

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



November 2019

Vol 84 • No 11

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Cover Picture: A scene in south-west Ireland. See page 215.

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

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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.

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Volume 84

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Number 11

Do We Need the Old Testament?

Earlier this year, an American preacher claimed in a sermon that the Christian faith must be “unhitched” from the Old Testament. Several others have argued against his claim – and rightly so, because it is plain wrong. We need the Old Testament as well as the New.

Let us notice first why God gave the Old Testament originally to people who lived before Christ came into the world. In it God was revealing Himself to them, telling them that He is a holy God and directing them as to how He wanted them to live – He gave them commandments which were for their good. He also made it clear to them that they were sinners, for they were not keeping His commandments properly, and He emphasised to them that this was something very serious. He pointed out to them, not only the danger of sin, but also its evil.

But He showed them also how they could find salvation from sin, so that they could escape the punishment they deserved and go to heaven when they died. He was telling them how their sin could be forgiven and also – which is also very important – how they could be made holy.

But why do we need the Old Testament in the New Testament age, since Christ has come into the world and has finished all that had to be done for the salvation of sinners? We must not throw away the Old Testament – we must not unhitch ourselves from it – because it is all true; it is all perfectly reliable. It is *God* who gave it to us. God cannot lie; He cannot say anything to us that is not accurate. The whole Bible is reliable.

Yes, God has given us a further revelation in the New Testament, but it does not take the place of the Old Testament. What we should think about the New Testament is that it completes God's revelation to mankind; it does not stand on its own.

We now have a complete Bible. God is never going to give any further revelation. He warns us: “If any man shall add unto these things [written in the Bible], God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book” (Revelation 22:18). But He also warns us in the next verse about taking away from the words that He has revealed. God had already warned His

people: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2).

Just as surely as we must not add any words to any part of the Bible, so we must not take any words away from it, and we must certainly not get rid of the whole Old Testament. We must not unhitch the Christian faith from it and ignore it; the Old Testament still has a great deal to teach us. It is a precious part of the glorious Word of God.

The fact is that there are many parts of the New Testament we would not understand without the Old. Take, for instance, the words of John the Baptist recorded in John 1:29: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world". What did he mean by "the Lamb of God"?

We would need to go to the Old Testament to realise that, by a "Lamb", John meant a sacrifice. The sacrifice – perhaps a lamb – would be offered up in the place of sinners; it would suffer and die instead of them. And "the Lamb of God" was a sacrifice that *God* had provided; Jesus, the Son of God, was to be offered as a sacrifice so that He might take away "the sin of the world". He was to bear away the sins of people in the various generations, in places throughout the world. But it is important to recognise that, apart from the Old Testament teaching about sacrifice, we would not be able to understand what John the Baptist meant by "the Lamb of God".

If we begin to understand what John the Baptist said, we must realise that his words speak to us today. And *God* is speaking to us through these words; He directs us to behold the Lamb of God – to look by faith to Christ as the One who did all that was necessary to take away the sin of the world. So each of us is to look to Christ by faith, as sinners who need to be saved, who need to have our sin forgiven and to be made holy.

John the Baptist's words call us to the same act of faith as we find in the Old Testament verse, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:22). Through these words, Christ tells us to look to Him, to believe in Him. He is God and there is no other Saviour from sin. We should note the consistency here between the Old Testament and the New. Indeed, we should expect that there will be perfect consistency between the two Testaments, and that is how it is. God is consistent with Himself in everything He says.

Yes, it is true that we do not need to offer sacrifices now, and that is because Christ offered up Himself as the Lamb of God. His was a perfect sacrifice, and it does not need to be repeated; it never will be repeated. Indeed for anyone to claim to repeat that sacrifice is to claim that it comes short of what is said about it in the New Testament.

And that is sinful – it is to make little of the work of the Son of God in our nature. Instead we must place a high value on it; we must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who offered Himself as a sacrifice to take away sin. Unbelief is a very serious sin. And the better we know the Old Testament, the better we will understand what the New Testament has to say about salvation from sin, and about many other very important matters.

If we unhitch the Christian faith from the Old Testament, we will lose the full account of the creation of the universe and of human beings, a truly basic teaching (though we would still have references to it in, for example, 2 Peter). And perhaps one reason why people might want to unhitch the Christian faith from the Old Testament is so that they would not have to face up to the testimony of Genesis that the universe – and everything in it – was created in six days. Many people who profess to be Christians do not want to be out of step with the majority of people today, who assume that it is absurd to believe in six-day creation. But it is not absurd; God has infinite power and infinite wisdom; in a very short space of time He is able to do what seems impossible. There is no limit to what He is able to do.

By unhitching from the Old Testament, we also lose the historical books, like 1 and 2 Samuel, in which we find accounts of many good people and many ungodly people. God is providing them as examples from which we can learn how we should live and how we should *not* live.

These books tell us, for example, about King Saul, who claimed to be obedient to God, but he did not want to carry out all God's instructions fully (see, for instance, 1 Samuel 15). Because of his disobedience, God in judgement left him more and more to go his own way, a way leading to a lost eternity. His life is a serious warning not to disobey God.

On the other hand, 1 and 2 Samuel speak of David, a man who loved God and sought to obey Him in all that he did. In this he is to be our example; but we are not to follow David, or any of the people of God, when they sin.

Again, if we unhitch from the Old Testament, we will lose the Book of Psalms. This would mean neglecting David's confession of sin to God and his laying hold of God's mercy, as in Psalm 51. This would also involve turning one's back on the Psalmist's praise for the greatness of God's mercy, His faithfulness and righteousness, in Psalm 36. Here is a Book that teaches us how to praise God, which is one of the great duties that God lays on us. How much we need that teaching!

The simple fact is that we cannot afford to do without the Old Testament, or even a part of it. We should value that whole section of the Bible, read it carefully and seek to follow its teachings. Let us ask God to bless both the Old Testament and the New to our souls.

Samuel the Prophet

6. Samuel Anoints David as King of Israel

Rev Neil M Ross

This is the last part of a paper given at this year's Youth Conference. Last month's part dealt with Samuel anointing Saul as King of Israel, and Saul's downfall.

Samuel, still sad at the downfall of King Saul, was now given the task by God of appointing a replacement king. God reproved Samuel for continuing to mourn for Saul and directed him to go to Jesse's home in Bethlehem and to anoint one of his sons to be king.

At the home of Jesse, Samuel thought that Eliab, the eldest son of Jesse and striking to look at, was the one to be chosen. But God said, "I have refused him". Nor were any of the next six sons of Jesse chosen by God. God reminded Samuel: "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

We would do well to act on this searching truth: that God looks on the heart. We should seek that our own hearts would be right in God's sight: that we would have what the Bible calls the new heart, the clean heart. So we must pray as David did, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).

Samuel discovered that Jesse had yet another son, David, who was out shepherding. Samuel ordered that he be brought home without delay. When David arrived, God commanded Samuel, "Arise, anoint him: for this is he" (1 Samuel 16:12). This meant that God appointed David to be king of Israel after the death of Saul, and gave him gifts for this high office, for we are told: "The Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward" (1 Samuel 16:13).

Samuel was by now an old man, probably over 70 years old. He returned safely to Ramah to continue his work of judging, and supervising the school of the prophets at Naioth.

It was possibly at this time that Samuel also drew up rules, implemented by David after Samuel's death, for allocating the duties of the priests and the Levites in the tabernacle when it would have a more permanent location. (It seems the tabernacle at this time was no longer in Shiloh but in Nob, a city of the priests, not far from Jerusalem.) Samuel's input to regulating the tabernacle worship is confirmed by 1 Chronicles 9:22, which says about the priests and Levites: "Whom David and Samuel the seer did ordain in their set office".

Samuel's concern that the worship of God would be according to the will of God teaches us that we too are to worship God in the way He commands.

This is known as the *regulative principle of worship*. In Deuteronomy 12:32 God says about worshipping Him: “What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it”.

Although Samuel never again went to visit Saul, he did meet him once more in extraordinary circumstances. Some time after David was anointed as king-elect, Saul became insanely jealous of him and tried to kill him. David fled for his life, went to Samuel at Ramah and unburdened himself to him. Samuel and David withdrew to Naioth and stayed there. Saul tracked David to Naioth but was unable to seize his quarry because the Spirit of God seized himself. There, in front of Samuel, Saul was held in a kind of temporary, superficial religious fervour; therefore David was able to escape once again.

The next event recorded about Samuel is his death, probably at the age of more than 80. In 1 Samuel 25:1 we have the brief notice of the end of this great man: “Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah”.

His end was a blessed end, for he died in peace with God; he died believing in the Saviour to come. His name is in the list of saints in Hebrews 11, of whom it is said: “These all died in faith” (verse 13). This is what we should aim and prepare for – that we would die as believers in union with Christ, for the Bible says, “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord” (Revelation 14:13).

Samuel’s passing away was a great loss to Israel. The nation lost a faithful prophet, a just judge, an effectual intercessor and a scholarly teacher. We also lament the passing away of the godly, especially those who have been useful to the church of Christ. Their death is gain for them, but the loss is ours. Let us pray for help as the Psalmist did: “Help, Lord, because the godly man / doth daily fade away” (Psalm 12:1).

Samuel’s life is an example for us today. True, he was an exceptionally great man, but we must try to imitate him. His life was one of devotedness to God. So we, by the grace of God, must heed the exhortation, “Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1). We are obliged to obey the call of Christ in the gospel, “Give Me thine heart” (Proverbs 23:26).

Samuel’s life was one of prayer. What a great privilege it is for us to have godly people pray for us. We ourselves should take the burdens of others to God in prayer because the Bible says, “Pray one for another” (James 5:16). Not least, we should pray for ourselves, that we would “obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

Samuel was a man who lived by faith, died in faith, believed the word of the Lord, depended on the Messiah to come, and trusted in the Lord. May we

learn that “without faith, it is impossible to please” God, and especially that we must believe in Christ to be saved from our sins. Unbelief debars sinners from heaven. May we all receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation. He is cordially calling us, “Come unto Me”. And, however great and many their sins are, He is encouraging poor sinners by the assurance, “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out”.

John Calvin – His Life and Work

5. Return to Geneva

Mr F R Daubney

Last month's section of this Youth Conference paper saw Calvin become one of the ministers in Geneva, where he was a colleague of William Farel. But there was opposition to their scriptural stance, especially as to who should come to the Lord's Supper, and they were sent away from the city.

On 13 September 1541 Calvin entered Geneva, aged 32, three and a half years after he and Farel were banished. There was much rejoicing among the people. His decision to return was momentous, not for Geneva only, but for Europe and the Protestant cause. He was to remain there until his death 23 years later.

The first thing he wanted to do was to appoint a commission to draw up a code of rules, by which church affairs in the state would be regulated. This was done and the rules were accepted by the General Council in January 1542. From this date the Presbyterian form of church government was established in Geneva. Calvin's great aim was to establish the Church at Geneva upon the principles of the New Testament. In doing this he had to encounter, not only the opposition of those who stuck to the Papacy, but the hostility of the lawless, the vicious, and the self-indulgent, which is, of course, sinful human nature.

Calvin had learned during his exile in Strasbourg a different approach to those who opposed him. He was more conciliatory, more tender than he used to be. Yet he still had strong convictions and an iron resolution. He knew what he was aiming for, and he was prepared to strive, to suffer and to wait, in order to achieve it. The Libertines continued to oppose him, believing themselves to be contending for the liberty of Geneva. They regarded the French pastors who controlled the city as foreigners and disliked the fact that Protestants came from other lands and received citizenship. They also disliked the rigid preservation of order, raising the standards of morality, and repressing vice.

Each of the parish churches were to have two services on Sabbaths, with three services in both St Peter's and St Gervais; the children's catechism was taught at midday in each of the parishes. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays there were to be sermons in each of the parishes.

Calvin had difficulty with some of the pastors who had been appointed during his absence. He wrote to Myconius, in Basel, "Our other colleagues are a hindrance rather than a help to me. They are rude and self-conceited, with no zeal and less learning. Worst of all, I cannot trust them, much as I wish to, for they show their alienation from us in many ways and give hardly any signs of a sincere and trustworthy disposition."

He would have loved to have Viret from Berne and Farel from Neuchatel to join him, but it was not to be. Only as the number of Protestant refugees from France increased, did he manage to build up a faithful pastorate. The ministers met weekly for Bible study. One of them would expound a passage of Scripture, and then the meeting was open for discussion. Once every three months they met for a form of critical analysis of each other's preaching and pastorate, among other things. All the ministers were on an equal footing although, because of Calvin's deep knowledge and his exceptional powers of mind, he was their natural leader, their permanent president.

Calvin was a sick man all his life. He suffered from lack of sleep and he worked constantly. He was afflicted with a headache which hardly ever left him. He had problems with his throat which caused him to spit blood if he used his voice too much in the pulpit. He was afflicted with pleurisy on several occasions and, by the age of 51, he was overcome with tuberculosis. He had an internal abscess which would not heal, fevers laid him low several times, and he was plagued with gallstones and kidney stones. In later years he suffered from arthritis.

One wonders how a man so afflicted could work so hard and for such long hours. His wife too suffered constant sickness and died 9 years after they married. His three children died early. Other trials included his sister-in-law, and then his step-daughter, committing adultery. "These things nearly crush me", he groaned. His friends had difficulty encouraging the deeply humbled and depressed Calvin. He wrote to Bullinger, "Still in bed with fever, I got news of the disgrace of my step-daughter; it forced me to go to the country for a few days". He had never taken a rest from preaching, but these blows caused him to flee for a while. It is not difficult to imagine how gleefully his enemies would have made capital out of the disgrace brought on his family.

No Reformer, not even Luther, was more constantly exposed to furious attacks than Calvin. Rome and the irreligious saw him as a dangerous enemy. He was accused of harshness, a lust for power, self-righteousness

and cruelty. His friends testify that in his personal relations he was gentle, caring and considerate, avoiding all dissension; but when God and His kingdom were attacked it was different. Then he felt that he was an instrument of the Most High, and he would not hold back. Yet no doubt his ill health sometimes made him irritable when his sacred convictions were attacked.

“We Didn’t Know We Were Poor”

Rev K M Watkins

“**W**e didn’t know we were poor until the white man came.” At the Kenya mission in rural Kisii, we would hear some of the older folk say that sometimes. In the old days, before they met Europeans, they thought that everyone lived as they did themselves. At that time, there was enough land for everyone in Kisii. The soil was fertile, the weather was favourable, with good rains and warm sunshine, and the harvests were reliable. Ordinarily, no one went hungry. Many families had a cow or two for milk, some hens for eggs and several goats for meat on special occasions.

Yet they walked barefoot and wore clothing made from animal skins. Their homes were small huts, with mud for the walls and floor, and grass for the roof. Their work in the fields was hard, using basic hand tools under the heat of the baking equatorial sun. Without money, their economy was based on bartering: “I’ll give you this if you give me that”. Their traditional remedies did little to combat malaria and other serious illnesses. Infant mortality was high, meaning many babies and young children died. Average life expectancy in Kenya in 1950 was just 42 years. But they did not know anything else, so they did not look on themselves as poor.

Until the white man came.

The first Europeans to arrive in Kisii worked for the colonial government. Their motor vehicles and swift horses were far superior to the only form of transport the local people had ever known – walking on foot. In Kisii town, where the administrative centre was, the new buildings were so much larger, and built of brick. For the few who saw inside, the furniture was so grand.

The Europeans were dressed so smartly in their well-cut clothes. With their money they were able to buy valuable things. Their food was richer and more varied. As mission clinics and hospitals were opened, the white man’s medicine worked so much better than their own. The newly-formed schools presented them with riches of knowledge that they had never imagined.

So you can see why the older people would say, “We didn’t know we were poor until the white man came”. This made us think of a spiritual

application. All of us are spiritually poor – so very, very poor – because of our sins. But we do not think we are! Like the Laodicean church, we think we are “rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing” (Revelation 3:17). We think that we have good hearts and do good works. We might admit that we are not perfect, but still we think that we do not need anything more for God to accept us. In reality, of course, we are “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”.

When the Kisii people compared themselves only with other Kisii people, they did not see much difference, and did not realise that they were poor. When sinners compare themselves with their fellow sinners, they see little difference, and can soon start to think that they must be good, because they are no worse than others. Perhaps they admit that they do not have many good works, but then the next man does not have many either, so they cannot be that bad, can they? They may even think that they are better than other men.

The Pharisee who went to the temple to pray thought like that. Hear what he said: “God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess” (Luke 18:11,12). How rich he thought he was, just because he went without food two days a week and gave away 10% of what he had! He was not cheating men outwardly, or committing adultery, or collecting taxes for the Roman authorities; so he thought he was good and not spiritually poor.

There was another Pharisee that used to think like that. His name was Saul and he came from Tarsus. He felt himself to be so rich! Later, that man would list the things that he had thought made him spiritually rich: he was “circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless” (Philippians 3:5,6). With all these privileges and performances, Paul thought himself religiously rich and in need of nothing. He wrote, “I was alive” (Romans 7:9); that is, he considered himself to be spiritually alive and rich in religion. He did not know his spiritual poverty.

Paul was not left to go on thinking like that. He explained it later: “I was alive without the law once” (Romans 7:9). He thought himself to be spiritually alive only because he was “without the law”. Not understanding the true spiritual demands of God’s law, he thought that he was keeping it. Comparing his achievements with his low view of God’s righteous requirements, he did not realise how far short he was falling. But all this was to change.

God sent His law to Paul’s conscience by the power of the Holy Spirit. The effect was life-changing: “When the commandment came, sin revived,

and I died" (Romans 7:9). When the law of God came in its true meaning, demanding spiritual and perfect obedience, Paul's sin came to life. Seeing himself as he really was, a wretched law-breaking sinner, all his thoughts of being rich in God's sight withered and died. All his own self-righteousness became filthy rags. Not one work remained that could be called truly good. For the first time, he saw himself as spiritually poor, with no righteousness of his own at all.

It was not seeing white men from Europe that made Paul see his poverty, but God's law. All convicted sinners can say, "We didn't know we were spiritually poor until the holy demands of God's law came into our consciences". It was especially the Tenth Commandment which convicted Paul: "I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Romans 7:7). Every commandment of God is "holy, and just, and good" (verse 12). When the law comes like that, we become poor in spirit. All converted souls can say, "We didn't know we were spiritually poor until the law of God came with convicting power".

We also think that Saul of Tarsus was affected by the witness of the followers of Christ. When he was persecuting Christians to prison and death, he was "kicking against the pricks", as Jesus later described it (Acts 9:5). The Christians' loyal willingness to suffer for the sake of Jesus of Nazareth was like a goad in his side, that he fought against with all his strength. But he found the Christians' constancy hard to ignore. Paul saw Stephen die, faithful to his Lord to the end, and that had its effect, no doubt. The followers of Jesus seemed to have a holiness more real than his own. Indeed they did!

It often happens that, before a sinner is converted, he begins to see that the Lord's people have something he does not have. He begins to see them as the seed which the Lord has blessed. They are the truly rich ones, possessing the real treasures: forgiveness of sin, acceptance by God, the Holy Spirit working in their souls, adoption, sanctification. All the promises, even Christ Himself, belong to them. All things are theirs! And then the sinner sees that he has nothing at all in comparison, and begins to pray that he too would be loved with that same divine love and enjoy the good of God's chosen ones. He begins to say, "I didn't know I was poor, I didn't realise I was missing so much, until a Christian's witness came to my attention".

But most of all, it was when Paul met with the Saviour Himself that he most felt his poverty. All that he had been trusting in became worthless in his eyes. Only one thing was needful and valuable, and that was to obtain salvation through Jesus Christ.

Later Paul described his experience: "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ" (Philippians 3:7). He had been sure that his religious

efforts made him rich, but now he saw that actually he was in spiritual poverty. The true riches were in Christ, who says to us all, “I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich” (Revelation 3:18). Christ has all the blessings of the gospel, which are far more valuable than the gold of this world, and He is ready to give them to those who ask Him.

Sinners become rich indeed, when Christ becomes theirs through faith. Then they say with Paul, “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Philippians 3:8). All of them may say, “We didn’t know we were so spiritually poor until Christ came in the gospel to save us, and then He made us exceedingly rich”.

Seeking the Lord Early

1. Christ’s Love

J C Ryle

Ryle directed this address to children; probably he was including young people. But everyone, young and old, should be able to read it with profit. It is taken, with editing, from Ryle’s *Home Truths*, volume 5.

Proverbs 8:17. *I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me.*

I am going to talk to you about Jesus Christ and your souls. I want to make you happy. But I know that people are never really happy unless their souls are happy, and I am sure that people’s souls cannot be happy unless they love Jesus Christ. That is why I am going to preach to you now: I want to tell you something about Jesus Christ and your souls.

I hope you will all pay attention while I talk to you. I pray that the Spirit of God may come into your hearts and make you able to do so. Try to listen to me. Try to understand what I say. Try to remember something; carry it away in your minds. I wish to do you all a great deal of good. Do not forget I am specially preaching to you – not to the grown-up people, but to you.

Now just think what a pleasant text we have here. It says, “I love them that love Me; and those that seek me early shall find Me”. These are wonderful words indeed; and who do you think says them?

It is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. He is called “Wisdom” in this chapter. But we know it means Jesus Christ, for things are said about wisdom in this chapter which can only be said truly about Jesus Christ Himself. Come now and let us see what Jesus Christ says. Listen, for this is very important.

1. He tells us: “I love them that love Me”. Now what can we make of this? First of all, do you not think it is very nice to hear that there are people whom Jesus Christ *loves*? You know we all like to be loved in this world. Just think how disagreeable it would be for you and me if there was nobody alive who loved us. Suppose no man or woman cared a bit for us; suppose everybody neglected us and left us alone; what should we do? We should be wretched and miserable and unhappy! I am sure we all like to be loved.

Well then, just consider what a blessed thing it must be to be loved by Jesus Christ – by the Son of God Himself. You know that sometimes people love us in this world and yet can do nothing for us. Your father and mother love you, but perhaps they are poor and cannot buy what you need, or perhaps they are sick and can do nothing to help you.

But these are things that can never happen to Jesus Christ, and I will tell you why. Jesus Christ is *very great*. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is the Maker of all things. He is God Himself. He is Almighty. He is able to do anything that He likes. What a wonderful thing it must be to be loved by Jesus Christ!

Again, Jesus Christ is *very rich*. He has everything to give away which you can need, either for soul or body. He keeps the keys of heaven. He has an endless store of blessings in His treasure house, far more than I could describe. What a wonderful thing it must be to be loved by Jesus Christ!

Again, Jesus Christ is *very good*. He never refuses anyone who asks Him favours in a proper way. He was never known to say, No, to any person who made a prayer to Him with a meek and humble heart. What a wonderful thing it must be to be loved by Jesus Christ!

Consider these things. Do you want a *great* friend? Do you want a *rich* friend? Do you want a *kind* friend? Is this the sort of friend you would like? Then be sure there is no friend in all the world like Jesus Christ. There is no love so well worth having as the love of Jesus Christ. Blessed and happy are they whom Jesus Christ loves. I could not tell you a tenth part of all the great things He does for their souls.

He pardons all their sins. He forgives all the bad things they do. He washes them in His own blood, and makes them whiter than snow, so that not a spot remains. I think that is just what you and I need. We have all sinned many, many sins.

Besides, *He gives them power to become good*. He puts His Spirit in their hearts, and makes them love God's ways and walk in them. That too is just the thing you and I need. We have very bad, wicked hearts by nature. We can never love God's ways apart from His power.

Besides this, *He takes care that none whom He loves shall be lost*. He

keeps them as a shepherd keeps his sheep. He will not allow either wicked people or the devil to destroy their souls. That too is just what you and I need. We are all very weak, foolish creatures. We should never be safe if we are left to ourselves.

Lastly, *He is getting ready a place in heaven for those whom He loves.* He has a glorious house for them there, far away from sin and sorrow and trouble. That too is good news. Is it not pleasant for His people to think He has prepared a home for them, so that whenever they leave this world, they shall go to a place of peace and rest?

All these things the Lord Jesus Christ does for those whom He loves. Just look at them! What mighty things, what glorious things they are! He cleanses them from all their sins. He gives them power to be good. He takes care they are not lost, He gets ready a house for them in heaven.

This is love indeed. This is love worth having. Did I not tell you truly that there is nothing in all the world to be compared to Christ's love? There is nothing like being loved by Jesus Christ.

For Younger Readers

Writing the Whole New Testament

Long ago, a man in Ireland had no Bible in his own language. He could not find one anywhere. Then he heard that a rich man had a New Testament in Irish. The poor man went to ask if he could borrow the Testament; he wanted to copy it all out.

The rich man was afraid to give it to him. Perhaps he would not bring it back, the rich man thought. If the man kept the New Testament, the rich man would not be able to read from the Bible. Clearly he wanted to read what God is saying.

The rich man asked, "Where will you get the paper?"

The other man then answered, "I will buy it".

The rich man asked, "And the pens and ink?"

The poor man answered, "I will buy them". He then asked the rich man to allow him to come to the rich man's house and copy out the New Testament, bit by bit, during the evenings, after he had finished his work.

The rich man could see how earnest the other man was and said he could come. The poor man came evening after evening until he

finished copying out the whole New Testament. It must have taken him a very long time. How much he wanted to read the Bible!

Ask God to make you want to read the Bible. Always remember that God is speaking to you when you read it, and when you listen to someone else reading it.

God's Word Speaking

A young shop assistant once took up a page of the Bible. He was about to tear it in pieces, and use it in packing up some small parcel in the shop, when a friend said, "Do not tear that: it contains the word of eternal life".

The young man did not like being reproved, but he folded up the leaf from the Bible and put it in his pocket. Shortly after this, he said to himself: "Now I will see what kind of life it is of which this leaf speaks".

When he unfolded the leaf some time later, the first words that caught his eye were the last in the Book of Daniel: "But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days". He began at once to ask what he would have at the end of his days in this world, and the train of thought thus awakened in his mind led to his conversion.

Adapted from Cheering Words

For Junior Readers

The Seed Took Root

Do you know where the centre of Asia is? If you look on a map, you will find it near the Chinese city of Urumqi, in the far north of China, between Kazakhstan and Mongolia. This city is the most remote inland city in the world, farthest away from any sea. In past centuries it was a desolate place, where the trade routes of Asia crossed each other and where the only means of transport were camel caravans and mule carts.

A young Scottish missionary arrived in this area around 1890. His name was George Hunter and he felt called by God to be an evangelist. He moved about from place to place, carrying the good news of the gospel to the tribes who lived in these far-away places. The only way to spread the good seed of the Word was to carry it himself along the highways and byways, sharing it with all the people he met. This meant learning many languages as he met people from many different nations – for example: Chinese, Russians, Tibetans, Mongols, Turkmens.

He became known as the “Apostle of Turkestan”; he was a familiar figure on the trade routes in the summer months. Over the winter months, when the snow was thick on the ground and travelling was not possible, he concentrated on translating the Bible and tracts into the languages of the peoples he met. He gave the rest of his life to this missionary work, only returning once to Scotland. He died among Chinese Christians in 1946.

Because of the nature of Hunter’s travelling ministry, it was difficult to measure the results of sowing the precious seed over such a wide area. Often he would never again see the people he spoke to; many of them also were travelling to some other place, and it was unlikely that their paths would cross again. Yet occasionally he found proof that the seed sown had taken root and brought forth fruit.

In 1914 another missionary, Mr Moore, was travelling through north-west China. He stayed one night in a small village called Pulungi. As he was preaching on the street, telling the listeners the message of salvation, he noticed an old man trying to push his way into the crowd of listeners. He had a bright, happy face and was overheard saying, “Why, it’s just the same! There’s no difference. It’s exactly alike.” He repeated one of these sentences after almost everything the missionary said.

Later that evening there was a knock at the door of the house where Moore was staying. To his great surprise, Moore saw the old man who had been in the crowd. He had obviously managed to find out where the foreign teacher was staying.

As Moore began to tell him again of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, he listened very patiently and then exclaimed, “Truly we are brothers!”

The missionary then explained that the only true ground of brotherhood was to be brothers in Christ. “But”, the old man replied, “we are brothers because we worship the same God.”

“O,” asked the missionary in some surprise, “have you heard the gospel preached before?”

“No,” he answered, “I have never heard it preached.”

Moore then asked what he knew about Jesus and the gospel.

This is what the old man told him. “Seven or eight years ago a foreigner passed through our village on his way to Sinkiang. I had been working at the farm and was returning home late. When I was crossing the street, this foreigner called me and gave me a book and told me to take it home and read it. ‘It contains the true doctrine’, he said.

“He was an elderly man with a beard and I have never seen him again. But I took the book home and, as I read its pages, I destroyed my idols; I tore my household gods off the door and burned them, and cut off my

connections with the secret societies to which I belonged. Since then I have worshipped the God of that book.”

The astonished missionary asked for the name of the book that had so changed his life.

“It’s called John’s Gospel,” the man answered, “and when I heard you preach this evening, I was amazed that all you said was the same as in that book. There was no difference!”

The two men rejoiced together in the wonderful power of the Word of God, which is “quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword”. And the foreigner who gave him the book all these years before was George Hunter! Would he not also have rejoiced to hear such news, that the seed of the Word he had scattered had taken root and brought forth fruit in that old man’s heart?

J van Kralingen

Money or Prayer?

She was a really poor woman, but she was truly godly. She loved Jesus very much. But one day someone tempted her to live like ungodly people. He said to her: “Well, Betsy, if you won’t pray all day today, I’ll give you half a sovereign”. A half sovereign is a gold coin and it would now be worth at least £125. What a difference that would have made to old Betsy, who was so very poor!

But Betsy put first things first. Prayer was far more important to her than all the things that a half sovereign could buy. She could trust in God for everything she needed, and that trust expressed itself to God through prayer. So she told the man: “No, Sir, not for all the worlds this side heaven”. She could not give up praying, even for one day.

But, godly woman that she was, she had a proper love for the man’s soul. So she went on to say to him: “I’ll just go to ask the Lord to help you to believe on Him, and then you’ll love prayer as much as I do”. Her prayers were not selfish; she prayed for others as well as for herself. And, as here, I am sure she always prayed for people’s spiritual needs more than for what they needed for their bodies – important though these might be.

That is how it should be with us; we should remember Jesus’ words: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33) – all the things Jesus had been speaking about: the things that we need to eat and to drink and to keep ourselves warm. Betsy understood that. Let us ask God to teach us to seek the most important things in life first: the things that matter for our souls.

Scripture and Catechism Exercises

Overseas Prizes and Awards 2018-19

Senior Section

Prizes: *Auckland:* Monique Jago. *Beaver Falls:* Phinehas Kerr. *Chesley:* Abby Smith. *Grafton:* Vashti Zuill.

Awards: *Auckland:* James Campbell, Danielle Jago. *Grafton:* Andrew White.

Intermediate Section

Prizes: *Auckland:* Rachel Campbell, Diana Jago. *Connecticut:* Nathanael Mack. *Wisconsin:* Julia Smith.

Awards: *Auckland:* Abby de Bruin. *Grafton:* Ronnie Zuill. *Santa Fe:* Elijah Dawkins.

Junior Section

Prizes: *Auckland:* Amelia Smith. *Chesley:* Kara Zekveld. *Grafton:* William Marshall. *Santa Fe:* Claire Smith. *Wisconsin:* Jenna Smith.

Awards: *Auckland:* Megan de Bruin, John Campbell. *Castle Hill:* Jonathan Hickey. *Chesley:* Isabel Bouman. *Grafton:* Marcus Optland, Mahala Zuill. *Santa Fe:* Noah Dawkins.

Upper Primary Section

Prizes: *Auckland:* Bryce Jago. *Gisborne:* Shona Hembd. *Grafton:* Eden Optland, Gavin Wood. *Münster:* Clara Rösner.

Awards: *Auckland:* Peter Campbell, Aaron and Owen Smith. *Beaver Falls:* Othniel Kerr. *Chesley:* Hannah Bouman. *Grafton:* Levi Kidd, Shyla Hawkins, Eve Zuill. *Santa Fe:* Cameron Smith, Carl Smith, Olivia Smith.

Lower Primary Section

Awards: *Auckland:* Joseph Campbell, Laura and Maria Jago, Madyson Seegar, Keith Smith. *Beaver Falls:* Isabel Kerr. *Castle Hill:* Matthew Hickey. *Chesley:* Daniel Kuiper, Angela Tuinier. *Gisborne:* Brooklyn and Preston Hembd. *Grafton:* Harrison Kidd, Paton McAlpine, Leo Wood, Elijah Zuill. *Münster:* Conrad Rösner. *Santa Fe:* Adele and Alex Smith, Anastasia and Charlotte Smith, Louis Smith. *Sydney:* Abigail and Ethan MacDonald. *Wentworthville:* David and Sarah Steel.

Looking Around Us

“Girls Should Be Girls and Boys Should Be Boys”

About 150 parents and pupils staged a protest outside a secondary school a few months ago, over what have been described as gender-neutral uniforms. A school in Lewes, in East Sussex, decided earlier this year that all pupils – girls and boys – must wear trousers. This is not the first school to do so, but probably there has been more opposition to the move in Lewes.

A former pupil in the school, now a well-known TV presenter, supported the protesters. He said that the “gender-neutral craze” was out of control and that girls should be girls, and boys should be boys. The local MP commented, “Very disturbed to see the school turning away girls from Priory school because they choose to wear a skirt. . . . This is not how we should be treating the young women of Lewes.”

The school said “concerns” had been raised over the length of girls’ skirts. Some protesters said pupils should have a choice to wear skirts, while others

believed clothes are being wasted. One can understand why people are unhappy when, having spent money on clothes that were acceptable as school uniform, the policy is suddenly changed, and the girls feel they do not want to wear these particular clothes out of school. But, much more importantly, if we follow the Bible, we will realise that there ought to be a distinction between male clothes and female clothes: “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment” (Deuteronomy 22:5).

If girls were wearing skirts that were too short, that is a serious issue and the answer was to ban such clothes. Yet it is likely that the main reason was to stop girls dressing in a different way from boys. We should remember that God created mankind “male and female” (Genesis 1:27). In an ungodly age, people may try to get rid of the differences between men and women, boys and girls, but the distinction between them should be respected. People should not try to fight against God, yet that is what they are doing when they want to blur this distinction.

“The Wages of Sin”

This is the heading on the front page of a Scottish newspaper today. The article is about four people (mostly Slovakian) who were found guilty of treating very badly some women from Slovakia and selling them as if they were slaves. The three men and one woman are now to receive the wages – the consequences – of their wickedness: presumably lengthy jail sentences.

Most readers will likely recognise the headline as a quotation from the Bible (Romans 6:23) and that it points to the consequences of sins in a lost eternity: eternal death, which is separation for ever from God and from all possible blessings. This was why the rich man about whom Jesus spoke was pleading in hell for a single drop of water to cool his tongue (Luke 16:24).

It would be good if those who report for newspapers believed the Bible and its warnings, but presumably the person who chose the headline is thinking only of the prison term that he expects will be passed on the guilty. But we should realise that the wages of sin will be paid, not only to those who have committed crimes, but to all who do not begin to love God truly in this life. He calls sinners to repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ, who died in the place of sinners. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36). How urgently and earnestly we should seek the Saviour, while we still have the opportunity to do so.

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