

# 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*



***August 2016***

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# Contents

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Josiah's Repentance . . . . .	143
Joshua – Successor to Moses:	
6. Dividing the Land and Charging the People . . . . .	146
For Junior Readers:	
“Is God in this Town?” . . . . .	148
John Brown of Haddington:	
9. Advice to a Young Man and to His Own Children . . . . .	150
The Evil of Spiritual Terrorism . . . . .	153
Depending on Christ's Blood . . . . .	155
Principles of the Christian Church:	
2. The Church as a City . . . . .	156
For Younger Readers:	
What Do You Remember? . . . . .	158
Looking Around Us . . . . .	159
The Sands of Time (2) . . . . .	160

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**Cover Picture:** A. View of Portree, Isle of Skye, See page 148.

## The Young People's Magazine

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# The Young People's Magazine

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## Josiah's Repentance

Josiah was a remarkable king of Judah. The Bible tells us that “like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him” (2 Kings 23:25). There were other godly kings, such as David and Hezekiah, but what seems to be emphasised in the verse just quoted is that Josiah was particularly consistent in the way he lived.

He began to reign when he was very young, when he was only 8. And “in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young (just 15), he began to seek after the God of David his father” (2 Chronicles 34:3). Clearly Josiah was not then too young to seek the Lord; indeed it would have been even better if he had sought the Lord when he was still younger. You should not tell yourself, whatever age you are, that you are too young to take religion seriously, to take God seriously, to think seriously about your soul, and to seek the Lord earnestly. However young you are, you may die.

And supposing you could know that God will spare you for many years to come, surely the best way to spend the rest of your life is to serve God – to serve Him, like Josiah, with all your heart. You must trust in Christ as the only Saviour from sin, which is *the* work that God has commanded (see John 6:29). If you trust in Christ, you will have God's care wherever you are; you will never perish in a lost eternity; and no one – not even Satan – can pluck you out of Christ's hand (John 10:29).

Josiah “turned to the Lord”. What guided him? It was “all the law of Moses”, the first five books of the Bible: Genesis to Deuteronomy. *We* now have a complete Bible to guide us, but in these five books, Josiah had enough information to guide him safely through this world and to direct him how to get to heaven. The great matter is that he made use of the part of the Bible which he had at that time.

When Joshua was beginning to act as leader of the Children of Israel, God told him: “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according

to all that is written therein” (Joshua 1:8). These books that Moses had written were what should guide Joshua in everything he said. But if he was to come under the influence of these books, he must meditate on them all the time, as far as possible.

And we have much more to guide us than Josiah had; we have all 66 books of the Bible. We must not only read them, but we must meditate on what we have read; we must think over the truths of God's Word, try to understand what God is telling us, and seek to apply these things to our lives. Not least, we must ask God in prayer for His blessing as we read His Word and think over it.

In taking the Scriptures as a guide, Josiah was acting wisely, for they are totally reliable. That is true, not only for the five books of Moses, but for all the books of the Bible. So Paul said – although the Book of Revelation, at least, was not then written – that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect” (2 Timothy 3:16,17). The whole Bible, in other words, is profitable to teach people all the religious truth they need to know, to convict them when they go wrong, to show them the better way, and to train them in righteous living.

Josiah is an example of those who have lived godly, upright lives in the light of the Bible. That is how we too should live, for the Bible is just as reliable today as ever it was; every part of it records what the Holy Spirit led its human authors to write down. It was through the Holy Spirit inspiring them that the human authors were kept from making mistakes and were able to write in a way that would be relevant for the lives of people of all kinds in every generation.

The law of Moses was a guide for Josiah, showing him the right way to go through this world. Relying on God's revelation, he turned to the Lord wholeheartedly. If you look up Deuteronomy 4:30, you will see that the last part of the verse uses the two phrases, “turn to the Lord thy God”, and, “be obedient unto His voice”; one follows the other and explains the other. So when Josiah turned to the Lord, he became obedient to the Lord's voice; he became obedient to what the Lord was saying to him.

What was God saying to him? The law of Moses summed it up like this: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (Deuteronomy 6:5) and “thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Leviticus 19:18); this is what Jesus identified as the first and second commandments of the law (Mark 12:29-31). But God speaks to us more fully in the Ten Commandments, the first of which is: “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me”.

But God speaks to *us* in the whole Bible, telling us how we should live. He not only uses commandments, but He gives us examples, in the lives of all kinds of people, of how we should live and how we should not live. For instance, we are told that Paul lived with dreadful hatred in his heart to Christ before he was converted – which points us to how we should *not* live. And we are told about how Paul followed Christ with great love and energy after his conversion – which gives us a wonderful example of someone wholeheartedly living a godly life. Josiah was another wonderful example of living a godly life.

We too must repent; we must turn from our own sinful ways to follow Christ; we must trust in Him. We must listen to what God is saying to us – we must obey Him with our whole heart. People may have a bad conscience about various sins, and this may force them to turn from some of their sins. Perhaps they would love to continue with these sins but, at least for a time, they dare not go on with them. Why do these people continue to love their sins? They have not turned to God with all their heart; they do not have a sincere love to God and to His commandments.

If they do not have a sincere love to God, they do not have a new heart. We need a greater power than our own if we are to turn sincerely from sin to God; we need the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts. That is why we need to use the prayer: “Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned” (Jeremiah 31:18). If God will turn us, we will truly turn to Him; we will really become obedient to His voice; we will seek to obey Him with our whole heart. It was by God’s grace that Josiah turned to Him and began to live such a remarkably godly life; God gave him a new heart.

In Old Testament times, God was very much speaking to the people of Israel only, rather than to the Gentiles. But as Paul told the people of Athens, God “*now* commandeth all men everywhere to repent” – not just Jews, but everyone, in all parts of the world. And Paul gave a powerful reason why all should treat this duty of repentance seriously: God “hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead” (Acts 17:30,31).

Who is “that Man”? It is the Lord Jesus Christ. God raised Him from the dead; and He will raise us up too, at the end of the world, and He will be our Judge. Josiah will be there, and we can be sure that Josiah is ready to appear before Christ whenever He will come the second time to this world, to call everyone to judgement. You too will be there, but will you be ready? If you have any doubt about your readiness, seek the Lord Jesus now; turn to Him from your sins, and do so with all your heart; trust in Him. And do not delay.

## Joshua – Successor to Moses

### 6. Dividing the Land and Charging the People

*Rev Neil M Ross*

The fifth part of this paper, in last month's *Magazine*, told about Joshua's peace treaty with the Gibeonites and his successful campaigns. This is the last section of the paper, which was given to the 2015 Youth Conference.

Although the Bible says that “Joshua took the *whole* land” (Joshua 11:23), it does not mean that he took possession of every inch of it, but rather that he conquered many areas throughout the length and breadth of the land and so secured most of Canaan. The Canaanites still held parts of the country, as God reminded Joshua: “There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed”. But by this time, we are told, Joshua “was old and stricken in years” – probably 100 years old, it is reckoned (Joshua 13:1). Although he was too old to go out to war, he had another important task to perform. He had to divide the land – including those parts yet unconquered – among the remaining nine and a half tribes. (The other two and a half tribes, of course, received their inheritance on the east side of the River Jordan.)

The dividing of the land among the tribes was done by casting lots. Casting lots has been done in many different ways through the ages, but I suppose a common modern way of casting lots is tossing a coin or throwing a dice to decide who is to get or do something. But we do not really know what method of casting lots was used in Joshua's day.

So the land was divided into regions, and each region was given to the tribe whose name was shown by the casting of lots. Although “Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord” (Joshua 18:10), it was evident that the process was directed by God, acting as the God of providence, and that the decisions were His. Therefore, as Psalm 78:55 shows, it was really God who divided the land to them. Scripture also tells us: “The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord” (Proverbs 16:33). God's decision, as indicated by casting lots, was final; Proverbs 18:18 says, “The lot causeth contentions to cease”.

It was just before this time that Joshua removed the tabernacle from Gilgal to Shiloh. Shiloh was in the centre of the country, a more convenient place for the people, and not far from where Joshua himself lived. And it was there, in the heart of the land, that the tabernacle and ark of the covenant remained for more than 300 years.

How necessary it is today for the true religion to be at the heart of any nation – I mean, at the centre of its life – if it is to prosper. When Joshua rehearsed the law to the people at Mount Ebal, he was saying, as it were,

“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs 14:34) – a truth that all nations, not least our own, are in great need of learning in this sinful age when so many people are departing from God.

But Joshua did not give the Levites an area of Canaan, for God said to them: “I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel” (Numbers 18:20). They needed, of course, to have places to live in; so Joshua gave them 48 cities throughout the country (Joshua 21:41).

We may learn from this that when God sends out a man to serve Him, say in the ministry of the gospel, He will supply all his needs. The Bible says, “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:14).

Of these 48 cities, Joshua appointed six cities of refuge, as God commanded. These were to protect anyone who unintentionally killed someone else and fled to one of those cities to be safe from a person wishing to avenge the killing. The cities of refuge are a very instructive type of Christ as the refuge of sinners who flee to Him for salvation. Paul describes himself and his fellow believers as those “who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” (Hebrews 6:18).

The time now came for Joshua to dismiss the tribes who had their inheritance east of Jordan, but who stayed with their fellow tribes to help them conquer Canaan as they had promised. Joshua told them, “Return ye, and get you unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession. . . . But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all His ways” (Joshua 22:4-6). So they went away with his blessing.

When Joshua was approaching his end he assembled the people at Shechem once more and addressed them solemnly. By this time he was very old and it seems that his address in the last two chapters of the Book of Joshua was his farewell to his people. “This day,” he said to them, “I am going the way of all the earth.”

After recounting what the Lord had done for them, Joshua charged them to serve the Lord faithfully. They were confident that they would do so, but Joshua told them, “Ye cannot serve the Lord, for He is an holy God” – meaning that, in their own strength, they could not serve Him.

Have we ourselves learned this lesson? Many years before his death, Joshua resolved, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”. He did so to the very end of his days. May we, by divine grace, do likewise!

Joshua especially warned them not to mix with the remaining heathen Canaanites in the land, nor make marriages with them. C H Spurgeon comments, “Separation from sinners was Joshua’s lesson, and it is one which

is not stale or needless at this time". Spurgeon adds, "Marriage with the ungodly is expressly mentioned, because it is a frequent and deadly snare. It has done more mischief in the Church of God than tongue can tell. It is the wolf which devours the lambs."

Joshua, having lovingly and faithfully laid those obligations on the people, dismissed them with his blessing. How soon after this he died we do not know, but it is recorded: "It came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old" (Joshua 24:29).

Joshua's end was a blessed end. Psalm 37 tells us: "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace" (verse 37). Joshua was a perfect man; that is, in comparison with others, not absolutely so. He was a perfect man in the sense of being righteous. He was righteous in his spiritual state before God, for he believed in the promised Messiah; and he was righteous, or upright, in his conduct. Our end also will be a blessed end if we have Christ as our righteousness and follow Him in the path of righteousness.

May we also seek to imitate Joshua's moral courage. Let us look to the Lord for grace to be courageous. He gave grace to Joshua to be strong and of good courage. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

What is especially admirable about Joshua is how, faithfully and perseveringly, he complied with the Word of God. Must we not also do what is commanded in God's Word at all times? Of course, neither we nor our works can be accepted by God unless we are first accepted in Christ.

To Christ Jesus then we must look in faith. Only He, the Joshua of the New Testament, can save us, lead us through the wilderness of this world, and bring us at last into the heavenly Canaan. Christ, as the faithful servant of God the Father, finished the work of redeeming His people by His death on the cross. If our hope and confidence is placed in Christ and His finished work, then it will be well with us now and for ever.

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*For Junior Readers*

## **"Is God in this Town?"**

Mary Bethune was a girl on the Isle of Skye over 250 years ago. Although she was only 11 years old she had to work as a goat herd, looking after the family's animals. These were dark days spiritually in these parts of Scotland. Even where there were ministers, very few of them preached the gospel. But about this time a godly minister visited the island. Mary heard



him preach from Psalm 68:19-20: “Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.”

Although she never saw the minister again, she did not forget his sermon. As she was out on the hill watching the goats, her thoughts kept going back to the two topics he had spoken of: first death, and then the deliverance from death that only God can give. She wanted to find out more about this God who could rescue fully from death (as the words of the Psalm are translated into Gaelic for singing). She began to ask everyone she met if they knew about this God who could deliver from the jaws of death. Her parents and neighbours, and even the local minister, began to think that she was losing her mind.

Time went on, and Mary could still find no one to answer her questions. Her longing to know this God of salvation grew. And she decided that, if she could not find Him in Skye, she would have to travel farther from home. In her childish way she realised that any goods not available in Skye were brought from Inverness. So, she thought, surely God must be found there too!

Though still young, she decided she would have to ask her questions somewhere else. There was no public transport in those days; indeed there were not even proper roads. The only way of getting anywhere was to walk; so she set off barefoot to cross Skye and head towards Inverness. Thankfully the people in those days were kind to strangers; they were generous in giving this poor girl food and shelter on her journey.

From village to village she walked, questioning everyone about “the God of salvation”. Most people thought she was a bit mad, and nobody could give her an answer. But the Lord whom she was seeking had His eye on her and eventually she arrived safely in Inverness.

At that time there was only a wooden bridge over the River Ness. As she crossed it, she spotted a lady who was actually on her way to church. It was the weekend of communion services in Inverness, and the God of providence brought Mary to meet this kind Christian lady, who at once took an interest in her.

“O lady, is God in this town?” Mary asked. “And if so, where shall I find Him?” Though she was surprised by the question, the lady replied, “Yes, God is in this town. Come with me, and perhaps you may find Him.” She then took Mary by the hand and walked with her to the church, where the service was beginning.

The minister who was preaching that day was James Calder, a true man of God. As he preached the gospel, Mary listened, giving it all her attention. She drank in every word he said about God, about the sinner and about the

Saviour. As he went on earnestly and clearly, God blessed His Word to Mary. The Holy Spirit made her able to understand the truth, and that moment in the old Gaelic church at Inverness proved to be the moment of her conversion.

"I see Him now! I understand it all now! I have found Him now! I have found Him!" she exclaimed in her delight. Her weary wanderings all the way from Skye were forgotten. She now knew the God she had been seeking for, the One on whom she could lean with confidence for time and for eternity. Mary could now say, "This God is my own God, the God of my salvation".

The kind lady who had taken her to the church now brought her to her own home, and cared for her like a mother. Mary lived with her until the lady died. Then she moved out of Inverness to be under the ministry of Mr Calder, whose sermon had been so much blessed to her.

Was that not wonderful? But what about you? You probably have the Word of God. You have the gospel preached to you from week to week. But what use do you make of it? Do you pray that you would know God as the God of *your* salvation? You are not too young. Mary was only 11 when she began to seek the Lord. If you seek Him as she did, you too will find Him. God has promised, "Seek, and ye shall find!"

*J van Kralingen*

Note: You can find out some more about Mary in the book, *Gospel Gleanings for Young People*. You can buy it from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom.

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## **John Brown of Haddington**

### **9. Advice to a Young Man and to His Own Children**

John Brown was a minister in Haddington, south-east of Edinburgh. In last month's article we saw him experience the sadness of his wife's death. Later he had the happiness of marrying a second wife, Violet Croumbie. We saw too some examples of his humble attitudes.

**B**rown was concerned about James Pierston, a young farmer who was a close friend of his new wife's family. James had been unwell and Brown wrote to him with good advice. The minister was specially anxious that, in James' time of trouble, he would seriously consider his great need of Christ, and also how suitable He was to all his needs.

It was probably a time when James was not well enough to work, and Brown advised him that this should be "a time of prayer for the effectual work of God's Spirit in your heart, in convincing you of your sinfulness and misery, and enlightening your mind in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing your will and thereby persuading and enabling you to embrace Jesus Christ

as freely offered to you in the gospel". (He was making use of the *Shorter Catechism* answer to the question, "What is effectual calling?")

Brown added, "That, to be sure, ought to be your principal care, as your soul's eternal salvation is of more value than the whole world". Nor did he forget James' body; he advised the young farmer to spend time riding his horse, to get some exercise.

In another letter, Brown reminded James to go riding whenever the weather would allow. And again he stressed the need to "be deeply concerned to receive Jesus Christ into your heart as the free gift of God. Without this there can be no solid happiness in this world, and nothing but inexpressible misery in the eternal state hereafter." Then he asked James to read Lamentations 3:22-29, a passage which includes these verses: "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth."

Brown was now conscious that he was growing older and was less fit than he used to be. He knew that he could not be left in this world for much longer. His two children by his first wife were grown up, but he had six others – between four and 14 years old. He wrote down some pieces of good advice for them. He started by looking back to their baptisms. He believed that God had made with him, and his children, His everlasting covenant – to be a God to him and to his children. Now he was once more committing them all to God's care. Conscious that he was in God's presence, and warning them that they would have to answer for their response at Christ's second coming, he told them:

1. "To learn diligently the principles of our Christian and Protestant religion." For this they were to use *The Shorter Catechism*, *The Westminster Confession of Faith* and especially the Bible – because the Bible has life and power that no other book has. He went on: "The more closely you press the words of the Bible to your own hearts, and pray and think over them before God, you will find them the more powerful and pleasant".

2. "Give yourselves to prayer." Brown quoted such verses as: "But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:16). "I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me" (Proverbs 8:17). "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth" (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Brown's parents had both died before he was 13, and he recalled that afterwards God sometimes made him enjoy prayer more than playing. So he advised his children to ask God to guide them in everything they did and to seek His blessing on everything they learned.

3. They were "to love, honour and obey" their mother. He reminded them

that God particularly watched how they treated her. He warned them not to break her heart by their disobedience and an ungodly way of life; "otherwise the Lord's dreadful curse" will come upon you.

4. He told them to avoid all wicked companions, such as those who wasted time with empty talk, who swore, got drunk or were immoral. He quoted Proverbs 13:20: "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed". And he added, "Never make any your companions with whom you would not wish to appear at the judgement seat of Christ, and with whom you would not wish to live for ever".

5. They were to pay earnest attention to "the infinitely-important concerns of your eternal salvation". He was concerned that they might grow up careless and wicked; then there might be no one godly among his descendants. It was a thought he found very unwelcome. And he warned them about "eternal damnation". He advised them to read such books as Thomas Boston's *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*, Samuel Rutherford's *Letters* and Joseph Alleine's *Alarm to the Unconverted* (also known as *A Sure Guide to Heaven*).

6. He warned them never to follow "the vain and vile fashions of this world. If you do, you disobey God." And they would put themselves in danger of ruining their souls. He quoted these verses: "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2); "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God (James 4:4).

7. He advised them not to marry without much serious and solemn prayer – not even to take one step towards marriage without earnest prayer. They were not to let anyone's beauty, friendliness or wealth bring them into what he called the "dangerous snare" of marrying anyone who was still unconverted. One of his concerns was that the children of such a couple might remain unconverted also.

8. "If the Lord will give you families and children," their father told them, "bring them up for God."

9. He advised them to "set the Lord always before you as your Saviour, Witness, Master, Pattern and future Judge". Then he quoted God's command: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

10. Brown's final piece of advice was to stick always, heartily and honestly to the principles of the Church of Scotland – not, of course, as it is today. Brown was thinking particularly of the Church as it was in the 1630s, when the National Covenant was signed, promising faithfulness to God.

He concluded by stating, "This from a dying father, minister, and a witness for Christ".

# The Evil of Spiritual Terrorism

*Matthew Vogan*

It is scriptural and useful to draw spiritual lessons from things with which we are familiar. When we come across these things in an everyday context we can recall the association between them and what is spiritual. It serves to benefit our souls as we are helped to focus on spiritual things.

Sadly, we often hear and read about the evil activity of terrorists. We wish that no such thing would happen in our land (or in any other). It is a great evil. No doubt it is a judgement from God that shows us how much Britain, as a nation, has sinned against Him and rejected Him. He permits some acts of terrorism, yet it does not seem that Britain is willing to heed this warning. We are thankful when we hear about terrorists being discovered and arrested before they can carry out their wicked intentions. We in Britain ought also to be very thankful that their numbers appear to be smaller here than in many other countries.

This great evil reminds us of the greatest evil. Sin, especially indwelling sin, operates in a very similar way to terrorists. It is hidden, yet aims at maximum destruction. It is no surprise that such a comparison can be closely drawn. Terrorists use fearfully sinful methods to achieve (usually) sinful goals. We can also learn spiritual lessons for our fight against sin from the methods used to combat terrorists. No such comparison is perfect. We will not be able to find everything corresponding exactly. Yet, as we consider these things in the light of God's Word, we hope that it will be instructive for us. We need to have our eyes opened to the dangerous enemy of our souls.

Spiritual terrorism is:

**1. A destructive enemy.** Terrorists aim to cause maximum destruction. They create explosions where they can destroy places that have special importance. They also want to kill and injure as many people as possible. They would like to cause as much destruction and disruption as they can possibly achieve.

This is the nature of sin. Every sin aims at as much destruction as possible. Every sin aims at death. "Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death" (James 1:15). It has a far-reaching effect. Every sin has a damaging effect on others as well as on ourselves.

It is sin that has caused hell, as well as all the miseries of this life. There is no greater evil than sin.

**2. A constant enemy.** Such are the beliefs of terrorists that they are always planning how they can achieve their goals. They look for opportunities and then spend time planning how to exploit the weaknesses they have discovered.

This is the nature of sin. If sin is not working openly and outwardly, it is working in the mind and heart in subtle ways. It is influencing us towards committing further and greater sin. Every imagination of the heart is only evil continually (see Genesis 6:5). The activity and threat is so constant that believers must say, "When I would do good, evil is present with me" (Romans 7:21). Just as terrorists seek opportunities to bring about destruction at times of greatest national importance, so sin is active at the times when believers would most wish it not to be. Its warfare against the principle of grace in the believer is constant (Romans 7:23, Galatians 5:17). It wars against the very soul of the believer (1 Peter 2:11, James 4:5). It "easily besets" us (Hebrews 12:1).

**3. An unpredictable enemy.** Terrorists appear to emerge from almost any background and walk of life. They can strike anytime, anywhere, using almost any method. It is a threat that cannot be predicted.

How much more is sin always unpredictable! The only thing that is predictable is the fact that it is always active.

Terrorists will not abide by codes of conflict and rules of engagement. Suicide bombers do not even seek to preserve their own lives and are unconcerned about the lives of others. Likewise, sin is not willing to be restrained.

**4. A hidden enemy.** The nature of terrorism is that it is an enemy within, not an external threat from a different country. It lies hidden. We hear about a "lone wolf" attacker who is not on the watch list. Other times it may be a secret cell with underground operations that strikes.

Sin too is an enemy within (Romans 7:17). Its activities can be so far hidden and difficult to discern that even we ourselves find that we are strangers to our own hearts. David was asking, "Who can understand his errors?" He could not discern all of his faults and sins of ignorance. He prayed therefore: "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults" (Psalm 19:12).

**5. A deceitful enemy.** Terrorists make use of beneficial things within society such as transport, utilities and communications. They use these for their activities, to further wicked ends. They may use them as weapons or opportunities to commit some terrible act.

This is how it is with sin. Anything that can be abused will be abused to the service of sin. Good things such as abilities, relationships and outward blessings will be abused. The best things, such as God's gifts, means of grace and knowledge of the truth can be tainted with sin and misused to serve its purposes. It has wiles, deceptions and schemes. It is deceitful above all things (Jeremiah 17:9).

**6. A familiar enemy.** We hear about home-grown terrorists. They were

born in the country they live in. They have lived all their life there. Such terrorists fully understand how society and its institutions operate. They are fully able to study patterns and routines to plan their attack. They are fully familiar with their targets.

Sin is a home-grown and home-born terrorist. Sin knows us completely. It has grown up with us since we were born. In particular, it knows our weaknesses. It is prepared to exploit them as ruthlessly as the terrorist will seize upon weaknesses in security.

**7. *A disruptive enemy.*** Terrorists aim at maximum disruption, disorder and instability. They aim to damage the sovereignty of a nation and its government. They refuse to acknowledge and bow to that authority.

Though it cannot and must not have dominion over believers, sin seeks exactly that (Romans 6:12). The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God. Neither can it be (Romans 8:7). If terrorists cannot seize dominion they will at least seek to make law and order unworkable. They seek to create fear and disruption. This is what sin tries to do. It disrupts spiritual life, exercise and activity. It seeks to disrupt our usefulness and fruitfulness. It wants to prevent communication in spiritual things.

It would be of vital spiritual benefit to us to learn from this comparison and apply it to our lives. On another occasion (God willing) we would like to complete these thoughts by considering how counter-terrorism strategies have spiritual lessons for our warfare against sin.

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## Depending on Christ's Blood

Rachael was a very hard-working, honest woman who lived in a small town in the English countryside. Although she was already 60, she had never learned to read. What was more serious, she had no idea whatever how she, a sinner, could be saved from her sins. She was not ready to die.

Yet she began to think about her sins and her need of being saved; she was not satisfied with herself. Very earnestly she asked somebody who visited her: "Must I shed my blood for Christ in order to be saved?"

Her visitor showed her that it was Christ who had to shed His blood and He had already done so. Her visitor told her: "The Lord Jesus has so loved poor sinners that He has shed His blood". And he quoted words from 1 John 1:7: "The blood of Jesus Christ [God's] Son cleanseth us from all sin".

The visitor was so glad when Rachael recognised something of the love of God in giving His only begotten Son. She said, "O I see it now. I have puzzled myself for weeks about what I must do to get rid of my sins. I

understand, from what I am now told, that the blood of Jesus is sufficient for them all” – for all her sins. She emphasised the word “all”.

She was right. When Jesus Christ was suffering on the cross He said, “It is finished”, and He gave up His spirit to His Father – He died. He died when He had done all that was necessary to take away the sin of everyone who will ever believe on Him.

Rachael believed what God had said and she trusted in Him. Afterwards, she was always speaking about heaven. When someone asked her what was the foundation of her hope for eternity – her hope of getting to heaven – she said, “I do depend upon the blood”. She meant the death of Christ.

As she thought over what she had learned about Christ, she would often exclaim, “What our blessed Jesus did go through for us poor ignorant sinners!” And a big tear would roll down her cheek.

Two years after she trusted in Christ, she died. As she lay ill in bed, someone asked her a question, and she answered, “I am a sinner, and a proper sinner” (she meant that she was a real sinner). And she added, “I do depend upon the blood” – the death of Christ. Then she said, “I am happy, quite happy”.

Only if *we* trust in Christ as the One who died in the place of sinners, can we be happy in the face of death and in the eternity that lies beyond death.

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## Principles of the Christian Church

### 2. The Church as a City

*Rev D W B Somerset*

The first part of this Youth Conference paper answered the question, What is the Church? It can be described as invisible and as visible. “The Visible and the Invisible Church are not to be thought of as two separate Churches but as the one Church viewed in two different aspects. From the heavenly view, God sees the *Invisible* Church, but the world looks on outward things and sees only the *Visible* Church.” This article gives the first of four pictures of the Church given in the Bible

Perhaps the most common picture of the Church in the Bible is as a *city*, generally called either Jerusalem or Zion (Zion being the hill in Jerusalem on which the temple was built). “Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord” (Psalm 122:3-4). “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King” (Psalm 48:2). “The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob” (Psalm 87:2). “When Zion by the mighty Lord built up again shall be, / In glory then and majesty



to men appear shall He” (Psalm 102:16, metrical). In Revelation, the Apostle John sees “the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21:2). The people of God together make up the inhabitants of this city, or sometimes the buildings of the city – they are the city, and God Himself, or God and Christ, are the chief inhabitants.

We are to think, then, of the people of God (the Invisible Church) as united together in the same way as the inhabitants of a city are. They have common interests – for example, concerning the water-supply, or the food, or the wealth, or the privileges of the city. Paul was a citizen of Tarsus and everyone in that city had this privilege: they were Roman citizens. The exalting of that city was the exalting of them all, individually and collectively. Again, the people of a city have a common safety, whether against human enemies or disease. They will have to join together to resist invaders, and they will have to act together to keep the gates closed and the city secure when it is threatened by the plague or the Black Death.

They will need to co-operate for other things: the general running of the city, or any building projects, or extending the bounds of the city, or rebuilding the city if the walls are broken down. They will need to remain on good terms as neighbours; they must not fall out among themselves. And they will have to care for one another: for the weak and the sick and the poor and the elderly and so on. All these matters have obvious applications for Christian Church.

One important Church principle that this brings out is the principle of the **unity of the Church**. The Church is one as Jerusalem was one. “Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together” (Psalm 122:3). To maintain and promote this unity is an important Christian duty. Christ’s prayer to His Father for His people was: “That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me” (John 17:21).

When the Church is outwardly divided, as it presently is, into Reformed and non-Reformed, Baptist and Paedobaptist, Presbyterian and Congregationalist, Pentecostal, Charismatic, with some godly people probably in all these groupings, it is like a city divided into political factions which cannot be at peace together. The true Church has a deeper unity – Christians are all joined to Christ by faith and they have the one way of salvation – but in practice these groups cannot worship together, and they spend much time and effort in striving against each other.

We may have become used to this situation, but it “ought not so to be”, and we should be doing what we can to promote the unity of the Church.

In particular, we should avoid those things which continue the divisions, and this is one reason why the Free Presbyterian Church does not engage in pulpit-swapping and in open communion with other Scottish Churches. The superficial feeling of unity that results from these things encourages the idea that the separation is not important; and in the long run it tends to obstruct the work of reformation.

Following on from the unity of the Church, another important principle is that ***the Church has a government appointed by Christ***. Christ is the King of the city and He has ordained how the city is to be governed. What government has Christ appointed in this city? Does the city consist of local churches with their pastor and elders answerable only to Christ? Or has He divided the city into dioceses and appointed a higher rank of bishops to rule over these? Or has He appointed a Pope? Or does each Church have its minister and ruling elders who are all equal, and who exercise authority through a gradation of Church courts?

This last is the Presbyterian system, which we believe is the biblical one. There are many elements to this argument, which we cannot pursue here. But obviously the picture of a united city – together with the essential equality of the people of God – supports the idea of a gradation of courts composed of a balance of teaching elders and ruling elders chosen by the people. There are much stronger arguments for Presbyterianism than this, but Presbyterianism is a system of government which is certainly consistent with the idea of the Church as a city with Christ as its King.

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### *For Younger Readers*

## What Do You Remember?

There was once a Welsh preacher who was not pleased with people who claimed they could scarcely remember anything they heard in church.

He was sure that these people could remember many other things. For instance, they could remember how much money they got for their old white horse when they sold it some years before. “Six or seven pounds, was it?” he asked. He told the people: “You can remember anything but the gospel”.

Do you remember anything the preacher in your church says? Do you listen to him? Perhaps lots of things he says are difficult to understand.

But I am sure there must always be some things you have heard before—perhaps a verse that you have learned by heart. Try always to listen out for something you know from the Bible. It is more important to remember these things than anything else you will ever hear.

# Looking Around Us

## A New Government

Britain has a new prime minister. Theresa May has taken over the most responsible position in British politics, and a new government is being formed as I write. Just a month or two ago, David Cameron's position at the head of the British Government seemed as secure as it is possible to be in politics, at least for the next few years. Then came the referendum on Britain continuing a member of the European Union, and the nation's decision to leave. Mr Cameron had campaigned energetically for Britain to remain in the EU, and when the British people's decision went against him he resigned.

One can examine the various factors on the human level that lay behind this series of events, such as the ability and the effectiveness of those who made the case for staying in the EU or for coming out. All sorts of relevant points could be made, but there is something more important: God is ruling over everything. We read in Psalm 75: "God is the judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another". God sees everything that happens in this world, and He overrules all the plans and decisions of human beings. In particular, He removes one ruler from their position and sets up another instead. We may not be able to understand much about God's purposes when He removes one prime minister and sets up another in his place. But we can be sure that He is ruling wisely and that nothing can stand in the way of Him fulfilling His purposes.

One duty the Bible lays upon us is to pray for our government – whatever country we live in – and, in particular, for its leader. Paul tells us to pray "for kings, and for all that are in authority" (1 Timothy 2:2). Why? So "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty". When a government operates effectively, and with God's blessing, the people should be able to go about their business without being afraid for their lives or that they may suffer oppression or persecution. Especially we should pray that God would yet give us a godly government, one that would frame its decisions in the light of the Scriptures.

We should always remember that a bad government is almost always better than no government at all. Paul lived under the Roman Empire, which was heathen and often cruel; Paul himself suffered injustice from those who should have administered the law honestly and uprightly. Yet he said, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers". And he explained, "For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1). He is the one from whom a government's authority comes; so we must obey the law, unless we are being told to do what is sinful.

# The Sands of Time (2)

This poem, by Anne Ross Cousin, turns into poetry some of what Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661), the godly minister of Anwoth, wrote. Here are some more verses.

O, Christ He is the fountain,  
The deep sweet well of love!  
The streams on earth I've tasted,  
More deep I'll drink above;  
There, to an ocean fullness,  
His mercy doth expand,  
And glory, glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel's land.

Even Anwoth was not heaven,  
Even preaching was not Christ;  
Oft in my sea-beat prison  
My Lord and I held tryst;  
And aye my murkiest storm cloud  
Was by a rainbow spanned,  
Caught from the glory dwelling  
In Immanuel's land.

But that He built a heaven  
Of His surpassing love,  
A little New Jerusalem,  
Like to the one above.  
“Lord take me o'er the water”,  
Had been my loud demand.  
“Take me to love's own country,  
Unto Immanuel's land.

But flowers need night's cool darkness,  
The moonlight and the dew;  
So Christ, from one who loved it,  
His shining oft withdrew;  
And then for cause of absence  
My troubled soul I scanned,  
But glory, shadeless, shineth  
In Immanuel's land.

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