

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: The *Cutty Sark*, preserved in London. See page 74.

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What Is Justification?

Let us start to answer this question by noting that justification is the opposite of condemnation. God told the Israelites what they were to do if there was a disagreement between two of them. They were to go to the judges, who were to decide between them. God's directions went on: the judges "shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked" (Deuteronomy 25:1). On the basis of the evidence they were to decide who was wrong and who was right. They were to condemn the one who was wrong; they were to declare that he had done wrong and deserved to be punished. On the other hand, they were to justify the one who was in the right; they were to declare that he was innocent – they must acquit him – and let him go free.

In this world, when judges try a case, they must do their best to decide who is right and who is wrong. And often that is very difficult. But when God looks at sinners, He understands at once what they have done and why they have done it. So, when "the Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did . . . seek God", He saw that "there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Psalm 14:2,3); everyone deserved to be condemned; there was no one who could be justified, who could be cleared of doing wrong – no one could be accepted as righteous.

Yet God does justify sinners, and He is acting justly when He does so (see Romans 3:26). How is that possible? It is the sinner who believes in Jesus whom God justifies. We should recognise that God must punish sin. If we do not believe in Jesus, we must bear the punishment of all our sins for ever and ever, in hell. But Jesus, the Son of God, took human nature so that He might bear the punishment due to sinners. That was why He had to endure such terrible sufferings, both in His body and soul, on the cross, as well as all the other sufferings He experienced during the rest of His life in this world. So all those for whom Christ suffered and died can be justly forgiven, because He suffered all that they deserved to suffer.

Yet something more is necessary. No one can get into heaven unless it can be said that he or she has kept God's law perfectly – yet that is what no one can ever do. But think again about Jesus Christ as the Substitute for sinners.

He was not only a Substitute in suffering punishment for sin; He was also a Substitute in *keeping God's law* in the place of sinners. He did so perfectly. And when God justifies sinners, He is not only saying that their punishment is cancelled because of Christ sufferings; He is also saying that they are treated as if they had always kept the whole law of God – because Christ, as their Substitute, kept the whole law in their place.

One thing should now be obvious: sinners are justified, not because of what they can do in keeping God's law, for they must keep it perfectly. But they never can succeed in keeping it perfectly; everything they do is stained by sin. Instead they must receive what the Bible tells about Jesus Christ and His saving work, and they must trust in Him. Salvation is a free gift, something we cannot begin to pay for.

John Berridge was born 300 years ago and became a minister in the English village of Everton. When he was 14, God had showed him that he was a sinner and that he must be born again before he could enter the kingdom of God. He took this seriously and set himself to earn salvation; he prayed and read the Bible and imagined that he was making progress in holiness and was on the way to heaven. When he became a minister, he was still unconverted. As time passed, he saw that his ministry had no effect on his hearers, even though he spoke very earnestly to them. For this lack of effect he did not blame what he was teaching, he blamed the wicked hearts of his hearers. No doubt, both were to blame.

What kind of doctrine was he preaching? It was, he wrote later, "that we are to be justified partly by our faith and partly by our works". And that is impossible, for nothing that we can do meets God's standard. After eight years of such preaching, he began to feel discouraged, because his sermons were still having no effect. Then he became afraid that he himself was not right before God. These fears, he said, "grew stronger, and at last very painful". He tried to pray to God very earnestly: "Lord, if I am right, keep me so. If I am not right, make me so. Lead me to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus."

And God did put him right; God led him to the knowledge of the truth. After about 10 days of earnest prayer, the words went through his mind: "Cease from thine own works", which is the teaching of Scripture, if not its very words. This thought led him to see what was wrong with his thinking: he was relying on his own works for salvation. He hoped to be saved partly by his own efforts and partly through Christ, although the Bible told him: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name [except Christ] under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Berridge went on: "I had hoped to be saved partly through my own

works, and partly through Christ's mercies, though I am told that we are saved by grace through faith, and not of works. I had hoped to make myself acceptable to God partly through my own good works, though we are told that we are accepted through the Beloved" (Ephesians 2:8,9; 1:6).

The Shorter Catechism gives us a short but full answer to our question: "Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein He pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone".

Let us try to understand what this means. That justification is an act of God's free grace is what Berridge discovered – that God in His kindness justifies sinners freely, for they cannot earn salvation; they cannot pay anything towards it. When sinners are justified, God pardons all their sins and accepts them as righteous, because of what Christ has done. He does so only because, when sinners believe in Jesus, His righteousness is put to their account; God treats sinners who believe in Jesus as if they had themselves done what Jesus did in their place. When sinners receive salvation – in particular, Christ's righteousness – by faith, they do not and cannot add anything of their own to His work. Justification is by faith alone, not by works or by any mixture of the two.

Clearly, in God's mercy, Berridge responded by faith to the call of the gospel. He quotes some of these calls, including: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1). Berridge explains *wine and milk* as "the blessings of the gospel", and adds, "When we are ordered to bring no money – that is, no merits of our own – we must not think to . . . purchase . . . these blessings by any deservings of ours. They are given freely . . . and must be received freely."

When Berridge died, he was able to go to heaven, but not because of any good deeds he had done that could earn him salvation, for he had never done any such works. He was received to heaven for the sake of Christ; Berridge believed in Christ, trusting in what He had done as the Substitute for sinners. So Berridge was accepted as if he had never sinned, as if he had always kept God's law perfectly.

What about you? Are you trusting in what you have done, or what you expect to do before you die? That can do you no good; you cannot save yourself; you cannot even contribute to your salvation by any works of your own. Remember Berridge and his vain attempts to contribute to his salvation. Instead follow his example of trusting in Christ. Hear the call to "come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" – receive the blessings of salvation by faith alone in Christ Jesus alone.

Joshua – Successor to Moses

2. Made Leader of the Israelites

Rev Neil M Ross

In the first part of this paper, in last month's *Magazine*, we saw Joshua in slavery in Egypt and then as Moses' personal assistant. The paper was given to the 2015 Youth Conference.

Joshua, it seems, was now by the side of Moses more than ever before. He “departed not out of the tabernacle”, we read. This statement also suggests that he had some kind of caretaking responsibility for the tabernacle.

We now come to an interesting incident in the relationship between Joshua and Moses. Joshua showed his concern for the honour of Moses when he heard of two of the elders of Israel, Eldad and Medad, prophesying in the camp as if under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Joshua evidently thought they were not among the 70 elders gathered together by Moses to the tabernacle to receive that gift of the Holy Spirit. So he asked Moses to make them stop prophesying.

Moses answered, “Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His spirit upon them!” (Numbers 11:28,29). This response of Moses was, as some think, a rebuke to Joshua for being too concerned for the reputation of his master and mentor and not desiring, as much as he should have, that others would have the gifts of God.

In any case, it teaches us that we should not grudge anyone the gifts and graces of God, or envy them when they are thus blessed. It also teaches us that we should earnestly seek that multitudes worldwide would receive the blessings of the gospel through Christ, by the Spirit.

Joshua, we see next, was chosen as one of the 12 men who were to explore Canaan secretly and report back to Moses. On their return, Joshua, and his fellow spy Caleb, submitted a favourable report. They believed that God would protect them all; so they encouraged the people to take possession of their God-given inheritance without delay. But the people had been aroused to rebellion by the negative report of the other ten spies.

Next day, they were determined to stone Joshua and Caleb, who were reasoning with them and urging them neither to rebel against the Lord or fear the inhabitants of the land. The awful result of their rebellion was that God consigned them to wandering in the wilderness for almost 40 years. He also refused to let any of the generation which left Egypt enter Canaan (apart from Joshua and Caleb).

During those 40 years of Israel's wilderness wanderings, Joshua largely

disappears from view. But he witnessed many solemn scenes from which he could learn much. All of them would have impressed more deeply upon his mind and heart the need to take heed to the word and will of God, and submit to them completely.

We too are to give nothing less than full submission to God's Word. Just as rebellious Israel had to live and wander in the wilderness for a long time, so today, as Psalm 68 tells us, rebels "inhabit parched lands". Let us seek grace to receive God's Word with meekness and, like Joshua, to be lovingly obedient to it.

Also, during those 40 years, Joshua would have experienced much of the faithfulness of God. No doubt he marvelled at God continuing to protect His people, provide for them and lead them, in spite of all their unbelief and other provocations.

Should we ourselves not wonder at God's constant kindness to us in spite of our numerous sins and faults? May His goodness be a wonder to us and lead us to repentance.

It was possibly Joshua who commanded the Israelite army when it conquered Og and Sihon, two of the kings of the Amorites east of Jordan (Deuteronomy 31:4, Joshua 2:10). At any rate, Joshua is seen to be a seasoned soldier and skilful strategist in the battles that Israel later fought under his command.

We come now to the most important point in the life of Joshua – *his consecration as Israel's leader*. At the age of about 80 he was appointed, in succession to Moses, to lead the nation. As the Israelites, now in the fortieth year of their journeys, came near Canaan, God confirmed to Moses that Joshua would be his successor.

Moses knew that he was forbidden to enter Canaan, and that the end of his life was near. He prayed to God to set a man over the people who would truly shepherd them (Numbers 27:16,17). God's answer was, "Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight" (Numbers 27:18,19).

Joshua would have felt deeply the responsibility laid on him by the solemn act of consecration. He was now the successor of a man of whom Scripture says, "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deuteronomy 34:10). Joshua needed to be encouraged. So Moses, at the command of God, said to Joshua before the people: "Be strong and of a good courage, for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them. . . . And the Lord, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with

thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed" (Deuteronomy 31:7,8).

God Himself confirmed these promises directly to Joshua when Moses died. God commanded Joshua: "Arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them" (Joshua 1:2). But God also promised, "I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage" (Joshua 1:5,6). If Joshua was to succeed in his task, he must continue to be obedient to God. God said to him: "Observe to do according to all the law . . . for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:7,8).

Certainly, when God calls us to duty, He will give us the courage, strength and wisdom that we need. He will do so when we step out in the path of obedience, trusting in Him, presenting our needs to Him in prayer, keeping an open ear to His word, and striving to run in the way of His precepts.

John Brown of Haddington

6. Writing for Plain People

The previous article appeared in January. In it we saw John Brown become a minister in Haddington, a small town near Edinburgh.

Brown was no doubt a diligent pastor. But he managed to find time for several other useful activities. In his little study above the front door of his manse, he might often be found, dipping his pen in ink and writing just a few more words of whatever book he was writing at the time – before the nib again became dry and he had to dip it in ink once more, Brown, of course, lived before the days of word processors, which make the work of writing so much more manageable.

Yet Brown and many another godly minister, completely ignorant of modern technology, persevered in their exertions in the hope of doing good to souls in places far beyond where they were able to make their voices heard. They were glad of the opportunities they had to spread far and wide, in printed form, the truths of the Bible – in the hope that sinners would get good for their souls and that God would be glorified in this way.

Sometime in 1765 Brown would have been carefully checking over the sheets on which he had written out the book he called *The Christian Journal*, perhaps the most popular of all his writings. In it he describes all sorts of ordinary happenings and things one might see on a day in spring, in summer, in autumn, or in winter – or on a Sabbath – and drew spiritual lessons from each of them. For instance: "Yonder a sparrow chirps. Pretty bird, but [it is

in] Jehovah's care; [it is in] my Father's charge. Am I [as a believer] not much more so? Though, when forsaken of Him, I mourn, yet let me cleave to His house, nestle in the walls of divine perfections and promises, and in the covering of Jesus' righteousness." Brown was obviously someone who tried to consider profitably what he saw as he walked about the town of Haddington or rode through the countryside. It would be good for us to follow his example wherever we live.

He thinks of a stream, and that makes him consider the "river of Jesus' blood and blessed Spirit, which makes glad the Church, the city of God". He then exclaims, "O the plenty, the purity, freeness, and easy access to Thee! Here we may drink and wash; all may drink and wash; filthiness can never pollute Thy stream. Wash here, my soul; wash seven times and be clean." This book was reprinted many times, and each time Brown tried to make it better. He fully expected that some people would try to make fun of it. But he knew that it was his duty to bear their mockery patiently; he trusted that Jesus would make it useful to serious people.

Another major work was Brown's *Dictionary of the Holy Bible*. It was intended to give a summary of what the Bible tells about people, places and other things, at the same time making use of what was then known from other sources, such as ancient history. The *Dictionary* appeared in 1769 in two large volumes. And most years until 1868 a new edition of the work was published. Indeed five editions appeared into which other people inserted ideas which were not Brown's at all; these ideas were false and opposed by Scripture. These people were wickedly taking advantage of the popularity of Brown's books and of his reputation as a sound writer, in the hope of deceiving people into believing what was opposed by the teaching of Scripture.

Perhaps Brown's best-known work was his *Self-Interpreting Bible*, which appeared in 1778. It involved years of work for this busy Haddington minister. For those with something more than a basic education, there were plenty commentaries on the Bible that they could use; Brown was concerned to help ordinary people understand the Bible. For any verse, Brown might give readers references to several other verses so that they might use one part of the Bible to shed light on another part. This is why references in the middle of Bible pages, for instance, can be so useful today. And at the bottom of each page, Brown provided short explanations, especially of difficult verses. Besides, he summarised each chapter briefly at its beginning, and at its end he left the reader with some "reflections". It was, as someone has said, a plain word for a plain man.

Among the introductory material, he provided the reader with 14 helpful rules for understanding the Bible. The twelfth one went something like this:

If, at first sight, one verse seems to say the opposite of another verse, we must consider them seriously in the hope of finding out how, in fact, they agree. But if we are not able to see how they agree, we should never think they contradict each other; we should conclude instead that the problem arises because we do not understand properly what at least one of them is saying.

When this Bible was first published, the printer could not afford to buy all the materials and print the pages before the books were finished and sold; so Brown had to put in some of his own money to get the project off the ground. Even so, the printer went bankrupt, and Brown lost his money. In the end, it was published somehow, and many other editions followed, with Brown often adding more material. It is likely that, because the book was so successful, Brown easily recovered the money he had lost.

Some readers were no doubt fascinated by the information that Brown reported, such as the number of books, chapters, verses, words, and even letters in the whole Bible, and in each of the Old and New Testaments. For instance, the middle verse of the Bible is Psalm 118:8, the middle verses of the Old Testament are 2 Chronicles 20:17,18, and the middle verse of the New Testament is Acts 17:17. Finding out and checking such information, as well as checking the references, comments and everything else he included in this book, was one reason why Brown wore out five copies of the Bible during this work.

But most people, one would like to think, valued their copy of the *Self-Interpreting Bible* much more for the spiritual help it gave them as they sought to understand what God had revealed for the good of their souls. That should be our purpose too in coming to the Bible and to other religious books: to get good for our souls, through the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

Heaven and Hell

6. More About Heaven

Rev J B Jardine

The previous section of this Youth Conference paper, in last month's *Magazine*, began to describe the blessedness of heaven.

John Bunyan describes heaven in *The Pilgrim's Progress*: "I saw in my dream that these two men, Christian and Hopeful, went in at the gate. And lo, as they entered, they were transfigured, and they had raiment put on that shone like gold. There were also that met them with harps and crowns, and gave them to them: the harps to praise withal, and the crowns in token of honour. Then I heard in my dream that all the bells in the city rang again for

joy, and that it was said unto them, ‘Enter ye into the joy of the Lord’.

“I also heard the men themselves sing with a loud voice, saying, ‘Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever’ . . . Now, just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and behold the city shone like the sun; the streets also were paved with gold, and in them walked many men with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps to sing praises withal.”

In heaven there is no sickness, tears, death, sin, weariness, sleep or fear, only everlasting joy and glory to crown the heads of the redeemed. J C Ryle puts it briefly: “Heaven is the eternal presence of everything that can make a saint happy, and the eternal absence of everything that can cause sorrow”.

Again we repeat: there is no place in heaven for sickness, pain, disease, death, poverty, work, money, care, ignorance, misunderstandings, slander, lying, strife, contention, quarrels, envies, jealousies, bad tempers, unbelief, scepticism, irreligion, superstition, heresy, divisions, wars, fights, bloodshed, murders, or lawsuits.

When the righteous gather in heaven none of them will be missing. The weakest lamb will not be left behind in the wilderness and the youngest infant will not be forgotten. Their faith may be very weak, but it never fails. Their hope may be very low, but they will hope to the end.

In his *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*, Thomas Boston speaks of the heights of the heavenly blessing: “Now [in this life] they are made ‘partakers of the divine nature’! But then they shall be perfectly of [that nature]; that is to say, God will communicate to them His own image, make all His goodness, not only pass before them, but pass into them, and stamp the image of all His own perfections upon them, so far as the [person] is capable of receiving them; from whence shall result a perfect likeness of Him in all things in or about them; which completes the happiness of the creature.”

Again Boston says that heaven is in its reality a “perfect and uninterrupted communion with God”. The righteous will have the “full enjoyment of God”. The end of this will be a perfect likeness to God and unspeakable joy. “As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness” (Psalm 17:15); “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Psalm 16:11).

The great question that should concern us is whether or not we will get to heaven. What will it profit us if we study the doctrine of heaven but do not get there? Jesus Christ, the One who sits at God’s right hand, is able and willing to save those that come to Him by faith. He is an Advocate and Friend

to all who desire to be saved. He is waiting at this moment to be gracious. If we do not get to heaven, the fault will be ours. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

For Junior Readers

The Book God Used

Have you ever heard of John Flavel? He lived a long time ago, in the 1600s, and was a well-known and respected Presbyterian minister in England. He wrote many good books. He spent most of his ministry in Dartmouth, which is on the south coast of England. A lot of his time was taken up with prayer, particularly asking God that his sermons and books would be blessed to the conversion of sinners. The Lord answered this prayer many times; so his work was greatly blessed.

Let me tell you about one time when his prayers were answered. Flavel visited a bookshop in London where his books were on sale. The bookseller, whose name was Boulter, told him about a customer who wanted to buy some books of plays for his entertainment.

Boulter told him that he did not stock such books but that he could recommend to him something much more worthwhile to read. He showed his customer Flavel's small book called, *Keeping the Heart*. It is based on the words from Proverbs, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life". He urged the man to read it and assured him that it would do him much more good than books of plays.

The customer read the title of the book and glanced over some of the pages. He then started cursing the man who wrote the book. The shopkeeper begged him to buy it and read it for himself. He eventually agreed to buy it but said he was going to tear it up and burn it.

"Well," said Boulter, "in that case you shall not have it!"

The customer then agreed that he would read it. And the bookseller promised that, if the man still disliked the book, he would give him back his money.

About a month later the man returned to the bookshop looking much more serious than he was the first time. Boulter was amazed to hear what he had to say: "I thank God most heartily that you put this book into my hands, I bless God who moved you to do it, for it has been used to save my soul! Blessed be God that ever I came into your shop."

Was that not a wonderful answer to Mr Flavel's prayer! He then ordered

100 more copies of the book so that he could give them to poor people who could not afford to buy them for themselves! Both the bookseller and Flavel praised God for His goodness in using this book in the conversion of a sinner.

J van Kralingen

For Younger Readers

What God Sees

A boy and girl were carrying a basket of cakes to their Granny. They knew that the cakes would taste very nice. They really wanted to eat one.

They counted them several times and decided that they would eat just one of them. Nobody would know, they told themselves.

As they were staring at the cakes, ready to take just one, the girl looked up at her brother's face. Then she asked him: "Can't God count?"

She knew the answer to her question. So did her brother. Of course, God knew how many cakes there were. And He would know if they ate one. They knew that God was watching them. So they left the cakes alone.

When you want to do something wrong, remember that God sees you. Then, I hope, you will no longer want to do it.

Zimbabwe Youth Conference

On 10 December 2015, young people from our congregations in Zimbabwe gathered in Bulawayo at Lobengula Church for the second Youth Conference in our Church in Zimbabwe.

A large number of youths came: from Mbumba, Zenka, Nkayi, Ingwenya, Zvishavane and Chiedza, despite many challenges like financial constraints and difficulties with travel. Many from the host city of Bulawayo also came for the conference. The total attendance was 115 people.

The following papers were presented:

1. Relations between parents and children, from Ephesians 6:1-4 – Rev M Mloyi.
2. The Word of God and young people – Rev A B Maclean.
3. Presbyterian church government – Rev S Khumalo.
4. The Five Points of Calvinism – Rev N Sibanda.
5. History of the Mashonaland Mission – Mr N Siziba.

After every paper, there were discussions which aroused a lot of interest and were very profitable, even for those who were not Free Presbyterians. At the end, there was an opportunity for anyone to ask questions.

Then the conference was closed, as many were travelling back to their various homes, some far away. As we parted, the rains fell and our prayer is that the Lord Himself would pour down His Holy Spirit upon our young people, that they may be conscious of their sins and come to a saving knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

“Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands, establish Thou it” (Psalm 90:16-17).

(Rev) *S Khumalo*

The Great Things the Lord Has Done

The ship was sailing from London to the West Indies. The second mate – the third in command – claimed that it was the worst ship that ever sailed the seas. He did not explain what he meant, except to say that the sailors were particularly bad for swearing. The captain was a good sailor and kind to the crew, but he had no care for his own soul or for the souls of those who sailed with him.

About 16 days after leaving port, one night when the second mate was on watch, a sudden gust of wind made the ship list heavily to one side. The mate lost his balance and hit his head against a pole with considerable force. His head was very sore, he was angry, and he cursed the ship, the wind, the sea and God who made them.

“Scarcely had this horrid oath escaped me”, he recalled afterwards, when the words came back into his mind and made a terrifying impression on him. He ran off towards the stern of the ship and, for a moment or two he imagined he saw the sea parting and the ship going down into the depths. All that night he seemed to see his oath passing in front of his eyes; he saw too what he knew must be the consequence of his sin: his certain condemnation in hell.

He was miserable for several days but was afraid to tell anyone why. He asked one of the other crewmen for a book and he was brought a novel written by a godless Frenchman. That could be of no help to a sinner, particularly one concerned about his soul and where he would spend eternity.

Then he asked for a New Testament and, with a sneer, the man asked him if he was going to die. “I never trouble myself about these things,” the man added; “I leave Bibles and prayer books to the priests” – perhaps referring to Church of England ministers.

“Several days thus passed in the greatest torment, this dreadful oath always

before me, and I was continually harassed with the dreadful thought: ‘I shall be damned; I shall be damned’. I could not pray; indeed I thought it was of no use.” And it was of no use to go to the captain for help. But on the fifth day he was searching in his chest and found some little things he had bought wrapped up in a piece of paper. But the piece of paper was very valuable; it contained almost the whole of the first chapter of Isaiah.

“How my heart throbbed when I found it was a part of the Bible! But imagine what I felt at these words, ‘Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool’. Like a drowning man I clung to this lifebuoy; on this I laid my soul while the billows [the waves of sad concern] were going over me. I prayed, and the Lord was graciously pleased to remove in some measure the great guilt from my conscience.”

The mate must then have transferred to another ship, called the *Mayflower*. On board there was a group of men who gathered together to worship God. “There”, said the mate, “the Lord spoke to me pardon and peace. I am now like poor Legion [out of whom Jesus cast many devils] going home to my friends to tell them what great things the Lord has done for me.”

God is able to do wonderful things for sinners even in unlikely places. He is in control of all that happens – He was even in control of the page from the Bible when it was used as wrapping paper. The man who used it in that way sinfully despised God and His revelation, but God may overrule people’s sins to do good to others.

One assumes that the man owned a Bible, but how sorry he must have been that he did not take it with him when he set out on the voyage from London! Be careful to take your Bible everywhere you go, and make good use of it always.

The Bible Speaks to a Sinner

This “conversation” illustrates what the Bible tells sinners and how the sinner may respond. It comes from a volume of *The Christian Treasury*. Whatever a sinner may say, there is always a suitable response from the Word of God.

Bible. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways (Haggai 1:5).

Sinner. I am not so bad as some others.

Bible. They that compare themselves among themselves are not wise (2 Corinthians 10:12).

Sinner. I hope I am not so bad as to go to hell.

Bible. The wicked shall be turned into hell (Psalm 9:17).

Sinner. But God is merciful.

Bible. Let every man take heed how he buildeth . . . for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:10,11).

Sinner. Is there no mercy apart from Christ?

Bible. There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12). [Jesus saith,] I am the way . . . no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me (John 14:6).

Sinner. I hope I do some good.

Bible. There is none that doeth good; no, not one (Psalm 14:3).

Sinner. Is everything that I do wicked?

Bible. The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord (Proverbs 15:26). The ploughing of the wicked is sin (Proverbs 21:4).

Sinner. I am sure I have some good thoughts.

Bible. God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Genesis 6:5). Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders (Mark 7:21).

Sinner. If my heart is so wicked, what shall I do?

Bible. Repent . . . and turn from all your transgressions . . . and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die? (Ezekiel 18:30,31). Give *Me* thine heart (Proverbs 23:26). They . . . first gave their own selves to the Lord (2 Corinthians 8:5).

Sinner. I try to be honest, and pay my debts.

Bible. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law (Galatians 5:4).

Sinner. What is the law?

Bible. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself (Matthew 22:37,39).

Sinner. Surely I have kept the law in some measure.

Bible. Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all (James 2:10).

Sinner. But did Christ not abolish the moral law?

Bible. Think not that I am come to destroy the law . . . I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill (Matthew 5:17). Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them (Galatians 3:10).

Sinner. How then shall I be delivered from the curse of the law?

Bible. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13).

Sinner. Will all then be saved?

Bible. He that believeth . . . shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16).

Sinner. I do believe.

Bible. The devils also believe, and tremble (James 2:19).

Sinner. What then must I do?

Bible. This is the work of God, that ye *believe* on Him whom He hath sent (John 6:29).

Sinner. What is it to believe?

Bible. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness (Romans 10:10).

Sinner. I have been trying to do my best.

Bible. Without faith it is impossible to please Him (Hebrews 11:6).

Sinner. I have been praying and reading my Bible.

Bible. He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination (Proverbs 28:9).

Sinner. Ought I not to pray?

Bible. Men ought always to pray (Luke 18:1). I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting (1 Timothy 2:8).

Sinner. But will not God hear if I pray the best I can, though I have not a new heart, and do not believe?

Bible. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me (Psalm 66:18).

Sinner. What must I do to be saved?

Bible. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved (Acts 16:31).

Sinner. Is Christ able to save me?

Bible. He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:25).

Sinner. But I am so unworthy that I am afraid He will not accept me.

Bible. Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out (John 6:37).

Sinner. Why then am I not saved?

Bible. Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life (John 5:40).

Sinner. I think I am willing; I cannot believe that I am unwilling to come to Christ.

Bible. He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us *eternal life*; and this life is in *His Son* (1 John 5:10,11).

Sinner. I will believe, but cannot now.

Bible. God . . . now commandeth all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30).

Sinner. I must wait God's time.

Bible. The Holy Ghost saith, *Today* if ye hear His voice, harden not your hearts (Hebrews 3:7,8). Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2). Come, for all things are now ready (Luke 14:17).

Sinner. How can I come now?

Bible. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely (Revelation 22:17).

Sinner. If I am spared, I will try soon; perhaps tomorrow.

Bible. Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee (Luke 12:20). Ye know not what shall be on the morrow; for what is your life? It is even a vapour (James 4:14).

Sinner. What would you have me do?

Bible. Be ye reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Sinner. But do I hate him?

Bible. The carnal mind is enmity against God (Romans 8:7). Now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father (John 15:24).

Sinner. I never thought I hated God.

Bible. The heart is deceitful above all things (Jeremiah 17:9). He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool (Proverbs 28:26).

Sinner. Well, what must I do?

Bible. Repent, and believe the gospel (Mark 1:15). Except ye repent, ye shall . . . perish (Luke 13:3). He that believeth . . . shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16).

Sinner. What can I do more? I have done all I can.

Bible. Ye shall . . . find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart (Jeremiah 29:13). Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me (Isaiah 27:5).

Sinner. But may I be saved now?

Bible. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the *Lord Jesus*, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved (Romans 10:9).

Sinner. Is this promise for me?

Bible. The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely (Revelation 22:17).

Sinner. I do believe with all my heart.

Bible. Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee (Matthew 8:13). Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee (Luke 8:39). Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto *Thy name* give glory, for *Thy mercy*, and for *Thy truth's sake* (Psalm 115:1).

Looking Around Us

“Cheating Watches”

Teachers have complained about “cheating watches”, which can hold huge amounts (4 GB) of written information or pictures. They can be read in exams and are intended to give students an unfair advantage. There is even a new model with 8 GB of memory, which can hold video files. What are such cheating students to do when an invigilator is about to pass their desk? These watches include an “emergency button” which quickly switches the display to a normal clock face.

All this is totally unfair to other students who are sitting the same exam. They have to bring up from their memories what others – hopefully just a few – can bring up at the press of a button. One brand is advertised as “specifically designed for cheating in exams”; that is how lacking in shame the makers are. Not only may such cheats pass an exam that they would otherwise fail, they may be admitted to a further course when otherwise they might be turned down, they may get a job when otherwise they might be unsuccessful with their application. And others may miss out on these opportunities. But if the cheats are caught, there may be serious consequences: they may be disqualified from *all* their exams.

More seriously, this behaviour is dishonest. Another advert promises a watch that is “perfect for covertly viewing exam notes directly on your wrist”. And dishonesty is sin – before God. When human invigilators find it hugely difficult to notice a “watch for easier studying” (words quoted from another advert), the Most High, who sees all things, knows exactly what is happening and all the ungodly, selfish motives that lie behind such dishonesty. Ask God to help you to be honest in everything you say and do.

What Happens After this Life?

It is not often one finds a good comment bearing on eternity in *Time* magazine. Yet the first of their readers’ letters in the issue for March 21, while brief, is very much to the point. The reader, from Dublin, is reacting to an article on getting older; he states, “We all want to live longer, healthier and happier – that’s natural. But let’s remember that we are mortal and that death is part of life. The real question is what happens to us then.”

How he would answer his question, I do not know. How would you answer it? Do you expect to go to heaven and to escape hell?

Here is something else to remember: “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near” (Isaiah 55:6). Bear in mind too that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only Saviour.

A Leper's Spiritual Healing

A poem by John Newton based on Matthew 8:2,3.

Oft as the leper's case I read,
my own described I feel.
Sin is a leprosy indeed,
which none but Christ can heal.

Lord, Thou canst heal me if Thou wilt,
for Thou canst all things do.
O cleanse my leprous soul from guilt;
my filthy heart renew.

He heard, and with a gracious look
pronounced the healing word,
"I will; be clean", and while He spoke,
I felt my health restored.

Come, lepers, seize the present hour,
the Saviour's grace to prove.
He can relieve, for He is power;
He will, for He is love.

A while I would have passed for well,
and strove my spots to hide,
Till it broke out incurable,
too plain to be denied.

Then from the saints I sought to flee,
and dreaded to be seen.
I thought they all would point at me,
and cry, "Unclean, unclean!"

What anguish did my soul endure,
till hope and patience ceased!
The more I strove myself to cure,
the more the plague increased.

While thus I lay distressed, I saw
the Saviour passing by.
To Him, though filled with shame and awe,
I raised my mournful cry.

Price £1.00