

# 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*



***March 2018***

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**Cover Picture:** The parish church in Haddington. John Brown was later a minister in the town. See page 50.

## The Young People's Magazine

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Volume 83

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## God Made Everything

Last month we considered those who say that there is no God. Now let us think of men in Bible times who believed the truth of God's revelation. When they spoke to people who believed in a false God, they might speak of the true God as the One who made the heavens and the earth, the One who created all things.

For instance, *Jonah* did so. God sent him as a prophet to Nineveh to cry against the people there because of their wickedness before Him. Jonah was disobedient; he went in the opposite direction. He boarded a ship that was to sail for Tarshish. But, because Jonah was disobedient, God sent a great storm which made sailing very dangerous.

Naturally, the crew were afraid and they could not understand Jonah when they found him fast asleep. They were amazed that he was not praying for deliverance to his God. They began to question Jonah, and he told them about his religion and his God. He said, "I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land". For people like the crew of the ship, who probably knew nothing about the true God, Jonah believed that the most obvious way to show them something of His greatness was to point to Him as the Creator of the earth and everything in it, as well as everything that we can see in the sky.

He was telling them, in other words, that God created all things. Jonah, disobedient though he was, believed what God had revealed about Himself; in particular, he believed that God had made all things out of nothing in six days, and that this showed there was no limit to His power. Because God had created all things, it was obvious that nothing was too hard for Him at any time. And Jonah would later recognise God's power in sending the strong wind, and afterwards sending a fish to swallow him up, and finally making that fish vomit him onto dry land. Jonah could not deny God's power; he did not want to.

Take *Paul* as another instance. He and Barnabas were preaching the gospel in parts of what is now Turkey. They came to a place called Lystra, where they found a man who had never been able to walk. Paul called on him to

“stand upright” on his feet, “and he leaped and walked”. The result was that the people decided that both Barnabas and Paul were gods and they were ready to worship these apostles. But Barnabas and Paul could not bear the thought of being worshipped; they insisted that they were ordinary human beings like the local people and added, We “preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein” (Acts 14:15).

Paul and Barnabas were directing the people to turn from their vain gods, who had no real existence; they could not create anything. And the apostles were directing the people to turn to the living God, whom they identified as the One who brought all things into existence – everything that they could see around them: the heavens above, the earth stretching out from them in every direction, the sea beyond the land, and everything that lived on the land and in the sea. This was the God who continued to give them what they needed – rain to quench their thirst and make their crops to grow, “filling our hearts with food and gladness”.

All this is still true, of course. The world in which we live today is the world that God created. God has not changed; He never will. So we can still emphasise the greatness of the true God to anyone we come in contact with; we can point to the beauty of the natural world around us, the glory of what we see in the sky above us – and all that can be seen through telescopes. We can point to the wonders of the human body: of the eye, for instance, the brain, the digestive system and each individual cell.

Many will likely reply that science has shown that there is no need to rely on God for an explanation of how everything came into existence. They are thinking of the theory of evolution. In its commonest form, it goes back to Charles Darwin, who in 1859 published his book, *The Origin of Species*. It had tremendous influence on large numbers of people, and still has.

The main idea of Darwinian evolution is that every living creature is the result of a vast number of slight changes over a huge period of time, ever since the first tiny living creature appeared on earth, and it all happened just by chance. That the human body should function as well as it does is absolutely marvellous, and it must have functioned even better before Adam and Eve fell into sin. It has been suggested that it is more likely that a jumbo jet could be produced by a hurricane sweeping through a scrapyard than that a whole series of small changes over a long period of time would turn a one-cell creature into a human being.

Evolution is taught with great confidence in schools and universities, and promoted in the media. And when anyone suggests in public that the true account of how everything came into existence is that God created all things,

they are treated with great scorn. It often seems impossible for anyone to say anything more ignorant than to express belief in six-day creation.

But let no one think that there are no problems with evolution. A scientist, Michael Denton, wrote a book in 1985 called *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*; in 2016 he published a further book, *Evolution: Still a Theory in Crisis*. Anyone setting out to read these books should have significant scientific knowledge, but the point of drawing attention to them here is to emphasise the title. Dr Denton is one of those scientists who recognise the difficulties that result from imagining large numbers of little changes before some part of the body is complete. A half-developed eye, for example, is useless; one cannot see through it. So Dr Denton suggests that big changes take place all at once – a form of evolution that it is even more difficult to believe in.

The fact is that God has revealed Himself in the Bible, and the first thing that He has revealed is that He is the Creator of all things. Indeed apart from the early chapters of Genesis, there are more than 30 references to God as creator in the Scriptures, and possibly significantly more. We must consider this teaching as a fundamental part of God's revelation to us.

It is instructive also to notice that it is “*through faith* we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God” (Hebrews 11:3). In other words, if we are to have a proper understanding of how the universe, and everything in it, came into existence, we must by faith receive the Bible's testimony that God made all things; we cannot see creation happening. God's testimony is perfectly reliable, and we must receive it as reliable if we are to draw proper conclusions from its teaching – for example, that because God created human beings, we must live to His glory. We must worship Him and we must obey Him in everything that He commands us.

Many who do not want to believe in God find evolution attractive. If they believe in evolution, they can feel free to live for themselves rather than feel obliged to obey God and live to His glory. Thus they make idols of themselves, serving “the creature more than the Creator” (Romans 1:25) – serving things that God created rather than God Himself.

The fact is that God made everything. In particular, He made each of us, and this fact should lie at the bottom of all our thinking. This generation has largely lost sight of the fact that God is the Creator, but this is a basic matter distinguishing the true religion from every other and from every worldview which assumes there is no God. Jonah was right in pointing to his God as the One who made the heavens and the earth; so was Paul. But evolution can never successfully explain how everything came into existence. We should think of God as the infinitely-powerful Being who made the whole universe and everything in it. We must give Him the glory that is rightly due to Him.

## The Talking Ass

*Rev K M Watkins*

The man was on a journey, riding his ass. It was strange when the ass turned out of the path into the field. Further along, it was strange again, when the ass turned into a wall by the side of the path, crushing the man's foot. It was stranger still when the ass fell straight to the ground from underneath the man. She had never done anything like this before; it was completely out of character.

But an even stranger thing happened next. The ass opened her mouth and spoke – not with the “hee-haw” braying sound that asses normally make, but with the words of human speech. This was amazing: a “dumb ass speaking with man's voice” (2 Peter 2:16). It was a miracle! It was contrary to nature.

The man was called Balaam, and Balaam was a prophet. But Balaam was not a good man. He “loved the wages of unrighteousness” (2 Peter 2:15). Balaam loved money, and he did not care if he had to do unrighteous things to get it. The Bible warns us that “the love of money is the root of all evil” (1 Timothy 6:10). When people love money, sin grows from that bad root, tempting them to do all kinds of evil to get it.

The early New Testament Church was warned about people who “ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward” (Jude 11). Greedy people make the same terrible mistake as Balaam. They will do almost anything to get the worldly riches and honours that their hearts seek. Greed is part of covetousness, which the Tenth Commandment forbids. It is a form of idolatry, because it makes the person think that things are more important than God. Greed is a soul-destroying sin. It destroyed Balaam.

Balaam was journeying to meet a man called Balak, who was the King of Moab. Balak had heard how the Israelites had defeated the Amorites and the Bashanites in battle and taken over their land. The Israelites were now camped in the borders of Moab, and Balak was afraid that they were going to attack the Moabites also. Therefore he “hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them” (Nehemiah 13:2). Balak really thought that Balaam had the power to pronounce a form of words, which would result in Israel's downfall. Thinking that Balaam was able to do that was empty superstition and that was sinful.

But Balak understood what kind of man Balaam was. To entice him to come, Balak promised to reward him handsomely. He would promote him to “very great honour” and give him whatever he asked for (see Numbers 22:17). Although Balaam protested that he could only speak what the Lord told him to speak, he was desperate to find some way to get the rewards

promised by Balak. In his eagerness, Balaam did not do what the Lord told him. He did not wait for Balak's messengers to come to him again, but "rose up in the morning, saddled his ass, and went" (Numbers 22:21).

The Lord became angry with Balaam. "God's anger was kindled because he went: and "the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him" (Numbers 22:22). Although Balaam liked to say that his eyes were open (see Numbers 24:3,4,15,16), he could not see that angel standing in the way. But his ass could! She saw "the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand" (Numbers 22:23). Seeing the angel ready to strike with his sword, she knew that it was dangerous to continue on the path. That is why she acted so strangely.

Balaam should have been thanking his animal. She had saved his life three times. But instead of that, Balaam was angry and hit her three times. He should have taken her strange behaviour as a warning – a warning from God.

What about us? Perhaps there is something in the world that we have set our hearts upon. It might be sinful. Or it might be lawful in itself. But we want it so much that it has become an idol to us. We have fallen in love with the thought of getting it, as if nothing else could ever make us happy. Instead of committing our way to the Lord in prayer, and walking according to the rules of His Word, we rush on, in our greed to get it.

What do we do when things do not go according to our plans and efforts to get that thing? Do we do what Balaam did? Do we get frustrated and angry with whatever seems to be getting in the way of our dream? You see how little children react when they cannot get what they want. Older ones can see that it is not good for them to have it, but the little children cannot see that. So they become angry, crying and complaining. That is how Balaam behaved. And that is how we behave too, if we have hearts that are covetous and greedy like Balaam's.

Instead, when we meet with disappointments, we should pause and consider. Perhaps it might be God standing in our way, to warn us that we are on a wrong path. That is what David did. His anger had been stirred up against a foolish and stubborn man called Nabal, and he was on his way to kill him. David was interrupted by Abigail, Nabal's wife, who wisely persuaded David not to do so. Instead of being angry with Abigail for getting in his way, David recognised this as God's voice warning him not to commit the sin of murder. David thanked Abigail and turned back (see 1 Samuel 25).

Balaam was so greedy that he could not hear God's voice warning him through what his ass had done. It was then that "the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?" (Numbers 22:28). Balaam should certainly

have understood now that God was rebuking and warning him through his ass's strange behaviour. An animal was talking! That had not happened since the serpent spoke in the garden of Eden.

But instead of hearing the warning, Balaam became even more angry with his ass. He accused her of mocking him, and wished that he had a sword of his own, to kill her with (see Numbers 22:29). Even a miracle happening before his very eyes did not change Balaam. Still only one thing mattered to him – getting to Balak, in order to get the reward.

Like Balaam, you get warnings from God in your daily life, when worldly things do not go according to plan. But perhaps you do not listen to those warnings. Instead you become frustrated and angry. God also warns you through His Word. If you continue in a life of sin and worldliness, you will surely perish in a lost eternity. In the end, the sword of His justice will smite you. Sermons tell you that. But do you believe it? Do you act as if you believed it? If you go on in sin, it shows that these things have no effect upon you.

Perhaps you think that if God showed you a real miracle, then you would turn from your wicked ways. But Balaam saw a real miracle. His ass spoke! Did it turn him from his wicked way? Not at all! Even the miracle of an animal talking did not change his heart. He continued the same greedy sinner that he had always been.

The rich man in hell wanted Lazarus to be sent from heaven to warn his brothers about the torments of hell (see Luke 16:27,28). He was sure that “if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent” (verse 30). But Abraham knew better. Even if they saw a miracle of resurrection, they would not repent. They had the Bible already, and they were refusing to hear its warnings, so they would refuse to hear the voice of someone risen from the dead. “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead” (verse 31).

What a thought! You already have the Scriptures, which warn you to repent of your sins and urge you to believe in Christ for salvation. If you refuse to obey the Bible's command to repent and believe, you will continue to refuse even if you see a miracle. If you could understand it, there already is One who comes to you in the gospel, who has indeed risen from the dead, whose name is Jesus. Although you did not see the miracle of Christ's resurrection on the third day, yet you have it recorded in the Bible, which is the very the Word of God. But still you do not repent and believe.

In order to repent and believe, “ye must be born again” (John 3:7). You need the Holy Spirit to give you a new heart. Only then will the salvation of your soul become more important than all the things that are in the world.



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Only then will you repent and turn from your life of sin. Only then will you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died and rose again. Without the new birth, even the most marvellous miracles done before your very eyes will leave you the same unbelieving sinner that you have always been. Balaam and his talking ass prove that.

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## A Religion for All Weathers

It was a fishing village on the coast of Cornwall. The people were very poor, but they were religious. It was a time before boats had engines; the fishermen needed wind to fill their sails, but too much wind was dangerous. One winter was very difficult. The winds were blowing in the wrong direction for nearly a month, and the men could not go out to sea to fish.

At last, one Sabbath morning, the wind changed and some of the men left their homes and began walking towards the beach. They planned to take advantage of the better weather and sail out to sea in the hope of bringing home a good catch. They sorely needed the money that the catch would earn. Some of them were making excuses for their Sabbath breaking, such as, "If we were not so poor. . .". Others claimed to be sorry that it was the Sabbath and added, "but . . .".

Then a sturdy fisherman spoke up. "But, if," he said, echoing the words of other fishermen. "Surely, neighbours, you're not going with your butts and ifs to break God's law".

The people gathered round him, and he added, "Mine's a religion for all weathers, fair wind and foul. This is the love of God, that ye keep His law." (He was referring to 1 John 5:3). Then he went on to quote from the Fourth Commandment: "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy". And he continued: "That's the law, friends. And our Lord came not to break, but to fulfil, the law. True, we are poor; what of that? Better poor, and have God's smile, than rich and have His frown. Go, you that dare; but I never knew any good come of a religion that changed with the wind."

The fisherman's scriptural words influenced those who had decided to break the Sabbath and go to sea. They went home and got ready for church.

But in the evening, just when they would have been on their way back to the shore, a sudden storm sprang up and blew strongly and dangerously for two days. After the storm, settled weather came, and the catches of pilchards were so large that soon there was no shortage of money among the fishing families in the village. The words of Scripture were fulfilled: "Trust in the Lord and do good . . . and verily thou shalt be fed" (Psalm 37:3).

We cannot expect that the rewards for Sabbath-keeping will always be so obvious. But the duty remains the same: "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy". But to become involved on Sabbaths in what is not work of necessity and mercy most certainly involves spiritual dangers. Jesus asked, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). The answer surely is obvious.

Let us seek to have a religion that does not change with the weather – a religion that does not change when we are under a degree of pressure.

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*For Junior Readers*

## No Hitting Back

John Brown was born in Scotland in 1722. He grew up in a Christian home out in the country. He was taught from the Bible, and had the privileges of going to church on the Lord's Day and of family worship each morning and evening.

These were hard times and his parents could not afford to send him to school regularly. But when he was able to go he worked hard and got a good grounding in reading, writing and arithmetic. He wanted to study and was soon reading various religious books and learning *The Larger Catechism* by heart. Sadly his parents both died when he was only 11 years old. Can you imagine that? He was a poor orphan and still only a child!

A kind family took him in to stay with them for a short time. While there he became very ill with a fever. Although he was just 12 years old, it did not look as if he would get better. He had serious thoughts about eternity and eagerly read the Bible and other useful books. And he listened to sermons when he was able to get to church.

He was then sent to live with an old shepherd and his family. His work was to look after the sheep. But the old man, who had never been taught to read, also encouraged John Brown to read the Bible to him. They even built a sort of hide-out on the hill where they could read the Word of God, pray and sing Psalms together without being disturbed.

There was also another boy working on the farm called Henry. He was not serious and he often made fun of John and his religion and provoked him. One Sabbath evening, Henry hurried his sheep back to the fold first, hoping to annoy John. Before John arrived with his sheep, Henry strewed some prickly whins and gorse around the gate; he knew that John would have to walk through them to fasten it.

John, barefooted as always, made his way painfully through them to shut

the gate. Henry then jumped on him and pushed him headlong into the prickly heap. He was laughing at his companion's sore feet and waiting for an angry reaction. Young John picked himself up – his face, hands and legs bleeding.

What did he say? No anger, no hitting back! John just asked Henry why he did that “on the Lord's night?” Was that not a real Christian reaction? John was more concerned about sinning against God by breaking His holy day than about the hurt and upset Henry had caused him. He also showed a spirit of forgiveness toward Henry and was a good influence on him during the rest of their stay on that farm.

Will you not remember John Brown's example when you are provoked by others, at home or at school? The Book of Proverbs tells you that “a soft answer turneth away wrath”. And in the New Testament you can read about the example of the Saviour, “who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not”. Is He not the best example to follow?

*J van Kralingen*

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## Challenges in a Godless World

### 3. A Total Challenge

*Matthew Vogan*

The previous section, in January's issue, of this Youth Conference paper spoke of the challenge the Church faces from godlessness today.

**T**he challenge faced by the Church in our secularist society is total. It confronts us in every area: gender; identity, origins, authority, the family, medicine, psychology and much else. In short, this challenge is presented in every aspect of what it means to be human, how we understand the world and how we live in it.

Secularism completely turns upside down the biblical understanding of the world. One Christian professor, Dr James N Anderson, has noted that any system of thought may be assessed according to certain fundamental questions. These influence our decisions and the way in which we interpret our experiences. Anderson uses the initials TAKES to explain each aspect:

T = *Theology*. Any system of thought presents a view concerning God.

A = *Anthropology* (the study of man). There is a particular idea of what human nature is and what it should be. Where have we come from and what is our purpose and destiny?

K = *Knowledge*. What can we know and how can we know it? Where do we get reliable knowledge from? What is the authority for this?

E = *Ethics*. What is the standard of right and wrong? Who decides?

S = *Salvation*. What is the answer to the basic human problem and where does this answer come from?

Secularism entirely undermines biblical truth in all of these areas. It rejects God and presents an atheistic view of the world. It presents an idea of human nature which is self-determined. Thus even things that are part of our biological make-up, such as our gender, can be defined by ourselves – and so can be changeable – according to a secularist mentality. According to the prevailing notions, truth is merely personal, subjective and relative, not revealed and objective. This is the same for morality, which is not thought to be absolute but simply what the majority think. The result is moral and social anarchy, and breakdown in the lives of individuals, families and communities.

It seems that there is only one shared value across a secularist society which is pursued as a type of “salvation”. This is unfettered personal freedom. When this becomes the ideal and main goal, the highest role of the state is to guarantee personal freedoms. Of course, this means choosing between them when they are in conflict. Various laws and cases show that the state is ready to put the rights of a powerful LGBT lobby above the consciences of Christians.

This is why recent generations have witnessed a moral reversal in society. Theo Hobson is a liberal theologian, but he describes what has happened rather accurately. He says that three steps are required for a full-scale moral reversal to take place:

(1) What was previously condemned must now be celebrated. First of all, of course, it is tolerated and accepted but then it comes to be celebrated. There is a rush, not just to tolerate, but celebrate, even in the business world. Homosexual events are sponsored and even some advertising has become associated with liberal trends. These are the rather rapid changes we have witnessed. If you are 17 years old or over, for instance, then it may be surprising to realise that within your own lifetime it was actually illegal to promote homosexuality in schools in Britain.

(2) What was once celebrated must now be condemned. Where Christian values and morality were once given an honoured and respected place, they are now condemned out of hand. Thus politicians such as Tim Farron may be hounded in relation to Christian morality.

(3) Those who will not join in the celebration must be condemned. Those who will not celebrate must be singled out, ridiculed and shunned. This haste to commend themselves by creating a distance from people with “reactionary views” is a key part of an all-too-common virtue-signalling. We hear people say that they want to be on the “right side of history”. This is an absurd

phrase as past history is actually against them. They mean the history that future generations will write about the present. They do not want to be left behind or be seen as stuck in the past. This assumes, of course, that truth and morality change with the times and the opinion of the majority.

There is in fact a repressive intolerance towards those who will not celebrate such changes. There is an aggressive movement to shut down opposing views, particularly in universities. We hear of so-called “safe spaces”, where even the suspicion that a view might offend means that it must not be voiced or heard. It means that society and its institutions, even those of learning and debate, are becoming echo chambers of the opinions of the majority. The only “blasphemy” is seeming to challenge such views.

For instance, last October, the Christian Union was banned from the Freshers’ Fair at Balliol College, Oxford. In justification it was claimed that Christianity was part of a network of oppression of marginalised groups such as homosexuals. The idea was that such groups need to be protected by excluding Christians and denying them their freedoms.

It is worth giving greater focus to the total challenge presented to God’s law by secularism. The first four Commandments have long since been rejected as having no place in the laws of our society. Yet we have also witnessed the systematic dismantling of the second table of the law in our national statutes.

God has instituted the family for the protection and rearing of children. He has given parents authority and responsibility to honour Him with that authority. This is provided for in the Fifth Commandment. It extends to other levels of authority in the society and the Church. Yet our society has become anti-authority and uses the idea of individualist rights to undermine that authority. Schools lack effective discipline and the authority of parents is undermined by the state and its institutions.

The Sixth Commandment protects the right to life but this has been eroded alarmingly. Legislation allows children to be murdered in the womb as part of our National Health Service. Growing pressure in the media seeks assisted suicide for those who no longer want to live. In some countries this has become a mere matter of personal choice.

Marriage is protected in the Seventh Commandment but our society undermines that institution. It has redefined it to include unions between those of the same sex, something which can never be marriage.

Living together without marrying is seen as the norm. Government bodies choose to indulge this by speaking of “partners” rather than husband and wife.

Theft is contrary to the Eighth Commandment but this part of God’s law is also greatly undermined. The Government sponsors gambling. Lawful work

is an essential part of this Commandment but this is too often undermined by the welfare policies of governments. The media report that supermarkets lose more than £3 billion per year through theft from self-checkouts.

The Ninth Commandment protects the truth but this is too often a sad casualty in an age of fake news and political spin. Opinions that “offend” are too easily shut down or shouted down. In a secularist society, words are often tools of power and domination rather than for edifying.

A secularist, consumerist society, driven by and built on excessive desire for material things cannot endure the Tenth Commandment, “Thou shalt not covet”. Many live to consume and spend on themselves. It is a false, materialistic religion, for covetousness is idolatry.

How few appreciate the destructive emptiness of secularism! How much we need to saturate our minds, hearts and lives with biblical truth, when it is being opposed with such determined totalitarian enmity. We must be like John Bunyan’s pilgrims going through Vanity Fair. When they were asked what they would buy from the wares of worldliness, they responded, “We buy the truth”.

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## Justification

### 1. What It Is Not

*Rev Roderick Macleod*

This is the first part of a paper given at last year’s Youth Conference.

Man has acquired a great deal of useful knowledge. But when one of Job’s friends asked, “How then can man be justified with God? Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?” (Job 25:4), he asked one question that all the knowledge in the world cannot answer. The vital importance of this question is seen in Psalm 130:3: “If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?” And what it so seriously implies for everyone is summed up in these words, “In Thy sight shall no man living be justified” (Psalm 143:2).

If we are to learn how the guilt of our sins can be removed, how we can obtain a title to everlasting life, and how we can escape the punishment of our sins, we need to go to God’s Word. *The Shorter Catechism* expresses in a number of brief but accurate statements, the teaching of the Bible about what we are to believe concerning these and other fundamental questions. We shall therefore examine, with the help of *The Shorter Catechism*, how the Bible answers these questions.

The question we seek to study directs us to Question 33 in *The Shorter*

*Catechism*: “What is justification?” The answer is: “Justification is an act of God’s free grace, wherein He pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone”.

As it is common to think that one is justified by works of personal merit, we intend (1) to say what justification is *not*. This should clear the way to say (2) what justification *is*.

**1. What justification is not.** It does not deal with the change that is wrought in the heart by regeneration and sanctification. Justification is concerned with sinners having a title to everlasting life. Effectual calling, regeneration and sanctification are different; these doctrines describe obtaining a fitness for everlasting life.

*Effectual calling* describes the work of the Holy Spirit so that the sinner is persuaded and enabled “to embrace Jesus Christ as He is freely offered to us in the gospel”. The doctrine of *regeneration*, or the new birth, refers to the change that is powerfully brought about by the exceeding greatness of God’s power through the Spirit. In regeneration, a new life begins in the soul: an active, spiritual principle which governs and motivates a person in such a way that true spiritual holiness will progressively become his great delight.

*Sanctification* refers to the progress of this principle of spiritual life in the renewed soul and the process by which a person is gradually made holy, until at death he or she “is made perfect in holiness and doth immediately pass into glory”. No doubt, you can see how closely related effectual calling, the new birth and sanctification are. They all refer to one aspect or other of the new heart promised by God in the covenant of grace: the change wrought in the hearts of sinners by the Holy Ghost. Now the important point is that the doctrine of justification does not belong to this group of doctrines.

*Justification is not sanctification.* The Scripture texts already quoted indicate that man has a sense of guilt, and so a sense of condemnation on account of sin. They clearly suggest that the only ground on which God will justify a sinner is the possession of a righteousness which is an absolutely-perfect copy of the moral law. It is impossible for *us* to produce this justifying righteousness. The commonest error on this subject is that our sanctification is the ground of our justification. Paul laboured with great care and perseverance to rid the world of the idea that we can be justified on the basis of our own merit.

Justification and sanctification both deal with sin. But they deal with different aspects of sin. It is very important to note that there are two things about sin that need to be remedied: (1) the guilt of our sin on our consciences; and (2) the moral defilement of sin in our hearts. When God justifies a

sinner, He is dealing with the sinner's guilt, not the defilement of his nature. Justification removes the guilt of sin, not unholiness of heart. When God is sanctifying a believer, He is dealing with the defilement of his nature.

Paul's startling statement that God "justifieth the ungodly" (Romans 4:5) is explained by this very important point: A sinner is declared just, not because he now has a holy heart. Indeed he is declared just in spite of the fact that he still has a heart full of pollution. He is justified on the ground that he has the righteousness of Christ "imputed to him".

*Justification is not regeneration.* In Scripture, regeneration (Titus 3:5) is spoken about in terms that correspond to "life". It is called being "born again" (1 Peter 1:23); being "born of the Spirit" (John 3:6); being "born of God" (1 John 5:1). The one who is regenerated is "a new creature" (Galatians 6:15), "begotten of God" (1 John 5:18).

Justification is spoken of in terms of pardon and of one's standing before God. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1); "being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath" (Romans 5:9).

One might ask, What is the need to stress these differences? In fact, there is a great need to distinguish them clearly. If, for example, we think that we are justified only because we are holy – making sanctification the ground of our justification – we shall never be justified.

Having distinguished the doctrine of justification from what the Bible says about the change wrought in the heart of a sinner, we must not isolate these different aspects of the same salvation from one another. They are just different views of a person who has been saved from his sins. As born again, or *regenerate*, we hear his cry, as it were from the morning of effectual calling, to God as a father, ready and able to help him.

As one being *sanctified*, he is viewed as clad in his armour, a magnificent prince, warring with sin and its secret agents – sin being the most powerful, evil and deceitful principle in the created universe. Viewed thus, he is seen engaging in "the sorest battle there ever has been: the conquest of self in the conflict with sin" (as a famous war veteran once said).

In evangelical *repentance* we see the light fall on the tear that is in this humble warrior's eye, as he mourns over offences done to a gracious and holy God.

As *adopted* we see him coming into the presence of God as to a father, with desires to please God awake in his soul. He comes as a little child, asking for grace to stand in falling times; yes, grace to live in killing times; grace to deny himself in selfish times and grace to suffer for his well-beloved elder Brother's interests, in persecuting times.



When we view the believer as *justified*, we see him in the garments of salvation, wearing the robe of the righteousness of Christ, and so in possession of a title to an eternal inheritance of life in glory. We must not separate these aspects of salvation but we must distinguish them.

What gives a title to heaven (justification) and what gives a fitness for heaven (regeneration and sanctification) are like the two lines of a railway track. Railway lines are always separated by strong beams of wood or some other material. Disaster strikes if they become entangled. Anyone who has seen a long stretch of railway track will have noticed that railway lines seem to meet at the furthest point in the distance. Justification and sanctification are something like this; it is only at death, when a believer is made perfect in holiness that one might think of them as merging. At death, the believer passes into heaven with a title to it, on the ground of Christ's perfect righteousness imputed to him and received by faith alone. But he also has a fitness for heaven because Christ has been formed in him and so his sanctification is now perfect.

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*For Younger Readers*

## Clean Hands

A little boy used to wash his hands again and again. His older brother Henry asked him why he washed them so often.

"Because I want to be strong", the boy told Henry.

Henry probably could not see why washing his hands could make anyone strong. So that evening, as they sat in the farmhouse porch, Henry asked his brother to explain.

"Because I read it in the Bible", he told Henry and then showed him part of Job 17:9: "He that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger". But the young boy did not understand the words properly. The words really speak of someone who is not getting his hands "dirty" by using them in a sinful way. Indeed the words point to people who want to keep away from every kind of sin.

But we must trust in God to keep us from sinning. And we must try to keep away from sin, as we trust in God. Then He will make us more strong to keep away from sin. Ask God to make you trust in Him for Jesus' sake and to keep you from sinning. I do hope that Henry and his brother learned to trust in God and to keep from sin.

# Looking Around Us

## A Serious Warning

Early on the morning of January 13 the people of Hawaii were shocked to receive this official text message: “Ballistic missile threat inbound to Hawaii. Seek immediate shelter. This is not a drill.” A television notice read: “If you are indoors, stay indoors. If you are outdoors, seek immediate shelter in a building. Remain indoors well away from windows. If you are driving, pull safely to the side of the road and seek shelter in a building or lay on the floor.”

It seemed a very real and terrifying event. North Korea's missile tests might then easily have resulted in a real attack. There was no time to lose and people sought shelter at once. We now know that even the person sending the message was convinced it was real. Pupils in a local school were shepherded into a changing room for shelter. It generated tremendous anxiety. But after 38 minutes of terror, a message went out to say that it had been a false alert. People had believed it and had responded in a way that showed this. What would we do? No doubt the same; why would anyone take a chance with such a deadly situation?

And yet a more serious warning and alert goes out and is scarcely heeded. It does not concern merely our lives and safety; it concerns our eternal destiny, safety and happiness. It comes from a source that cannot make mistakes. We are solemnly warned in the Scriptures and from the pulpit to “flee from the wrath to come” (Luke 3:7). As more than one writer has put it, God sounds “an alarm for the unconverted”. If we have not obeyed that, what are we saying about the warning? Are we treating it as though it was a false alarm and that God is not to be trusted?

It is not only a warning but a warm pleading invitation. “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?” (Ezekiel 33:11). We are invited to receive the greatest blessings as well as to flee from the wrath to come. “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” (Hebrews 2:3). “Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do, But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him” (Luke 12:4-5).

This is a warning from heaven itself. “See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven” (Hebrews 12:25)

*Matthew Vogan*

## The Unburnt Bible

A Protestant church in Kyrgyzstan, in central Asia, was set on fire on January 3. Muslim militants were blamed for throwing into the building bottles they had filled with petrol and set on fire. As a result, the church was seriously damaged, with much of the inside burnt, including pews.

But there was an open Bible sitting on the Lord's table which survived undamaged; the flames went out before they reached the table. Clearly, while the Lord allowed the flames to do considerable damage, He was in control of the flames and prevented them going any farther. It was part of His wise providence that the Bible was preserved

God does not always preserve a Bible from being burnt, but He will preserve copies of the Scriptures in various languages till the end of time. He does so in His kindness to sinners, so that they may learn something about Him and His grace – His willingness to do them good, delivering them from sin and its consequences, by faith in Jesus Christ.

See that you make good use of the wonderful privilege of having a Bible within reach. If you do not read it and receive the testimony it brings you from God, it would be better for you to have lost it in some fire or never to have seen it. But, through the Bible, God still calls to you to believe in Jesus.

## Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2017-18

### Overseas Names for Exercise 1

**Senior Section:** *Auckland:* James Campbell, Monique S Jago. *Beaver Falls:* Jael and Jenny Kerr. *Carterton:* Elizabeth, Esther and Joshua Schuit. *Chesley:* Joel Bouman. *Grafton:* Rachel van Dorp, Vashti Zuill. *Thembiso:* Tafadzwa Mtswango. *Wouterswoude:* Wilma de Wit.

**Intermediate Section:** *Auckland:* Abby de Bruin, Rachel Campbell, Danielle Jago. *Carterton:* Caleb Schuit. *Geldermalsen:* Harm Gyben. *Gisborne:* Sarah van Dorp. *Grafton:* Hugh Marshall, Jared McAlpine, Andrew White, Ronnie Zuill. *Singapore:* Owen Chai Yi. *Thembiso:* Nelson Lunga, Miles Mabetha, Innocent Moyo, Mthandazo Moyo, Taklanda Moyo, Mayezi Ncube, Gugulethu Ndlovu, Thembelihle Sibanda. *Wouterswoude:* Esther de Wit.

**Junior Section:** *Auckland:* Megan de Bruin, Diana Jago, Amelia Smith. *Beaver Falls:* Ehud Kerr. *Chesley:* Isabel Bouman, Kara Zekveld. *Connecticut:* Nathanael Mack. *Grafton:* William Marshall, Mahala Zuill. *Singapore:* Naomi Ruth Chai Shi. *Thembiso:* Nokuthula Nyakai. *Zenka:* Nathaniel Ncube, Shantel Ncube.

**Upper Primary Section:** *Auckland:* John and Peter Campbell, Bryce Jago, Aaron Smith. *Castle Hill:* Jonathan Hickey. *Grafton:* Levi Kidd, Marcus Optland, Gavin Wood, Eve Zuill. *Texas:* Cameron Smith. *Thembiso:* Lastgirl Bhebhe, Moreblessing Phiri.

**Lower Primary Section:** *Auckland:* Joseph Campbell, Laura and Maria Jago, Madyson Seegar, Keith and Owen Smith. *Beaver Falls:* Isabel Kerr. *Castle Hill:* Matthew Hickey. *Chesley:* Hannah Bouman, Angela Tuinier. *Gisborne:* Brooklyn and Shona Hembd. *Grafton:* Eden Optland, Leo Wood, Elijah Zuill. *Münster:* Clara Rösner. *Sydney:* Abigail and Ethan MacDonald. *Texas:* Alexander Smith, Charlotte and Olivia K Smith. *Thembiso:* Samuel Moyo. *Wentworthville:* David and Sarah Steel. *Zenka:* Gift Mgwabi.

# UK Youth Conference 2018

## Arrangements

**Venue:** Carronvale House, Carronvale Road, Larbert, FK5 3LH.

**Dates:** Tuesday, April 3, to Thursday, April 5.

**Chairman:** Rev Kenneth Macleod.

**Lower Age Limit:** 16 years old.

**Applications:** to Rev Donald Macdonald, 4 Clachan Road, Staffin, IV51 9HY; tel: 01470 562243. (Please let Mr Macdonald know by March 14, if possible). See the February issue for an application form. The fee will be £50 for those in full-time employment and £25 for others. Cheques are to be made payable to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

## Programme

### Tuesday, April 3

2.30 pm **The Life of David**

**The Sweet Psalmist of Israel**

*by Dr Robert Dickie*

7.00 pm **The Reformation in Europe**

**God Sending Light into the Darkness**

*by Rev Kenneth Macleod*

### Wednesday, April 4

9.30 am **Public Worship**

**Why We Go to Church**

*by Rev D W B Somerset*

2.30 pm **Historical Tour**

**Around Perth**

*conducted by Rev Douglas Somerset and Rev David Campbell*

7.00 pm **The Jews**

**Their Restoration and Spiritual Recovery**

*by Rev John Goldby*

### Thursday, April 5

9.30 am **The Sons of God**

**Adoption in Romans chapter 8**

*by Rev David Campbell*

**Price £1.00**