Section.** *Aberdeen:* Rachel Somerset. *Barnoldswick:* Christopher and Lily-Ann Metcalfe. *Dingwall:* Hannah Mackenzie, Laura Macleod. *Gairloch:* Roddie Wyatt. *Glasgow:* Kenneth Macpherson, Jessica and Jonathan Norris. *Guildford:* Susanna Risbridger. *Inverness:* Daniel Maton. *Kyle:* Sarah J Whear. *Llanelli:* Angharad Cran. *London:* Henry Munns. *Stornoway:* Lucienne Doig, Cara MacLeod. *Tonbridge:* Katie Playfoot. *Trowbridge:* Abigail and Daniel Broome.

**Junior Section.** *Barnoldswick:* Robert Metcalfe. *Cheadle:* Henry Johnson. *Edinburgh:* Bradley Morrison. *Gairloch:* Josh and Kyrene Tallach. *Glasgow:* Iain Macpherson, Louise Norris. *Inverness:* Jessica Maton. *Llanelli:* Abigail Cran. *North Tolsta:* Ruth Morrison. *Portree:* Hannah Macraill. *Snizort:* Jonathan Macleod. *Stornoway:* Jamie Doig, Matthew Macleod. *Tonbridge:* Joseph Playfoot. **Upper Primary Section.** *Aberdeen:* Jane Somerset. *Barnoldswick:* Claudia van Essen. *Beaulieu:* Deborah Maclean. *Brighton:* Katherine Hills. *Edinburgh:* Fraser Morrison. *Glasgow:* Grant MacLennan, Hugh Macpherson, Cameron Ross, Rebecca Smith. *Inverness:* Victoria Maton. *Kyle:* Mark Whear. *Llanelli:* Jonathan Cran. *London:* David and John Munns. *Ness:* Rachel Murray. *North Harris:* Hannah Jardine, Neil Morrison. *Snizort:* Andrew Macleod.

**Lower Primary Section:** *Aberdeen:* Julia Macleod. *Barnoldswick:* Timothy Metcalfe, Bethan and Calvin Middleton, Daniel van Essen. *Dingwall:* Catherine Campbell. *Edinburgh:* Fraser Campbell, Jenna Campbell. *Glasgow:* Reece Mackinnon, Susie Macpherson, Calvin and David Norris, Hugh Ross. *Gloucester:* Madison Westlake. *Halkirk:* Annelise Hymers-Mackintosh, Donald and Grace Maclean. *Inverness:* Lois Maton, Callum Arie Morrison. *Llanelli:* Carys Cran. *London:* Manow Fox, Sarah Munns. *Ness:* Katie Macinnes, Angus Murray. *North Harris:* John Chisholm, Ruairidh Morrison. *North Tolsta:* Angus and Uilleam Morrison. *North Uist:* Mairi Macdonald. *Portree:* Catriona Macraill. *Stornoway:* Cameron Mackay, Jeni Macleod, Owen Morrison. *Tain:* Abigail and Benjamin Reynolds. *Trowbridge:* Samuel Broome.

## Looking Around Us

### Who is in Control?

In late April, the cruise ship *Carnival Spirit* was on her way to Sydney with 2500 passengers on board when an unusually severe storm broke out. The authorities at Sydney's harbour decided it was necessary to shut the port for more than 24 hours; so the *Carnival Spirit* had to ride out the storm in the open sea. But this was safer than entering the enclosed space of the harbour. After the wind went down and the ship had docked, those aboard were able to get safely onto dry land. One of them spoke of feeling "completely helpless" in the face of what she called "unbelievably huge waves".

People like to feel in control of their lives. And when they find themselves caught in a severe storm, or are struck by a serious illness, or their life seems to spiral out of control in some way, they have nowhere to turn. Yet it is useful to learn that we cannot always expect to feel in control of our lives.

It is altogether unreasonable to think that we can keep control of everything. There is only One who is in control of all that happens, and that of course is God, who “is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea” (Psalm 93:4). No matter how huge the waves were off the Australian coast, God was in control of them.

So it makes sense for people caught in a storm or in any other kind of trouble to pray to the One who is in control, not only of waves, but of everything else. He has said, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me” (Psalm 50:15).

People may become worried about outward dangers, such as storms on the sea; yet they may completely ignore the danger of going on in sin and of having to meet the fierce storm of God’s anger when they leave this world. How necessary to seek the One who met that fierce storm of God’s anger at Calvary, when He was standing in the place of sinners! Let us look to Christ now, who is able to deliver us from all spiritual danger.

### **The Smallest Bible**

A copy of the Hebrew Old Testament the size of a pinhead has gone on display at a museum in Jerusalem. It has been dubbed the Nano Bible; it is the smallest copy of Scripture in the world. Over 1.2 million letters have been carved on a gold-plated silicon chip by engineers using an ion beam. But anyone who wishes to read this Old Testament can only do so if it is magnified 10 000 times.

A spokesman was at pains to emphasise the “incredible” technology involved. That is true, but we must not lose sight of the wonderful nature of its contents. Everything in it is inspired by the Holy Spirit and is perfectly accurate. And, though the Old Testament is not the complete Bible, it does show us how we ought to live and how we come short of God’s perfect standard. It showed the Israelites of that time how they could find salvation and so be ready to die and go to heaven. *We* need the New Testament also so that we can read God’s revelation about Christ as the One who *has* come to work out salvation.

The important thing for us to do with the Bible is to read it for ourselves, or listen to it being read. And we are to believe the message that it brings; in particular, we are to trust in the Son of God who died in the place of sinners. Let us also pray to God to give the Holy Spirit to bless the truths of the Bible to our souls.

**Price £1.00**