

# 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*



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**Cover Picture:** Reflections at Munloch, on the Black Isle.

## The Young People’s Magazine

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

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# The Young People's Magazine

Volume 85

January 2020

Number 1

## Disciples: True Or Temporary?

Capernaum was a place of some importance beside the Sea of Galilee. Jesus performed many remarkable miracles there and often spoke to the people of the place in the wonderful way in which He used to teach those who heard Him.

One day Jesus was speaking to the people in the synagogue. At last they made it clear that they did not like what He was telling them; they called it “a hard saying” (John 6:60) and they asked, “Who can hear it?” They did not want to hear any more.

They are actually described as “disciples”. These were not among the twelve Disciples, like Peter and John; yet one might say they were pupils, or learners, in Christ’s school. They had been willing to spend time listening to what He had to say, but when He was speaking about people eating His flesh and drinking His blood, they did not understand Him. Did He mean that they must act like cannibals? Of course not; the people knew that this was not what Jesus meant. We are told that the people “strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us His flesh to eat?” (John 6:52). It seems they did not think of asking Jesus what He meant. Yet He knew what they were saying, and He went on to emphasise His teaching.

There are many lessons for us in this passage. But let us note this lesson first: how important it is, when we do not understand something in the Bible or in a sermon, that we should pray that Jesus would teach us what it means. How will He do so? Perhaps He will use something else that the minister may say as He explains the Bible. Or else He may help us to understand as we read the Bible ourselves, or hear it being read to us.

Always, if we are to get any spiritual good from the Bible, it must be because the Holy Spirit applies it to our souls. There is so much that we do not understand, but Christ is the great Prophet – the great Teacher revealed in the Bible – who is able to reach our souls with His teaching. Let us begin to ask Jesus to teach us all we need to know, and especially what we need to know so that we may set out on the way to heaven. And then let us keep on asking Him to teach us.

It is so important for us to understand what God is saying to us in the Bible. Not only that, but it is very important to believe these things, for they are all true and they are relevant to our lives here and relevant to where we will spend eternity. Further, it is not only important to believe all that God is saying to us in the Bible, but we must believe on Jesus Christ, as Paul and Silas told the jailer in Philippi: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). And when they spoke about believing on Christ, they meant *trusting* in Him – trusting in Him for salvation – as the One who came into the world to save sinners by dying in their place.

And what did Jesus mean by eating His flesh and drinking His blood? He pointed the people to His *flesh*, so that they would think of Him as One who, being the eternal Son of God, took human nature. He did this, so that He might die in the place of sinners. He pointed to His *blood* because, when He died, He poured out His blood. He spoke of His flesh and blood separately, which tells us that He is speaking about Himself as One who died, who died for sinners. And if we eat Christ's flesh and drink His blood, we are receiving Him by faith as the Saviour that He is, for He died in the place of sinners.

How can we know that this last sentence is right? If we turn to John 6:35, we read Jesus' words: "He that *cometh* to Me shall never hunger; and he that *believeth* on Me shall never thirst". Jesus is placing the two parts of this sentence side by side; He is saying that to believe on Him is the same as coming to Him. But further, what takes away thirst is the same as believing; in other words, *drinking His blood* is the same as believing on Him as the One who died for sinners. Again, what takes away hunger is the same as coming to Christ, which is to believe on Him; so *eating His flesh* is to believe on Him as the One who came into the world to save sinners. To eat Christ's flesh and to drink His blood is to *believe* on Him as the Saviour.

That is what the people could have found out if they had come to Jesus to ask Him what He meant. But they did not ask. Instead they rejected what Christ was saying. Though they had been described as disciples, they all walked out of Christ's school; they had no more interest in what He had to say. They were disciples, but their following of Christ was only temporary; they were not true disciples. This was a very dangerous position for these people to be in; it is just as dangerous today when temporary disciples walk away from Christ and the teaching He gives through the Bible, and through preaching that is based on the Bible.

Then Jesus turned to the twelve Disciples and asked them: "Will ye also go away?" (John 6:67). What He was asking was: Do you also *want* to go away? It was Peter who answered for the others: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." No matter where Peter or any of the

other true Disciples might go, no matter to whom they might turn, they could never find another Saviour, anyone who could take away their sin and bring them safely into eternity. So Peter did not want to go away; he wanted to stay with Jesus; he wanted to go on being a pupil in Christ's school; he wanted to learn from what Jesus would yet have to say. And when Peter said what he did, he was speaking for ten of the other Disciples.

We should be like Peter: we should want to learn from Jesus. If you, like Peter, are a true follower of Christ – if you have been converted – you *will* want to learn more and more from the great Teacher. That was why Mary of Bethany sat at Jesus' feet and listened to what He had to say (Luke 10:39). She loved Him; she loved to hear what He taught her. That is why God's people today keep on reading the Bible, though they may have read it lots of times already; and that is why they keep on going to church and listening to sermons. They know that there is so much that they still do not know.

Yes, they have a real knowledge of Christ and of the way of salvation, but there is much that they have not learned – so much that they should know but do not. And so they ask God to bless them when they are about to read the Bible and when they are to hear the preaching of the gospel. They pray that the Holy Spirit would apply to them the truths they read or hear, so that they may “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of [their] Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). They are true disciples and they want to learn.

If you are not converted, yet still come to church – if you have not given up on Christianity – you should still consider yourself a disciple, just as those listening to Jesus in the synagogue in Capernaum were called disciples. That means you should consider it your duty to learn from what He is teaching you through the Bible, in particular, and the sermons you hear.

You may say that there is so much you do not understand: about faith, about repentance and about many other things. But do you pray that Jesus, the great Teacher, would so teach you that you would begin to understand these things and trust in Him as the Saviour of sinners like you? Peter trusted in Jesus; so did all the other Disciples except Judas Iscariot. And Peter was right in claiming that they believed and were sure that Jesus was “the Son of the living God”, the true God.

How important for us today, in the face of all the unbelief around us and all the denial of the existence of God, to hold on to this: that Jesus is divine, that He came into the world to save sinners, that we – each and all of us – are sinners, and that we will perish for ever without Christ as our Saviour! He still calls to us to trust in Him: “*Come unto Me*, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). If you trust in Him you will be a true, not a temporary, disciple.

# John Calvin – His Life and Work

## 7. Opposition in Geneva

*Mr F R Daubney*

Last month's section spoke of Calvin's great work in Geneva, not least in opposing the false teaching of Rome – and in particular, about the mass.

An issue which occurred quite early in Calvin's time in Geneva caused him a great deal of distress. A rector was needed for the College in Geneva, and Calvin chose a young man called Sebastian Castellio for the post. But soon Calvin had cause to repent of his choice.

The young man was quarrelsome and made enemies. He had been in Geneva only a year when he fell out with his in-laws over his wife's dowry; this led to scandal and injured the prestige of the school. He was also involved in on-going quarrels with the teachers. Castellio wanted to translate the New Testament into popular language which was easy to understand. But where an expression was lacking in the dialect, he coined one himself.

He sent a few chapters to Calvin who replied, "This is in need of a number of improvements. Look, instead of the Holy Spirit 'dwells in us', you translate He 'visits us'." A long discussion followed, until Castellio finally understood his mistake. Then he wanted Calvin to set aside some hours each week, when they could read the translation together. Calvin could not promise to do this as he was too busy with other things. Castellio was greatly disappointed and began to bear resentment.

Finally, because of his quarrelsomeness and a dispute about his salary, he was required to resign as rector. He applied to be a pastor but, because he had moved away from the teaching of the Church, he was unsuccessful. Calvin tried to find him a post elsewhere but did not succeed. At last, the Council ordered Castellio to leave Geneva. He spent many years in Basel, where, to earn a living, he eventually had to collect driftwood from the Rhine. His own quarrelsomeness had robbed him of success, but he considered Calvin the cause of all his troubles and became one of his most embittered enemies.

Trial followed trial for Calvin, most of which were caused by the Libertines, who were again gaining a prominent position in the Councils of Geneva. At every opportunity they resisted the Evangelicals, especially Calvin. They were mainly the old Genevans, who called themselves patriots and regarded the preachers, who were mostly French, foreign oppressors of their personal liberties.

In Calvin's earlier years, back in 1534, when he had first written his

*Institutes* a man called Michael Servetus, who held heretical views – views that were completely unscriptural – wanted to debate with the Reformer; but he did not turn up at the appointed time. The man had made a complete nuisance of himself in Strasbourg, Basel and Berne. He wrote to Calvin many times asking for his views on points of doctrine such as the Sonship of Christ, baptismal regeneration and the kingdom of God. He was dissatisfied and disputed with great rudeness.

Calvin sent him a copy of the *Institutes*, where his doctrines were set out fully, and it was returned, covered with scribbled notes. Servetus changed his name to de Villeneuve, but Calvin was fully aware of who he was. In 1552, Servetus produced a book called *A Restitution of Christianity*, in which he mocks the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine that Christ is God, justification by faith and infant baptism. In presenting his views, he managed to offend both Rome and the Reformers.

De Villeneuve was physician to the Archbishop of Vienne, near Lyon in France, and it was here that his book was published. Some of the Reformers knew who he was, and he was exposed by a visitor from Geneva, Guillaume de Trie. De Trie was pressed by the Roman authorities for proof and felt that his life was threatened; so he pleaded with Calvin to send letters to prove the identity of Servetus. With great reluctance Calvin agreed; he wanted nothing to do with the Roman authorities and did not believe it was his duty to “pursue heretics with the sword”. Inevitably, Calvin’s enemies argued gleefully that he had handed Servetus over to the Inquisition.

De Villeneuve was brought before the Inquisitor General, and he denied that he was Servetus and everything he was accused of. During an overnight break in the proceedings he managed to escape and flee. In his absence he was condemned to death by burning, and his effigy was burned at the stake. He was on the run for a month and then, strangely, turned up in Geneva where he was recognised and arrested.

The Genevan Tribunal called Calvin to witness against him and it turned into a debate. Calvin showed moderation, argumentative power and self-control; Servetus was abusive and full of personal hatred towards his enemy. He also had the support of the Libertines who hoped to use him to bring down the Reformer. The Tribunal gave the statement of Servetus’s errors to the Swiss states of Berne, Basel, Zurich and Schaffhausen; they unanimously declared against the heretic, saying he should be put to death. The law treated heresy as treason, punishable by burning and, though Calvin and his fellow ministers, including Farel, petitioned the Council to substitute the sword for the stake, they were inflexible, and Servetus was put to death on 27 October 1553.

The Servetus affair has generally been regarded as the darkest blot on Calvin's career. However, Felice, the historian of French Protestantism said, "It was not Calvin who set up the stake of Michael Servetus; it was the whole sixteenth century".

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## What Is a Soldier's Goodness?

It was after the Battle of Waterloo, which brought war between Britain and France to an end. Napoleon, the French leader, had been defeated and many of the British soldiers were being allowed to leave the army and make their way home.

One such soldier was middle-aged; he was disabled because somehow his leg had been badly crushed. With the help of a crutch he approached a stage-coach standing outside an inn in Bishopsgate, London. A tall man was sitting on top of the coach; he could see that the soldier would have great difficulty climbing up. So he came down quickly and helped the soldier get to a seat beside him. As they talked, the tall man learned that the soldier was on his way home to live with his two daughters after serving in the army. "I have enough to live on," the soldier went on, "and my daughters are good, steady girls; so I'm sure of a good home – though I had rather be at work again if my leg would let me."

The tall man expressed sympathy. He then spoke about being in the services himself; he was under a splendid commander and received very good pay. What he meant was that he was in the service of Christ, who was very good to him and gave him many blessings. The soldier was interested and he took some time to realise that the tall man was speaking about his religion. In fact he was a minister. The soldier did not welcome this way of speaking, and muttered that he wanted to have nothing to do with ministers. But there was no possibility of getting away; he had no option but to listen as the minister, whose name was Hart, explained the gospel to him.

When the men reached their destination they both came down from the coach. As the minister said goodbye, he handed the soldier some tracts and asked him to read them. "Then you will see", he added, "what a happy thing it would be for you as well as for me to receive mercy in Christ." The soldier accepted the tracts and stuffed them into his coat pocket.

Then the soldier saw his daughters Mary and Jenny approaching and was glad to turn away from the minister and speak to them. They worked hard, making clothes in their home for a living. Their father liked their house, but he often suffered severe pain in his leg; he complained a lot and could



be quite unreasonable. Mary and Jenny's mother, the soldier's wife, was a godly woman and she brought up her daughters well, but it seems that she had died. The daughters too were followers of Christ and they were very patient in reacting to their father's complaints; they always tried hard to make him comfortable.

One day when Mary came home, Jenny said to her: "See what I've found in Father's pocket!" And she showed her sister the bundle of tracts. Jenny had been giving her father's coat a shake outside. As she did so, the tracts fell out. She could see that he had not read them; they were so clean inside. The sisters looked at each other. Then Jenny said, "Let's tell Father we've found them; then we'd have a chance to talk about these things".

Mary thought differently; she said, "Put them back in the pocket again; he'll only be angry if he thinks we are trying to teach him". But no doubt they were both praying for him.

It was Wednesday, when Mary and Jenny always tried to attend the evening service in the church. A cold east wind was blowing and their father's leg was particularly sore. He had been very unreasonable that day, again and again interrupting his daughters as they tried to work. When the time for the service came, Mary offered to stay in and look after their father leaving Jenny free to go to church.

Some time later, the old soldier asked Mary why she had not gone to church, as he expected they both would. Mary answered him pleasantly, as she always tried to do, even when he was grumbling.

"It's chilly tonight," said the old soldier; "I'll have my greatcoat, I think." Mary got up at once to fetch it, and as her father pulled it over him, he said, "This is a good warm coat, nice and roomy".

Then he began to feel all the pockets. Mary kept an eye on him as she went on with her work. He pulled out the tracts, looking puzzled. He looked at them and seemed as if he was going to throw them into the fire. Then he changed his mind and examined them slowly. He put them all back and became very quiet. Mary went on sewing.

At last her father asked, "How long have you and Jenny taken to church-going and that?" Mary pointed out: "It was Mother taught us to care for our souls; that's why we go to church".

The old soldier answered, "Ah yes, I know your mother was that way". Then, after some time, he began to speak about these times in the past: "Your mother was a good woman and she bred you up right". "But there's different ways of being good," he claimed, "and a soldier's goodness lies in fighting for his country."

"What kind of goodness did you mean, Father?" Mary asked quietly.

"Goodness? Why, if I'm good, I'm good; and there is an end to it. What have you to say against that?"

"I only meant: I might be a good dressmaker, but not a good woman."

"You mean, I might be a good soldier and not a good man," he answered rather sharply.

Mary gave a gentle answer: "I'm not speaking of you, Father. But surely some soldiers might be very wicked men." And she spoke about some soldiers who had attacked her minister, when he tried to put a man out of a pub one evening; he did so because the man was spending all his money there, while his wife and children were starving.

The father asked about the minister and Mary told him that he was "Mr Hart . . . the one Jenny's gone to hear tonight".

Her father then asked, "What's he like to look at?"

"Very tall, greyish hair, and such a kind, firm face."

The old soldier said no more, but he was quite sure that he was the man who had given him the tracts. He took one out and read it in silence.

When Jenny came home she was interested to hear what had happened. But they were both surprised when, on the next Sabbath morning, their father put on his best clothes and told them that he had a mind to go to church with them. Afterwards he said nothing about the service. But on the next Wednesday, although his daughters were not able to attend the service, he went out. When he returned, he told them: "Girls, I've been to church, thought I'd pass the time there while you were so busy".

From then on, he always went to church with Mary and Jenny. He said very little, but they noticed that he often spent time alone in his bedroom and that the Bible they had put on his table did not stay in the same place. No doubt they concluded that he was spending time in prayer and reading the Bible.

On a Wednesday evening, the three of them were ready to set out for the church service when an old comrade of the soldier came in, ready to sit down and talk. "Can't wait to talk now; I'm going to the lecture;" the soldier told him.

"Whatever's that?" the visitor asked.

The soldier explained, "It's a sermon and prayers at the church. Do you good to come too."

"Not me," answered the visitor with a sneer; "I'll come back another day when you're not going to church."

After the service, the old soldier followed the minister into the vestry and reminded him of the day when they travelled together on the stagecoach. He said that the tracts and his daughters' behaviour had led him to study the

Bible. He went on: "It was your preaching that brought me to understand, and I just want to thank you. But I have indeed found mercy in Christ, like you said to me that night." The two men spoke for some time and it was clear to the minister that here was indeed a man who was completely changed: his pride and self-righteousness had gone and now he humbly rejoiced in the forgiveness of his sins and peace with God, which he experienced because of the Lord's Jesus Christ's atoning death.

Mary and Jenny now realised that it was their minister who had given their father the tracts. Looking back with thankfulness to God, they noted the various little happenings that had led to their father's conversion. They noted too that all these things happened in God's providence. He orders everything that takes place, especially what leads on to the conversion of a sinner.

Their father grew in grace as time went on, and he used to visit sick people and read to them from the Bible. He had received good from God's book and, no doubt, he wished that others would get good from it also.

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## Almost Too Late

The woman worked as a nurse; she also seems to have been employed to read the Bible to her patients. One day she was asked to see a man who had a serious problem in his lungs. When she went a second time, she found him much worse. She spoke to him about his soul and begged him to seek the Saviour while He might be found.

The man said unbelievably: "Ah no, Christ would not listen to me now. I have been too wicked and loved pleasure and drink, all my life long, and never thought of death, and perhaps I might not even die this time."

"Perhaps not," the nurse said, "but perhaps you may. It is high time you did think. Do you say the Lord would not listen to you? Do you know the story of the thief upon the cross?"

Just then his wife came in and saw his anxious face and his shortness of breath. She said to the woman: "Now you had better go. I told you not to talk to him about religion. I don't want him made unhappy, poor fellow."

The nurse thought it better to leave at once and the man's wife did not allow her to see him again while he was alive. He died three days later and she heard, to her great joy, that the Lord had laid hold of him through what she had said. She had seen his eight-year-old boy, William, listening very earnestly when she was in the room speaking to his father.

Afterwards the father asked, "What did she say about that thief upon the cross? Do you know anything about him?"

“Yes, Father,” said the boy, “and I know about where to find him” – to find the story about him in the Bible. “I have read about him at school; shall I read to you about him now?”

William told all this to a boy who lived nearby; this other boy told his mother, who told the nurse. The father did send for the nurse, but the message did not reach her until it was too late.

But two or three days later she met William and asked him about his father. He told her: “He wanted you, but Mother would not let me come. She said you made Father unhappy, but I read to him about the thief upon the cross many times. He was never tired of hearing, and at last he said, ‘William, can you pray about it?’ So I knelt down and asked Jesus to make Father believe that He could forgive him too.”

On the Sabbath morning, the man said, “William, it’s all right. Jesus has taken away all my sins. Let us kneel down and thank Jesus.”

William went on: “So he got out of bed and knelt down with me, and soon after went to sleep, and Jesus took him. Poor father!”

The man was brought to seek the Lord in time. But how close he was to being too late! Remember what God says, “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:6,7). *The story is adapted from Cheering Words*

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For Junior Readers

## Happy New Year

**H**ow many people have said, “Happy New Year”, to you recently? Probably quite a lot! What do you think they meant by happiness? What do you think would make you happy?

Lots of people in the world think that being rich would make them happy; others that being successful – having some great job – would make them happy; others that obtaining something they do not have, perhaps a husband or a wife, would make them happy. But what does the Bible tell us about happiness? Surely that is what matters!

In Deuteronomy 33 Moses is blessing the Children of Israel before his death, and he finishes with these words, “*Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord?*” (verse 29). To be saved by the Lord, that is what would bring you happiness – happiness that will last, not only for this life but to all eternity. Surely to seek the salvation of your never-

dying soul should be the important thing on your mind for this year!

David also speaks of true happiness in the Psalms: “*Happy* is that people *whose God is the Lord*” (Psalm 144:15); “*Happy* is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, *whose hope is in the Lord his God*” (Psalm 146:5); and, “Blessed is every one *that feareth the Lord, that walketh in His ways . . . happy* shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee” (Psalm 128:1,2). So to know God as your Lord, to trust Him, to fear Him and to live according to the Bible is the way to be truly happy.

Solomon also talks about true happiness, in the Book of Proverbs: “*Happy* is the man *that findeth wisdom*, and the man *that getteth understanding*” (3:13) – that is, spiritual wisdom and spiritual understanding; “*whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy* is he” (16:20); and “*he that keepeth the law happy* is he” (29:18). So to become spiritually wise, trusting the Lord in everything, and keeping God’s commandments will bring happiness, true happiness, however much worldly people may mock you for it.

The godly minister J C Ryle once met a young girl on a train to London. She was travelling alone, without any family or friend, and she was blind. She asked him how many people were in their carriage as she could not even make out people around her. But, in spite of this, she did not seem unhappy. Ryle began to chat to her. She said she wasn’t frightened of travelling alone, that she trusted in God and that people were always kind to her. As they talked, he found out that she knew the Lord and understood and remembered a lot of the Bible, although she had never been able to read it with her own eyes. He then took out his Bible and read her some chapters as the train went along.

After telling the children in his congregation about her, he asked them: “Are you as happy and as cheerful as she was? You are not blind; you have eyes and can run about and see everything, and go where you like, and read as much as you please to yourselves. But are you as happy as this poor little girl? O if you wish to be happy in this world, remember my advice today: do as the little blind girl did! Remember the promise, “*I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me*” (Proverbs 8:17).”

(Perhaps you could copy out these verses that tell you about true happiness and try to remember them in the year that lies ahead.) *J van Kralingen*

*For Younger Readers*

## The Long Psalm

There was once an old lady who had lived for 91 years; she knew the whole of Psalm 119. It is a very long psalm. Do you know how long it

is? It has 176 verses. And the lady had learned them all when she was a girl, when she was just 10.

Sometimes at night the old lady could not sleep. What did she do? She repeated Psalm 119 to herself; so she did not feel weary. I hope she thought about what the psalm means and worshipped God as she repeated it.

She learned it when she was young and she never forgot it. I hope too that you will try to learn verses from the Psalms and other parts of the Bible.

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## Seeking the Lord Early

### 2. Who Love Jesus Christ?

*J C Ryle*

Ryle directed this address to children; probably he was including young people. It is taken, with editing, from Ryle's *Home Truths*, volume 5. The first piece in this series appeared last November and spoke about Jesus Christ's love.

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

**L**et us see next who they are that Jesus Christ loves. He tells us in our text. He says, "I love those *that love Me*".

Now how shall we know whether we love Jesus Christ or not? This is indeed an important question. Are there no marks or signs, perhaps you will say, by which those who love Him may be found out? Yes, I think there are, and I shall now try to show you what those marks and signs are.

Remember then, for one thing, *those who love Jesus Christ believe whatever He says in the Bible*. The Bible says we are all sinners – lost, perishing sinners – full of wickedness and deceit, deserving nothing but God's anger. Many people do not quite believe this. They cannot bring themselves to think they are so bad. They dislike being told about it. Not so those who love Jesus Christ; they believe it all. They are ready to say it is true, true, quite true.

Again, the Bible tells us, we must come to Christ and trust only in Him, if we would be saved. It says that nothing but His blood can wash away our sins, that it is only for His sake that anyone can be forgiven. Many people will not believe this either. They believe their own goodness will help to get them to heaven. But those who love Jesus Christ believe all the Bible says. They take the Lord at His word. They leave off trusting in their own goodness and are ready to say, None but Christ, none but Christ is my hope.

No one can love Jesus Christ who does not believe what He says. Think what a sad thing it would be if you and I could not get our relations to believe us. Think how hard and unkind it would seem if they were to say,

We do not depend at all on what you tell us; we cannot trust what you say. I am sure we will suppose they no longer love us. This then is one mark of those who love Jesus Christ: they never doubt what He tells them; they believe every word.

Remember, for another thing, *those who love Jesus Christ try to please Him*. When you love people in this world, you know you try to please them. You try to do what they tell you, to behave as they wish you, to remember what they teach you. And why do you do so? Because you love them.

Besides this, you try and please them, not only before their faces, when they can see you, but also when they have gone away and are out of sight. True love makes you always think, What would my friends like me to do? If your father and mother found you doing naughty things – doing what they told you not to do – might they not well say, I am afraid you do not really love me? Yes, indeed they might. True love will always cause true obedience, and the Bible says, “Even a child is known by his doings” (Proverbs 20:11).

Now just as you try to please your friends, if you love them, so do those who love Jesus Christ try to please Him. They are always trying to do His will, to keep His laws, to obey His commandments. They do not think any of Christ’s commands severe. They never say that His laws are hard, strict and disagreeable. It is their delight to walk in His paths.

No man or woman or child can really love Jesus Christ if they do not try to obey Him. “Ye are my friends,” He says, “if ye do whatsoever I command you.” This then is another sure mark of those who love Jesus Christ: they try to please Him in all things.

Now we have got through one part of our text. Sit still and think for a moment about what you have heard. Let each of you ask your own heart this little question, Do I love Jesus Christ or not? Do I believe what He says? Do I try to please Him?”

Those who can answer, Yes, are the children He loves. Remember what He says: “I love those that love Me”.

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## Reasons for Using the Psalms in Praise

**H**is young people once asked W J Robinson, who belonged to a Presbyterian Church in America, to give reasons for only singing Psalms in the worship of God. Here are some of his reasons. They are taken, with editing, from *The Young People’s Magazine* for September 1937.

1. God has given us a book of Psalms to be sung in worship.
2. He has given us no other book of praise.

3. He has commanded us to sing these in worship.
  4. He has not commanded us to sing any other songs.
  5. The Psalms are inspired, and so the best and safest.
  6. They are adapted to all the uses of praise, and so are sufficient.
  7. So we do not need any others.
  8. We have the example of the great Divine Teacher, for He and His disciples sang them.
  9. They formed the only Psalm book of the Church until after the days of the teaching of the Apostles, men who were inspired to write Scripture.
  10. They do not belong to any denomination; they are the only union songs of praise which the Church possesses.
  11. The Psalms are easily put in a form for singing.
  12. The more we sing them, the better we understand them, and the more fully our hearts and minds approve of them.
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## Life of David, Sweet Psalmist of Israel

### 2. Saul and David

*Dr R J Dickie*

Last month's part of this Youth Conference paper told about David's background, and how and why he was appointed king of Israel – though he did not begin to rule till King Saul died.

**D**avid and Goliath. We next meet David in the war with the Philistines. The opposing armies were pitched in array against each other across a valley and Goliath scornfully challenged the Israelites to produce a man who would decide the war by one-to-one combat. David's three eldest brothers had followed Saul to the battle. In those days, there were no standing armies, and the prolonged absence of these three brothers no doubt affected the household of Jesse. This may be why "David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem" rather than joining his brothers in the army.

Jesse had a concern for the men who were fighting with Saul and his troops in the valley of Elah. He sent David to his brothers with an ephah of parched corn, ten loaves, and with ten cheeses to the captain of their thousand. And he asked David to check on the welfare of his three elder brothers.

The skilled Israelite warriors had cowered in fear for 40 days, and David volunteered to take on Goliath. This was despite the scorn of his eldest brother Eliab and the fears of Saul. When David came to Saul, he spoke of killing a lion and a bear. David trusted in the Lord: "He will deliver me out of the



hand of this Philistine”, and he was not afraid to declare that to Saul: “I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts”.

David discarded the armour which Saul provided. He put a smooth stone from the brook into his sling. His aim was accurate. The stone penetrated the thick bone of Goliath’s forehead and killed the giant instantly. David beheaded Goliath and presented the head to Saul, but kept Goliath’s heavy armour, which weighed around 9 stones (56 kg).

Abner was the cousin of Saul and his commander-in-chief, who took David to Saul. Saul asked David: “Whose son art thou, thou young man?” Some people have perplexed themselves by wondering how Saul did not recognise David and have concluded that David’s appearance changed from the last time Saul saw him. But the enquiry was not about David’s identity – it was about his forebears, as we see from David’s answer: “I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite”.

After this, David formed a close friendship with Saul’s eldest son Jonathan, and Saul honoured David by appointing him to command the men of war. David may well have wondered how he himself would become king, when his new friend Jonathan and his three brothers were in line to the throne if Saul died.

**Saul’s jealousy.** David was “accepted in the sight of all the people” and was so successful in battle against the Philistines that his victory was described as “the slaughter of the Philistines”. The praise of the women angered Saul, when they sang, “Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands”. Jealousy turned to murderous intent, and Saul twice tried to kill David.

Remarkably, David stayed with Saul, and Saul offered him his own daughter, Merab, as a wife, on condition that David would be valiant for Saul and fight the Lord’s battles. Saul hoped David would be killed but did not wish to do it himself. This same sinful conduct was repeated when David sent Uriah to battle so that he could marry Bathsheba, trying to conceal his adultery with her.

Saul later went back on his promise and gave Merab to Adriel the Meholathite, likely to anger David, and he offered David his second daughter, Michal, for the base reason that she would “be a snare to him and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him”, showing that his murderous intent knew no bounds. David was the eighth son of Jesse and therefore in reality had no personal riches, even if his father died. Saul set David the task of killing 100 Philistines. Saul’s wicked purpose was frustrated when David and his men killed twice as many as Saul demanded.

Saul’s consuming jealousy of David grew, and he asked his son Jonathan to kill David. Jonathan hid David instead. He then went to his father and

convinced Saul not to kill David. Saul gave his promise, and David returned to his service. Treacherous Saul broke that promise, sending men to David's house to slay him, but Michal helped David to escape away to the prophet Samuel in Ramah.

Alone and destitute, David reached the priestly sanctuary at Nob near Jerusalem, where the priest Ahimelech fed David and gave him a weapon, the sword of Goliath. Saul sent Doeg the Edomite to kill 85 of the city's priests and Doeg went on to slaughter "men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep". News of this caused David great grief. **David as a fugitive.** David gained the support of 600 men, and they travelled from city to city. Despite delivering Keilah from the Philistines, its citizens conspired to betray him to Saul. Becoming king must have seemed a very distant prospect to him as he went from one place to another in the Judaeen mountains and the woods of Ziph. The Ziphites also plotted to betray David to Saul and he moved on, after bidding his last farewell to Jonathan. David hid in the strongholds of Engedi (1 Samuel 23:29, 24:1) and Saul pursued him with no fewer than 3000 men "upon the rocks of the wild goats" (1 Samuel 24:2).

We see that David was content to wait on the Lord's time for becoming king and refused to take steps to kill Saul. At one point, in Engedi, Saul went to sleep in a cave, unaware that David and his men were deeper in the cave. David crept up on Saul, but instead of killing him, he cut the skirt from Saul's robe and next morning he confronted Saul. Saul broke down and confessed that "thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil". Saul admitted that David would one day be king and asked David to swear that he would not destroy Saul's descendants or wipe out his name. David solemnly swore to this, but it did not stop Saul from continuing to pursue him. On another occasion, David again spared the life of Saul, taking the king's spear and cruse of water as he slept.

**David in the service of the Philistines.** Finally, David and his supporters joined the service of Achish, the Philistine king of Gath, who entrusted David with control of the city of Ziklag. This was an extraordinary situation: not only that David was fighting as a mercenary for Israel's bitter enemies, but also that Achish accepted a man who had slaughtered so many Philistines in the past. Perhaps unsurprisingly in these circumstances, some Philistines doubted the loyalty of David and his men in a forthcoming battle. David and his men returned to Ziklag, only to discover that the Amalekites had raided the town in their absence, carrying off the women and children. David found the Amalekites and slaughtered most of them. He was able to recover the women and children unharmed.

# Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2019-20

## UK Names for Exercise 1

**Intermediate Section:** *Barnoldswick:* Calvin Middleton. *Dingwall:* Lydia Ross. *Glasgow:* Cameron Ross. *Halkirk:* Nicole Campbell, Annelise Hymers-Mackintosh, Sarah Stewart. *Llanelli:* Jonathan Cran. *London:* Sarah Munns. *North Tolsta:* Angus Morrison. *Trowbridge:* Samuel Broome.

**Junior Section:** *Barnoldswick:* Isaac and Jael Fisher, Bethan Middleton, Daniel van Essen. *Dingwall:* Catherine Campbell, Thomas Ross. *Glasgow:* Elena MacLennan, Hugh Ross. *Halkirk:* Donald MacLean. *Inverness:* Jenna Campbell. *Llanelli:* Carys Cran. *North Tolsta:* Uilleam Morrison. *Southampton:* Chloe Wilkins. *Ullapool:* Tacita Angell.

**Upper Primary Section:** *Aberdeen:* Julia Macleod. *Barnoldswick:* Ruth Fisher, Sam van Essen. *Edinburgh:* Anna Cameron-Mackintosh, Beth Dickie. *Glasgow:* Sarita Fraser, Violet Marr, Shona Ross. *Halkirk:* Grace Maclean, Fraser Stewart. *Inverness:* Susanna Campbell, Murray Dickie, James Maton, Callum Arie Morrison. *Llanelli:* Carwyn Cran. *London:* Anna McSeveney.

**Lower Primary Section:** *Aberdeen:* Kenneth Macleod, Cassia Soni. *Barnoldswick:* Talitha Fisher, Susannah Middleton, Alexia van Essen. *Beaulieu:* Rebekka Fraser, Hudson Maclean. *Dingwall:* Neil and Heather Campbell, Iain and Mairi MacColl. *Edinburgh:* Anderson and Samuel Dickie, Alec and Julia Cameron-Mackintosh, Darcy and Joella Esson, Alice and Leah Hicklin, Finlay Morrison. *Glasgow:* Christianna and Victoria Fraser, Evan and Joel Marr. *Halkirk:* Angus Hymers-Mackintosh, Catriona Maclean, Sophie Stewart. *Inverness:* Campbell Dickie, Annamarie Morrison. *Llanelli:* Sarah Cran. *London:* Ernest Campbell, Andrew and Daniel Macleod. *North Harris:* Finlay Jardine. *North Tolsta:* Rebecca and James Morrison. *North Uist:* Katie MacDonald. *Stornoway:* Calum Murray.

## Selling the Lord

It may not be for silver,  
 It may not be for gold,  
 But still by tens of thousands  
 Is this precious Saviour sold;  
 Sold for a godless friendship,  
     Sold for a selfish aim,  
     Sold for a fleeting trifle,  
     Sold for an empty name;  
 Sold where the awful bargain  
 None but God's eye can see.  
 Ponder, my soul, the question:  
     Shall He be sold by thee?  
     Sold, and a recording angel  
     Sets down the fatal choice.  
 Sold, but the price of the Saviour  
     To a burning coal shall turn,  
 With the pangs of remorse for ever,  
     Deep in the soul to burn.

Anon, YPM 1936

# Looking Around Us

## A Godly Government?

Tomorrow the United Kingdom will vote for a new government. By the time the result of the election is known, this magazine should be at the printers, God willing. As the campaign draws to a close, one thinks of the many statements politicians have made and the great promises that they have given also, and one fears that a lot of them are not very close to the truth. Even if promises are sincerely meant, it often happens that, when the time comes to keep them, it is impossible to do so. That is why we are encouraged to say, “If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that” (James 4:15).

We do not need to expect many politicians in Britain today to refer to God and to the teachings of the Bible in any submissive way. We may long for a time when we would have godly members of parliament in this and other nations and to have godly men and women in places of influence in every part of society. Yet we might feel that this is to look for the impossible.

Yet we should not despair of this, for there is no limit on God’s power; there never was, and there never will be. Pharaoh was very powerful in Egypt but he was not all-powerful. He could not resist God’s purposes. In the end he had to let the Children of Israel go free, no matter how long he tried to keep them as his slaves.

If we confine our thoughts to the human level, we must assume that we will not see a godly government in the UK or anywhere else – certainly not any time soon. But we should look up and remember God’s unlimited power. He is able to roll back the power of ungodliness and raise up a godly government – a government whose ministers would seek God’s glory in what they do, who would be guided by scriptural principles in the laws that they propose, and would have an eye to the spiritual good of the people more than their outward prosperity. May the Lord hasten it in His time!

### 2020 UK Youth Conference

This year’s Youth Conference will be held, God willing, at Strathallan School, Forgandenny, Perth, PH2 9EG, from Tuesday, April 7, to Thursday, April 9. Further details should appear in next month’s *Young People’s Magazine*.

Price £1.00