

# 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*



***December 2017***

***Vol 82 • No 12***

---

# Contents

---

God's Authority and His Commands . . . . .	223
God Is My Salvation:	
4. Facing Difficult Decisions . . . . .	226
Challenges in a Godless World:	
1. Introduction . . . . .	228
Paul – a Character Study:	
3. Paul the Missionary . . . . .	230
For Younger Readers:	
The Horses that Ran Away . . . . .	233
For Junior Readers:	
The Widow's Rent . . . . .	234
What the Bible Says About Itself:	
3. It Demands Faith . . . . .	235
Index for 2017 . . . . .	237
Looking Around Us . . . . .	239
"We Were Pharaoh's Bondmen" . . . . .	220

---

**Cover Picture:** On the Ring of Kerry in west Ireland. See page 226.

## The Young People's Magazine

**Published by** the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Scottish charity number SC003545.

**Editor:** Rev Kenneth D Macleod BSc, 11 Auldcastle Road, Inverness, IV2 3PZ. Tel: 01463 712872; e-mail: kdmacleod@gmail.com. All unsigned articles are by the Editor.

**Material for the magazine** should reach the editor by the beginning of the previous month.

**Subscriptions, Renewals, Changes of Address** should be sent to the General Treasurer: Mr W Campbell, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE; e-mail: wc.fpchurch@btconnect.com; tel: 0141 332 9283. The subscription year ends in December, and subscriptions should be sent in January each year for the following 12 months. Subscription rates, including postage, are: F P Magazine £26.00 (£2.00 per copy); Y P Magazine £15.00 (£1.00 per copy); both magazines £39.00. All queries should be directed to the General Treasurer, not to the printer.

**Free Presbyterian Magazine:** The Church's main magazine is *The Free Presbyterian Magazine*. Send to the General Treasurer at the above address for a free sample copy. See above for subscription rates.

# The Young People's Magazine

Volume 82

December 2017

Number 12

## God's Authority and His Commands

God in His kindness has given us commandments, to show us how we should live our lives in this world. People may find these commands restrictive, keeping them back from many things they would like to do. But we should be clear that God knows everything; He knows what is good for us; He knows how best we should live. So we should listen to what He says about how we should live.

But very often we do not; our minds are warped by sin; we do not think properly. But we should be very thankful for the commandments, for they give us the principles we need so that we can tell what we should do and what we should not do. We should be content for God to tell us how we should live and not have to work out these principles for ourselves.

Yet how do professed Christians today view the Ten Commandments? A recent YouGov opinion poll, according to a report in *The Daily Telegraph*, shows "that just six of them are still important to British Christians. Most Christians believe that four of the commandments are not 'important principles to live by'." Sinful human beings are deciding which commands they will take seriously and which they will reject. But no one has any right to do so. God has spoken and it is our duty to listen, and to obey.

Which four commandments are rejected? Perhaps not surprisingly, they are the first four. God tells us in the First Commandment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me". This is the fundamental command; all the others are based on this one. There can be no other god, for the true God is the One who made all things. He says, "I am the Lord, and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:5). Yet all those people, who are calling themselves Christians, seem not to accept that the true God's claim to be unique applies to everyone (and false gods have no real existence). Those people have too small a view of God and His authority.

And every reader of this article should carefully examine their own views and ask themselves: Do I give God the place in my heart and life that He deserves? Do I submit to everything He tells me in the Bible? Do I trust in Jesus Christ for the salvation of my soul, as God directs me?

The Second Commandment begins: “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image”. Only 43% in the survey condemned the worshipping of idols. This may not be surprising, given that the religion of Roman Catholics includes the use of the crucifix, an image of Jesus Christ on the cross, as some artist imagined what He looked like. All images are forbidden that are intended to be in any sense worshipped. The important point about all these commands is that God has spoken, and God *has* spoken to forbid the use of images in any religious sense. There is no way that an image of God can begin to show His glory. It is impossible to represent a spirit, and God is a spirit. And it is impossible to make an accurate image of the Saviour, or one that can begin to make His divine glory visible.

Many people might be even more inclined to reject this commandment if they realised what it implies; *The Shorter Catechism* explains what is forbidden in this command: not only “the worshipping of God by images”, but also worshipping God in “any other way *not* appointed in His Word”. Anything we bring in to our worship and our religious activities must have behind it the authority of God speaking in the Bible.

Many would be shocked to have it suggested to them that it is wrong to observe Christmas, because God’s Word gives us no authority to set apart a particular day to celebrate the birth of Christ. But we must accept biblical principles such as this: we must have the authority of the Bible for all our religious activities. When God has commanded we must obey; when God has not given us authority for religious activities we must also be obedient.

The Third Commandment directs us not to take the Lord’s name in vain; to do so is not reverent and it is offensive to Him. Yet many people think this command is not appropriate. Surely God has a right to tell us how to use His names and – if we take the word *name* as used in the Bible in its fullest sense – He has a right to tell us how to use what He has revealed about Himself.

Finally, fewer than one in three professed Christians believe in keeping holy the first day of the week. Yet, in spite of people’s rebellious attitudes, God has said in the Fourth Commandment: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy”. Surprisingly, “while almost half of [Roman] Catholics said they supported keeping the Sabbath day holy, just 29% of Protestants said they felt the same”. The question remains, even for the minority who want a day of rest: What is meant by keeping the Sabbath day holy? Do they accept *The Shorter Catechism*’s scriptural teaching as expressed in these words: “The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God’s worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy”?

The Bishop of Chelmsford commented, "In an age as busy, frantic and feverish as ours, I would have thought that keeping the Sabbath, or at the very least observing a balance between work and rest and play was more important than ever. Sabbath is . . . a practically useful idea, for it simply acknowledges that we need to rest and we need to play." But the Sabbath is *not* a day for play; indeed, on a Sabbath, even more than on other days, we must worship God.

One reason so many people reject God's commands is because many churchmen do not present a scriptural view of them to their congregations. Yet the Bishop of Manchester "lamented Christians' abandonment of the commandment about idolatry" and pointed to the danger of making idols of a celebrity, wealth, a certain designer label, or a make of car". An idol is anything we give our hearts to – when we should give God our whole heart.

The newspaper report continues, "Most Christians, in common with the general public, still believe that it's wrong to disobey your father and mother, commit adultery, covet others' possessions, bear false witness, steal and commit murder. Stealing and killing were the most widely condemned transgressions, with 94% of Christians and 93% of non-religious people believing those commandments are still important and relevant." It is not surprising that most people see the relevance of these commandments because they will feel themselves and their property safer if others recognise the authority of the commands that forbid killing and stealing.

What we need, and what the whole of society needs, is to take the whole of God's law seriously; it is the all-wise God who has given it, and it is not only for other people. It is good for us to keep these commandments; indeed it is good for us to keep them *all*. And we need to realise that it is not enough to pay attention to the demands the law makes on our outward behaviour; we need to respect God's demands for holiness in our *hearts* – including our thinking, our attitudes and our motives.

If we take God's commandments seriously, especially as they take to do with our hearts, we will realise that we cannot keep them as God demands – that is, we cannot keep them perfectly. We will then realise that we are sinners; we are rebels against God. And, no matter how hard we try to keep God's law, we will find we are failing. Indeed, we may discover more and more how demanding God's law is. And the Bible tells us the terrible consequences of sin, especially in a lost eternity.

We can never satisfy God with our feeble attempts to keep His law. Yet we are not to despair. He makes known to us the gospel: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And He calls us with all His infinite authority to believe in Christ for the salvation of our souls.

# God Is My Salvation

## 4. Facing Difficult Decisions

Eily grew up in Dublin, the Irish capital and was now 17. Her friend had found the truth in the New Testament. Soon he sent Eily a copy and she read it very carefully. Her mother did not know about the change that had taken place in Eily's thinking and the serious doubts she now felt about the Roman Catholic Church. She knew she must tell her mother about the change, but the thought of doing so was tremendously difficult.

Eily reached home when the lamps were being lit for the night and, she said, "I spoke my thoughts aloud". Quickly a little copy of the Gospel of John was taken from her, and it was thrown into the fire before she scarcely knew what was happening. It was a booklet that she had "greatly prized". Strong pressure was applied to her so that she would turn her back on "those things" and "be a good Catholic girl again". Eily recalled, "With tears and pleadings for the happiness of the home circle, for the sake of my mother and the little ones, I was beseeched. This went on for some time, and at last, worn out and utterly weary in body and soul, I promised to go to confession on the following Saturday and confess the whole matter to the priest."

How did she then feel? "My soul was in great gloom", she said. "There was no light anywhere, it seemed to me, in those hours, and my heart was torn between the natural love for my home and the never-ceasing other call" from Christ that she had heard in the New Testament.

On the Saturday she knelt "among many others outside a confessional box in the dimness of a large Roman Catholic church. "Far up the centre aisle a red light gleamed before the high altar," she remembered, "where our blessed Lord was supposed to be a prisoner behind bars. They called Him the 'Prisoner of the Tabernacle'." This involved the blasphemous claim that, in the mass, the priest changes the wafer and the wine into the body and blood of Christ; some of what is unused is kept in a locked cabinet made of precious materials (the tabernacle). To Eily the idea of Jesus being kept in a locked cabinet seemed very strange; she remembered the words of the Bible: Jesus "went about doing good" – He could not be locked up. This whole set of ideas is completely opposed by Scripture teaching.

As she looked around her, Eily could see altars for various saints, such as Anthony, Brigid and Teresa. But high up, above them all, at the top of the building was the Virgin Mary's altar. Yet she asked herself: "Did not the Scriptures declare, 'There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men,' Himself man, 'Christ Jesus'?"

She tried to quieten her mind and "prayed that I might somehow be led

through it all to the truth. At length my turn came, and I stepped into the dim interior of the confessional. A light fell on a crucifix at my side from a small grating high up in the door. I gazed at the figure of the dead Christ on the wooden cross, and then I remembered the risen Saviour."

Eily thought on the words of Scripture: "And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices that they might come and anoint Him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?"

"And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen; He is not here; behold the place where they laid Him" (Mark 16:1-6).

Eily continued her story: "The slide in front of me was drawn back, and the serious face of a young priest appeared, bowed waiting for my confession. In faltering tones I began in the usual way and went on to confess my sins, but somehow could not bring myself to tell the things that were uppermost in my mind. Fear held me speechless at last, and I waited in silence, unable either to proceed or finish."

The voice of the priest broke the brief silence: "You are withholding something. Remember it is to God you are confessing; do not be afraid." Indeed we must confess our sins to God, but the Bible does not tell us to do it in this way – as if the priest was the "one mediator between God and men", rather than Christ.

Eily now knew that she "must tell the priest the whole truth, whatever the cost. So I told him of my reading the New Testament, and what it meant to me, and concluded by saying that I was in very great doubt of all I had believed" up till then. In fact, if it was not for her family, she told him, "I should at once seek out and follow the new way".

The priest was amazed that someone as young as Eily should be so early "led astray" by reading a Protestant Bible. "I have as much power to forgive you," he claimed blasphemously, "as if I were, for the moment, the Lord Christ. Without the priest there is no forgiveness."

"These words", Eily believed, "marked the turning point in my life." She could see that Roman Catholic teaching does not match what the New Testament says. Then these words came into her mind: "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin"; and, "There is therefore now no

condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus". These were the words of truth; these were the words that she should follow.

There were many other verses she wished to repeat to the priest, but she could not remember the words properly, although she knew the general drift of what they said. Yet at this stage, Eily was anxious to be convinced that she could find these truths in the Roman Catholic Church.

The reason was that there was now a continual, dim sense in her mind of what it would mean for her to embrace the Protestant faith. And she did not wish to be parted from her home and loved ones; this was a thought she found staggering. So she listened to the priest and sincerely tried to hear everything he had to say. But, having grasped the difference between the Bible and Roman Catholic teaching, she must decide before long which of these teachings she would follow.

---

# Challenges in a Godless World

## 1. Introduction

*Matthew Vogan*

This is the first part of a paper given at this year's Youth Conference. Its full title is: "Challenges to the Church in a Godless, Atheistic and Secular World". The word *utopianism*, used in a quotation, means the aim to create a perfect society.

Few subjects could be more intensely practical and relevant than this. We may be inclined to think that others primarily encounter these challenges but they face every one of us every day in life. It is a very broad subject and we cannot hope to be comprehensive in considering all of its aspects. It would be very difficult to cover every challenge whether potential or actual.

For this reason, we do not intend to focus on specific cases or examples. There are many examples in the news headlines every week. There are notorious instances where Christians have been targeted by equalities laws and policies, for instance, and where Christianity has been undermined or sidelined in Western nations. Whether you have your own business providing goods and services, or you are a public official or servant you may expect opposition simply in going about your everyday business.

Instead of considering these we hope to get behind such examples in order to consider the nature and character of the challenges we face. It is important to realise that the challenges we face are not just laws, policies, court cases or activists – it is a whole culture.

Some paragraphs written by the often-controversial journalist Peter Hitchens are especially effective in summing up the general nature of these



challenges. They come from a book called *The Rage against God*. The book shows how the author turned from Marxism and atheism to Christian belief and conservative values. His brother Christopher Hitchens was a well-known atheist writer. The quotation is not given in order to recommend the personal theology, experience and faith of Peter Hitchens, which is rather difficult to assess. It is simply a penetrating perspective on our times which summarises well the nature of the challenges we wish to understand.

“A new and intolerant utopianism seeks to drive the remaining traces of Christianity from the laws and constitutions of Europe and North America. This time, it does so mainly in the cause of personal liberation, born in the 1960s cultural revolution . . . . This utopianism relies for human goodness on doctrines of human rights derived from human desires and – like all such codes – full of conflicts between the differing rights of different groups. These must then be policed by an ever more powerful state. A new elite, wealthy and comfortable beyond the fantasies of any previous generation, abandons penal codes (especially against the possession of narcotics) and abolishes marital fidelity [faithfulness in marriage] so as to licence its own comfortable indulgence. And so it permits the same freedoms to the poor, who suffer far more from this dangerous liberty than do the rich.

“Inevitably it is the Christian churches who are the last strongholds of resistance to this change. Yet they are historically weak, themselves infiltrated by secular liberalism, full of uncertainty and diffidence. The overthrow of Christian education is a real possibility in our generation. The removal of Christianity from broadcasting and from public ceremonies is almost complete.

“Expressions of Christian opinion or prayer in public premises can be punished in Britain under new codes which enjoin a post-Christian code of ‘equality and diversity’ on all public servants.

“Secularists are equating the teaching of religion with child abuse and laying the foundations for it to be restricted by law. Britain’s next monarch is likely to be crowned in a multi-faith ceremony whose main significance will be that it will be the first Coronation not to be explicitly Christian in more than a thousand years.”

There are seven aspects of the overall challenge that we would like to consider in future articles:

1. There is a *continual* challenge. It is not new or unique to our generation. It is simply the same type of challenge that the Church has experienced in all generations.

2. There is a *total* challenge. This challenge meets us in every aspect of what it means to be human and how we understand the world.

3. There is a *stealthy* challenge. Secularism has so saturated our culture that its influences are often difficult to detect.

4. There is an *uncompromising* challenge. Secularism will always seek to force its way further; we cannot seek to reach a compromise with it. And it is a destructive force.

5. There is a *futile* challenge. Secular humanism is empty of substance and reality. In the end its challenge against God and the Church cannot succeed. It contains the seeds of its own destruction.

6. There may be a *fruitful* challenge. Though secularism is oppressive to the Church, such challenges may have a fruitful impact. The Church is challenged to maintain its identity, to know its purpose and to believe the message it has received. It is also challenged to offer the truth to those deceived by the false and empty promises of secularism.

7. There is a *personal* challenge. Such a challenge forces us to ask what we ourselves believe. Are we going to live according to what we believe? Does it have any impact on how we live?

Of course there must be some bleak realism in handling this topic but we hope that this will not be seen as undue pessimism. We hope also to identify some positive matters that may strengthen us in seeking to meet the challenges the Church faces in our generation. May the Lord give us all needed wisdom in seeking to consider these matters together!

---

## Paul – a Character Study

### 3. Paul the Missionary

*Rev J R Tallach*

Last month's article was the first part of "Some Characteristics of Paul", which was the second section of a paper given at this year's Youth Conference. That article illustrated Paul's zeal by looking at what he did during his three missionary journeys. This article contains the other two parts of the second section.

**B. Paul's Spiritual Insights.** Paul saw, more clearly than anyone in the early Church, the dangers of attempting to add anything to the finished work of Christ as a basis for salvation. He pronounced a curse on anyone, even an angel from heaven, who preached any other gospel (Galatians 1:6-9). This constituted a form of anathema. The word *anathema* means "something set up or placed" before God and carries the idea of something set up before God for destruction, just as cities such as Jericho, and the heathen tribes of the Promised Land, were, in Old Testament times, "devoted to destruction".

Some people in the Early Church taught that it was necessary to keep

elements of the ceremonial law of the Old Testament in order to commend themselves to God. It was effectively a form of salvation by works and was completely contrary to the doctrine of salvation by grace as taught by Paul. We read that “certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed” came down from Jerusalem to Antioch; they demanded that Gentiles who professed to believe in Christ should be circumcised and keep the law of Moses (Acts 15:5).

Even Peter and Barnabas were carried away with this legalism and hypocrisy and separated themselves from their Gentile brethren. Paul publicly withstood Peter to the face “because he was to be blamed” (Galatians 2:11). Paul recognised that “a man is not justified by the deeds of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ . . . for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Galatians 2:16).

Acts 15 records the meeting of the brethren in Jerusalem at which Paul’s view was vindicated. This was not the end of the problem, as the Pharisee within the heart moves naturally to salvation by works. We find Paul having to return to this issue in his letter to the Galatians, where we have a warm defence of free grace. “I marvel”, he writes, “that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel; which is not another (Galatians 1:6,7). This letter to the Galatians was written on Paul’s first missionary journey, and this shows how quickly the drift from grace alone arose in the early Church.

The Epistle to the Romans was written during Paul’s third missionary journey and has, as its theme, justification by faith. First, the need for such a gospel is demonstrated, “that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God” (Romans 3:19). The doctrine of justification by faith alone is then stated: “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference” (Romans 3:22). Paul illustrates this teaching from the lives of the Old Testament saints Abraham and David: “Abraham believed God”, and “David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works” (Romans 4:3,6).

Paul speaks of the security of the believer: “We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” – the peace which Christ brings about by faith. As sin came by Adam, “much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many”. The Epistle ends, as do all Paul’s letters, with the practical effects of the doctrine, as they are found in the lives of believers. “Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable. and perfect. will of God” (Romans 12:2).

John Calvin said, "When anyone understands this Epistle, he has a passage-way opened to him to the understanding of the whole Scriptures".

**C. Paul's great hope amid great adversity.** Paul thought little of himself, having had a sight of the holiness of the law and of the presence and power of sin within. So he said, "The law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin" (Romans 7:14). While he could not deny that he had a delight in God's holy law, he found another law in his members, which caused warring against the law of his mind, bringing him into captivity to the law of sin in his members. His consolation was: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

Paul suffered much from his fellow Jews. Time and again they stirred up the citizens of the cities he preached in; then he was constrained to flee for his life and they pursued him to his next city and stirred up the people there. A group of them took a vow to kill him in Jerusalem. Like his Master, Paul "came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11).

When the Judaising body sought to undermine his apostleship in Corinth he declared himself to be a Hebrew and a child of Abraham just as truly as they were. They professed themselves to be "ministers of Christ", but his labours far exceeded theirs.

He was, he said "In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (2 Corinthians 11:23-28). He felt the weakness of the churches under their oppressors. He felt the offence they suffered as though done to himself.

In his last imprisonment he writes that all Asia – that is, all believers in Asia – had forsaken him. Only that faithful believer Onesiphorus (2 Timothy 1:16) was not ashamed of his bonds. Again when he was brought before Nero, none of the brethren stood with him (2 Timothy 4:16). Those who had professed faith in Christ did not visit and support Paul because he was a prisoner. Nevertheless, he tells the elders of Ephesus: "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." (Acts 20:24).

Through all these troubles Paul was an apostle of hope. First he had the hope that better days would come for the gospel on earth. In Romans 11 he speaks of Israel being originally as a branch of the olive tree, but that branch was broken off because of unbelief – Israel had rejected the Saviour.

The gospel then went to the Gentiles; they by grace believed and were as a dry and fruitless branch grafted in, but it partook of “the root and fatness of the olive tree”, thus bringing forth fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life. Paul speaks of the fruitfulness of the gospel among the Gentiles, but he goes on to say that Israel would yet be grafted in again. “For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?” (Romans 11:15). In other words, Paul encourages us to expect the conversion of the Jews and a widespread revival flowing from this.

One great consideration which the Apostle turns to time and again, as a constant comfort, is the return of the Lord Jesus at the last day. For instance, in his two epistles to the church in Thessalonica he mentions the coming of the Lord in every chapter. And in prospect of that great event, he directs them: “Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:18). He was an apostle of hope.

---

*For Younger Readers*

## **The Horses that Ran Away**

Long ago a man was using two horses and a cart to take a load of corn somewhere. He also took his little boy and a neighbour's boy with him. The boys would have sat somewhere on the cart.

Behind them were another two horses, with a cart and its load of hay. But these horses became restless. The first man went to help deal with these horses.

Then the first horses ran away. They ran as hard as they could up the road in front of them. The man was afraid the boys might fall off the cart and be hurt. What could he do?

There was no use him running after them. They would run far too fast. He could never catch up with them. What else could he do?

He went down on his knees and prayed. He told the Lord how He had protected the three young men in the furnace, and how He had saved Daniel from the lions' den. And he told God in his prayer that He was able to stop the horses.

The man got up from his knees and walked on for more than a mile. He found the horses standing completely still. And the two boys were safe. Yes, God was able to stop the horses. And He is still able to do wonderful things when we pray.

---

*For Junior Readers*

## The Widow's Rent

Mrs Maitland was a poor lady whose husband had died. She needed to find somewhere to live. She found a house, but there was one problem: the landlord could not be sure that she would pay her rent. He told her she must find someone who would pay it for her if she did not have any money to give him.

What could she do? She went to her minister, Duncan Dunbar, who kindly said he would pay if the lady could not. And he spoke so cheerfully.

Someone suggested to him that, in doing so, he was not being careful enough. This other person thought it was very likely that the lady would never be able to pay her rent.

"I cannot help that," Dunbar answered. "It may be as you fear, and I may have to pay her rent as well as my own. In that case I will look to the Father of the fatherless and the Husband of the widow." If Dunbar's kindness was to cause this difficulty, he must look to God, who is able to supply the needs of all who trust in Him. The minister was truly trusting in God when he added, "He will take care of her and of us too".

Three months passed and the time for paying the rent had now come. Mrs Maitland was very upset; she did not have any money. She had to go to the minister and tell him.

How did Dunbar answer her? He was very kind; he told her that he was very happy to give her the money she needed to pay for her house. He believed that God would send the money to him in some way. As he put the money in the woman's hand, he said to her: "If you can ever pay it, you may do so. If not, never let it trouble you, for it shall never trouble me."

Not long after this, a man from his congregation came to see the minister. His name was Cameron. He said, "I come to pay a little debt that I owe you, Mr Dunbar".

"That cannot be", the minister told him. He knew they had not done any business together.

Cameron explained that, some time before then, he had been involved in a small way in a ship trading with China. He had told his wife: "If there is

any profit, I will give one tenth of it to Mr Dunbar". Obviously the ship's business had been successful, and Cameron handed some money to Dunbar.

The money was exactly what the minister had given Mrs Maitland for her rent. The minister said, "You see how easy such things are to God. The money for that poor widow's rent was on its way from China at the very time I laid it out for her. Trust in the Lord."

The minister had no doubt looked to God, the Husband of the widow, and God had not disappointed him. He never does disappoint those who truly trust in Him.

---

## What the Bible Says About Itself

### 3. It Demands Faith

*Charles Hodge*

October's article spoke further about the evidence for the truth and the authority of the Bible. This series is taken, with editing, from *The Way of Life*.

**T**he Scriptures themselves clearly teach that the faith which they demand is founded on God's authority. This authority shows itself in the Scriptures by the excellence and power of the truth they contain. They everywhere represent faith as the effect and the evidence of right moral feeling, and unbelief as the result of moral or spiritual blindness. The Saviour said to the Jews: "If any man will do [God's] will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God (John 7:17). Again, "He that is of God heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God" (John 8:47).

The Apostle John speaks to the same effect: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God. . . . We are of God. He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (1 John 4:2,6).

In like manner Paul says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him" (1 Corinthians 2:14). And again, "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. . . . For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:3,4,6).

The doctrine taught in these and similar passages is that, in the Word of God, and especially in the Person and character of Jesus Christ, there is a

clear and wonderful revelation of God's glory. To this the natural man is blind, and therefore does not believe, but those who have the Spirit of God discern this glory and therefore believe.

Thus unbelief is represented as so serious a moral offence and faith as so important a duty. Atheism should be regarded everywhere as a serious sin, because the evidences of the existence of God are present everywhere. These evidences cannot be resisted without the same sin that is involved in calling evil good and good evil. Hence the Scriptures always speak of unbelief as a sin against God, the special reason for the world being condemned. "He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father" (1 John 2:22,23).

To disbelieve the Son, as He is revealed in the Scriptures, is a sin of the same nature as the denial of God. In both cases, it is to disregard supreme excellence as revealed by God. So the Saviour says, "He that hateth Me hateth My Father also" (John 15:23). On the other hand, faith is spoken of as the highest act of obedience, a moral act of the greatest worth in the sight of God.

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1). And the Saviour told the enquiring Jews: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent (John 6:29). Thus faith is not founded on mere outward testimony; there must be a change in our moral character. But all is plain if we are required to believe in the Son, and then His glory, as of the only begotten of the Father, is presented to us; and we must receive the Scriptures because they bear the mark of God's perfections. If this is the ground of faith, unbelief is indeed a serious sin; it is a refusal to recognise the wisdom, holiness and excellence of God.

This view of the ground of faith is confirmed by its effects. Faith works by love; it purifies the heart; it overcomes the world; it produces peace and joy. One can believe that those convicted of truths which affect their interests should experience fear, sorrow or joy, according to the nature of these truths. But no one can imagine that to believe moral or religious truths can control their desires if these truths are founded only on the testimony of other people. A man may believe on someone else's authority that the law by which we are bound – God's law – is holy, just and good; but such a faith will not subdue his opposition to it. He may, by argument or miracle, be convinced that God exists, but such a faith will not produce love. Faith must be founded on a *spiritual* grasp of the truths believed.



# The Young People's Magazine

2017  
Volume 82

Editor: Rev Kenneth D Macleod

*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)

**Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland**

Acknowledging God Always	163	How God Made the Man Listen	28
Andrew's Mother	90	"I Am not Afraid to Die"	57
Answers for People's Questions	3	"I Know God Loves Me, Because . . ."	116
Bartimaeus and His Garment	43	Job – Fearing God and Eschewing Evil	9,29,49,74
Beginning of Months, The	6	Lawyer and the Bible, The	178
Best Refuge in Trouble, The	123	Like an Empty Shell?	63
Challenges in a Godless World	228	Looking Around Us	19,34,58,79,95, 120,140,159,179,193,219,239
Clogmaker and the Bible, The	11	Looking for Answers	143
Conscience	126	Lookout in the Moonlight, The	147
Five Solas of the Reformation, The	128, 149,171,186,211	Love for the Lamb	46
Fixed in the Mind	103	Martin Luther and the Reformation	183
<b>For Junior Readers:</b>		Mother's Touch, A	92
Boy Who Wanted to Be with Jesus, The	106	Out of the Dark Cave	25
Finding the Word of God	33	Paul – a Character Study	185,207,230
Friend of God, The	189	<b>Poetry:</b>	
General John Field	69	Burdened Sinner, The	160
God Willing	131	Christian, The	139
Jejana	88	Sands of Time, The	59,80
Moving House	217	"We Were Pharaoh's Bondmen"	240
On the Rock	55	Proud of Being Religious?	206
Ready to Die	17	Repentance	113,133,156,166
Terrified on a Volcano	146	Safety in the Lighthouse	132
What Jabez Asked in His Prayer	175	<b>Scripture and Catechism Exercises:</b>	
Widow's Rent, The	234	Exercises	35,96,197
<b>For Younger Readers:</b>		General Information	196
Best Answer, The	55	Names	19,39,119
Boy Who Did not Want to Tell Lies, The	218	Prizes and Awards	179,220
"Don't You Feel Lonely?"	174	Strange Message, The	153
God Kept Them Safe	152	Thinking	23
God Was His Friend	32	Thomas Boston	14,26,52,70,85,107
God's Lights	190	"Try It"	203
Horses that Ran Away, The	233	Two Places not on the Map	66
"I Don't Want the Money"	110	UK Youth Conference 2017	40,60
Just One Herring	94	Unbeliever and the Commandments, The	73
Longest Psalm, The	77	What the Bible Says About Itself	176,194,235
On the Last Day	138	Will God Wipe Away Your Tears?	86,136,153
Sermons from Prison	17	Wisdom for the Voyage of Life	83
God Is My Salvation	168,191,214,226	Young People's Tour of St Andrews	111
God's Authority and His Commands	223		
Honest Miner, The	78		

# Looking Around Us

## No Need to Despair

Mark van Dongen was 29 when he was left paralysed from the neck down following an acid attack. He also lost his left leg, ear and eye. Afterwards he could only communicate by using an alphabet board to spell out the words he wanted to use. Now his ex-girlfriend is on trial for the attack, but she denies murdering him. She admits she threw what she believed was a glass of water over him but denies that she had any intention to cause him harm.

Whatever the truth of the matter, and the jury will have to decide on whether the accused is guilty or not, the attack had a huge effect on Mr van Dongen. What made the incident even worse was that he developed an acute lung infection and became unable to move his arms. It was described as “the straw that broke the camel’s back” and led him to apply to a Belgian clinic for euthanasia – the polite word for being killed. Belgium is one of the countries where this ungodly practice is legal.

Mr van Dongen died at the clinic at the beginning of this year. The trial was told that he said, in the face of his increased disability: “My life has come to nothing and there is nothing left”. He was despairing of again experiencing any worthwhile enjoyment in life. How very sad!

What was missing from his life? To say that “there is nothing left” meant that he did not see that a good God is ruling over everything in this world – One with whom he could have warm fellowship in his soul, even if he would always have to endure terrible pain and disability.

David sang before God: “What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee” (Psalm 56:3). Similarly the proper response to terrible trouble, including severe disability and serious illness is to say, Whatever time I am close to despair, I will trust in Thee, or to say, Whatever time I am suffering, I will trust in Thee. This assumes that the person in trouble has begun to trust in Christ Jesus for the salvation of his or her soul. Such people may trust the statement in the Bible: “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God” (Romans 8:28). What a support this declaration of the faithfulness of God should be to the believer when everything seems dark!

But no one who has heard the gospel should feel easy unless they seek the Lord and find Him. Even if they get through this life without experiencing serious trouble – which is most unlikely – they must meet death. And death, in spite of those who recommend euthanasia, is indeed “the last enemy” (1 Corinthians 15:26). What a terrible enemy death is for those who have not taken refuge in Christ! Yet no one should despair while Christ is within reach. How urgent is the call to seek the Lord while He may be found!

# “We Were Pharaoh’s Bondmen”

This poem by John Newton is based on Deuteronomy 6:20-23, verses which include the title. He is thinking of those who have experienced spiritual deliverance. The Simeon mentioned in the second-last verse is the old man who took the child Jesus in his arms at the temple.

Beneath the tyrant Satan’s yoke,  
Our souls were long opprest;  
Till grace our galling fetters broke,  
And gave the weary rest.

Jesus, in that important hour,  
His mighty arm made known;  
He ransomed us by price and power,  
And claimed us for His own.

Now freed from bondage, sin and death,  
We walk in wisdom’s ways;  
And wish to spend our every breath,  
In wonder, love and praise.

Ere long, we hope with Him to dwell  
In yonder world above;  
And now we only live to tell  
The riches of His love.

O might we, ere we hence remove,  
Prevail upon our youth  
To seek that they may likewise prove  
His mercy and His truth.

Like Simeon, we shall gladly go,  
When Jesus calls us home;  
If they are left a seed below,  
To serve Him in our room.

Lord, hear our prayer, indulge our hope,  
On these Thy Spirit pour,  
That they may take our story up,  
When we can speak no more.

**Price £1.00**