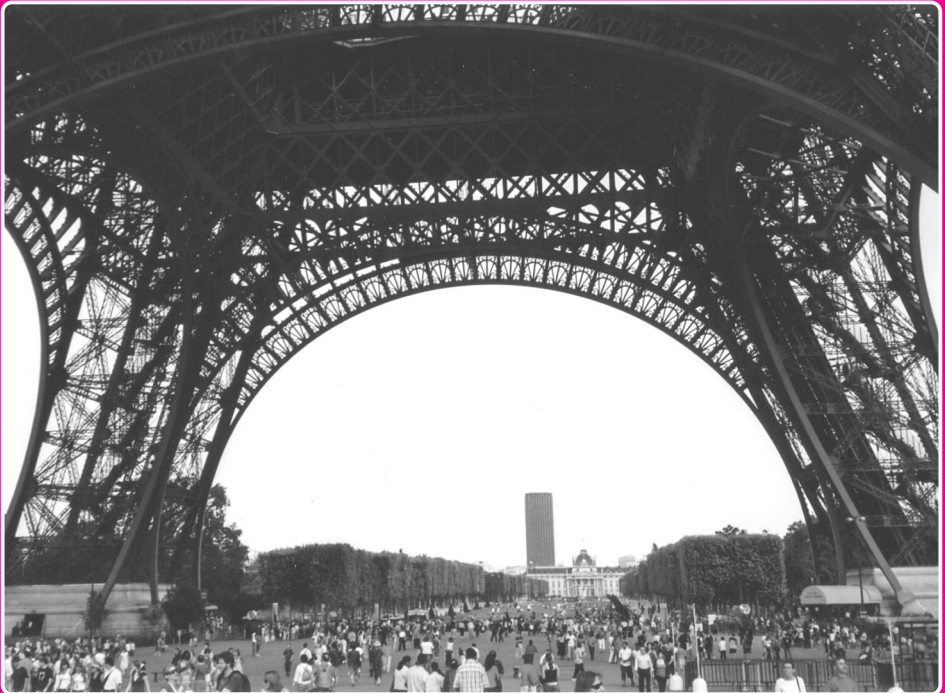


The Young People's Magazine

**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



April 2020

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The Young People's Magazine

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Remember Eternity

John Brown became a minister in Whitburn, a town halfway between Glasgow and Edinburgh, in 1777. His father is better known; he also was called John Brown, a minister in Haddington, a town east of Edinburgh (there was a series of articles about the father in this *Magazine* during 2015 and 2016). Both young John's father and mother were godly. Even when the son was just a boy, he liked to spend time with old Christians. His younger brother Ebenezer said afterwards that, while he was playing with other boys on the street, John was often speaking with these Christians about spiritual matters and joining them in prayer.

John himself wrote later in life: "It is long since, when a boy, that word 'Jehovah-Jireh' [a name of God, which means: 'The Lord will provide'] was made very sweet to me and I have often seen it performed". He was acknowledging that the Lord had often provided for him, as He had promised. What is said about John Brown points to him having been converted when he was young. What a blessing that was for him!

When John was only about 17, his mother died. Not long before then, when he was already a university student, she had written to him: "Youth is a precious time; let it not slip [away] without being concerned that Christ be yours, and you his". What good advice for young people today!

It is not surprising that such a man would, after he became a minister, take a real interest in the children in his congregation. When leaving a house where there were children, he would tell their mother particularly: "Now mind these children; mind their eternal interests". He wanted the mother – and the father too, of course – to remember the children and their spiritual needs, especially in view of eternity. And we can be sure that John Brown would have wished children and young people to remember the needs of their own souls, and everybody else to do so too.

1. We are to remember that there is an *eternity* ahead of us all. We must die, but that is not the end of our existence. We must exist for ever; no matter how long we have already lived, our existence will never come to an end.

And where will we live out our existence? Either in heaven or in hell,

either in the complete blessedness of heaven, or in the total awfulness of hell under the curse of God because of sin.

2. So we need to remember that we must *prepare* for eternity; we must be ready to die, because after death there is no further opportunity to prepare. It is in this life that we must find Christ, and salvation through Him; we will have no further opportunity to do so after we pass from this world. And we need to remember that we cannot possibly know when we will die; it might happen far sooner than we expect.

Let us remember too that we do not have the power to make ourselves fit for heaven. The Bible makes it plain that “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in [God’s] sight” (Romans 3:20). In other words, no matter how well we may keep the law of God, God cannot accept us as righteous. That is because, no matter how hard we try, we cannot keep God’s law perfectly, and perfection is the standard that a perfectly-holy God must apply to us.

We need someone whom God can accept in our place – someone who can keep the law perfectly and who can pay the penalty in our place because of all the sins that we have committed against God and His law. And the only one whom God can accept in our place is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who kept the law perfectly in the place of sinners and who suffered and died to pay the penalty for their sin. He is a perfect Saviour.

But how can we benefit from what Christ has done? We are called to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and . . . be saved” (Acts 16:31). We are to receive as absolute truth what the Bible tells us about Jesus Christ and we are to trust in Him to save us. Remember His promise, “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37); it is impossible that Christ will turn away anyone who comes to Him – that is, anyone who believes on Him.

3. Remember that you need to *hear* the truths about eternity, and about how you may become ready to enter eternity. So remember your need to go to church – absolutely whenever you are able – in order that you may hear the truths about sin and salvation explained to you (but a church that cannot do so, in the way that God has revealed in the Bible, is dangerous for your soul). God has appointed biblical preaching as *the* way for sinners to hear the gospel, the good news about salvation through Jesus Christ, and *the* way for them to be delivered from their sins.

As well as an opportunity to hear the Bible explained and applied, a church service is a time when the people of God can pray for you. When the minister prays, for instance, that those present will be saved, he is praying that you in particular will be saved. And others in the congregation will, in their hearts, join in with his prayers.

4. Remember too that you need to *pray* for yourself. It is not enough that others should pray for you. If it is possible, go away on your own to pray. If that is not possible, still pray. Tell God about your needs and ask Him to supply these needs, especially for your soul. Tell Him that you know you must die and pass into eternity. Confess to Him that you are a sinner and that you need to be forgiven and made holy. Ask Him, for Christ's sake, to forgive you and to make you holy, so that you will begin to live to God's glory in this world and be fit to go to heaven when you die.

As well as hearing the Bible read in church, remember to read it at home and to ask God's blessing on it. Ask Him to teach you from it, and to apply it to your soul so that you will really believe what He is telling us in it. And ask Him so to reveal Christ to you, through the Scriptures, that you will trust in Him. Ask Him to give the Holy Spirit to work in your soul so that you will obey the call, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ".

5. Remember that you need to have Christ as your Saviour not only for eternity, but also *for this life*. You need a new heart now, so that you will seek to live a godly life for the rest of your time in this world. You need a friend that will never leave you, and Christ is the only such Friend. We may have many difficult experiences in this world and yet have no one who can really help us; but if Christ is our Friend, He will stick to us more closely than any brother can (see Proverbs 18:24). No doubt the Lord supported John Brown when, for instance, his mother died; no doubt the Lord – according to His name Jehovah-Jireh – provided for him. And if Christ is your Friend, He will never forsake you; He will bring you safely through the rest of your life and take you into heaven at last.

6. Remember also the words of John Brown's mother: "Youth is a precious time". You who are still young have *wonderful opportunities* to get good for your soul and to prepare for eternity. At this stage in life, you may not have the responsibilities that will fall on your shoulders as you grow older. However busy you might feel you are now, your time may be far more occupied later in life. Ask the Lord to give you grace to make use of your present opportunities.

Do not let the days of your youth slip away. Bear in mind the words of Solomon: "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). While you are young, remember God, who made you – before times of difficulty and trouble come, and before old age comes, when you may lose interest in life. Keep in mind His authority over you. Seek Christ as He is revealed to you in Scripture; seek Him *now*, before you enter eternity, when it will be too late to find Him.

Counted Innocent in Heaven's Court

2. Justified by Faith

Rev J R Tallach

This paper about the Bible's teaching on justification was given at the Youth Conference in 2019. Last month's article defined justification as being "found innocent" and it began to consider justification in the light of the events recorded in Zechariah 3. Here there is a *judge*, "the angel of the Lord"; and the *accused*, whose name is Joshua, the high priest; and Satan, who is like the lawyer in the court who *brings the charge against the accused*.

In an exercise of kingly mercy and in the face of Satan's accusations, the Angel declares, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan . . . is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" (Zechariah 3:2). It is a very simple and telling figure. A dry stick is already in the fire and well alight, but someone pulls it out and puts out the flames. That is true of every sinner saved by grace. They may all sing, "He took me from a fearful pit and from the miry clay" (Psalm 40:2). They were all "ready to perish" (Deuteronomy 26:5); they were all brands plucked from the burning.

The judge then orders Joshua's filthy garments to be removed. He must be washed from his sins and give up those sins. The highway to heaven is a way of holiness. "An highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness" (Isaiah 35:8). And God "hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling" (2 Timothy 1:9).

There is a dangerous error, called Antinomianism, which these days affects many who profess Christianity. It teaches that, if the believer is justified by faith in Christ, the law has nothing to do with him and he may live contrary to God's law and yet be right with God. But this calls in question the faith in Christ they profess, because a "faith without works is dead" (James 2:20). Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth listing the sins of that city and saying, "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:11).

Joshua then, at the command of the Angel of the Lord, is given a change of clothing. This is the "robe of righteousness" of Isaiah 61:10 and the garment of salvation. Being clothed with this change of raiment is an illustration of being justified by faith in Christ. This was illustrated after the Fall, when the Lord made coats for Adam and Eve from the skins of animals killed for this purpose. This garment of righteousness is used as an illustration of the righteousness counted to the sinner in Revelation, the last book in the Bible. There John is told that the clothes of the saints in heaven are white because

they “have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:14).

Wearing these robes illustrates how justification relates to the sinner. It is put on by faith. That is what Paul is calling the believers in Ephesus to do: “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:22-24).

Paul commanded the Romans, “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof” (13:14). Putting off the filthy garments and putting on a change of clothing illustrates the exercise of faith in the finished work of Christ. It follows that “there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:1).

People's justification then rests entirely on their putting on Christ's righteousness, having discarded their own. Paul considered his own righteous achievements as dung, that he might win Christ “and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ” (Philippians 3:9).

On the one hand we have the salvation Christ wrought out on Calvary for His people. He is referred to in Zechariah 3:8: “Behold, I will bring forth My servant the Branch”. The ancient kingdom of Israel was cut down nationally by the Romans and religiously by the scribes and Pharisees. But a Branch would grow out of the root: Jesus would come as the God-man. That salvation, being the work of the God-man Christ Jesus, is of infinite value. It met all the requirements for settling the debt the sinner owes because of sin.

In Luke 7 we read of Jesus in Simon's house. Also there was the woman from the city who was a sinner; she washed Jesus' feet and anointed them with precious ointment. Jesus told the parable of the two debtors. He said of both of them that the man who was owed the money “frankly [or, freely] forgave them both”. Every penny was written off and neither debtor was charged for debt. Jesus paid the debt of sin when He suffered and died on Calvary. When faith applies for deliverance from the debt sin owes to a holy law, there the Lord freely writes off that debt at once.

When the Lord was discussing with Peter the request for tribute money from the temple authorities, He asked who the kings of the earth take tribute money from: their own children or strangers. Peter answered, “Of strangers”, and Jesus said, “Then are the children free”. All God's children are debt-free under God's holy law. The justified sinner is a debt-free sinner.

Every example of faith resting on Christ is a great wonder; “great is the

mystery of godliness . . . [Christ] believed on in the world” (1 Timothy 3:16). But the example that will come most readily to mind (after yourself if you are a believer) is the thief on the cross. Earlier in the crucifixion of these three – Jesus and the two thieves – he had railed on Jesus along with his fellow thief, but a spiritual change came over him. As physical life drained out of him, spiritual life began in his soul. He made his prayer to Jesus: “Remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom”. He was promised a prepared place in the kingdom of glory; his lifetime of service to sin and Satan were cast into the sea of God’s forgetfulness and he departed this world as a debt-free, justified sinner.

Seeking the Lord Early

5. Seeking Early

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. Last month’s article was about finding Christ. Proverbs 8:17. *I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me.*

Now there is only one thing more in our text that I want to talk to you about. Only one little word. But that little word is so very important, that I dare not pass it over. It is the word *early*. “Those that seek Me early”, the Lord Jesus Christ says, they are those that “shall find me.”

Children, that word *early* was meant particularly for yourselves. Seeking Jesus Christ early means seeking Jesus Christ *when you are quite young*, and that is just what I want you all to do. The Lord sends a message to you this very day by my mouth. He says He should like you to begin seeking Him at once. Now do remember, all of you, you cannot begin seeking Jesus too soon.

Seeking early is the *safest way*. Children may be young and healthy, but no children are too young and healthy to die. For death is very strong; it can soon make the healthiest of you pine away and make your rosy cheeks pale and sickly. And death is very cruel; it does not mind who it takes away out of families, and it will not wait for anyone to get ready; it will take you just when it pleases. I see the names of many young people on grave stones. Children, you would not like to die without having sought the Lord at all. Remember, seeking early is the safest way.

And then, besides this, seeking early is the *happiest way*. Surely if it is so pleasant to have Jesus Christ for a friend, the sooner you have Him for a

friend the better. You cannot think how happily a child's life goes on when his ways please the Lord! Everything seems bright and cheerful. Lessons seem more easy, and play seems more pleasant. Friends seem more kind, and trouble seems less difficult. Everything in life seems smoother. Children, I want you to enjoy all this. Then make haste and do not delay to seek the Lord.

A Slave's Prayers

The story is taken from *The Young People's Magazine* for May 1938. It was used earlier in a sermon by C H Spurgeon.

An American who owned slaves was buying another. He asked the person selling the slave, who was known as Cuffey: "Tell me honestly what his faults are".

The seller said: "He has no faults that I am aware of but one, and that one is, he will pray." How strange to call this a fault, but it shows how strongly some people hate religion, especially the religion of the Bible.

"I don't like that," answered the buyer and added cruelly, "but I know something that will cure him of it pretty soon." So the next evening Cuffey's master appeared unexpectedly in the plantation, where the slave was praying earnestly for his new master, his master's wife and their family. The master stood and listened, yet said nothing at the time. But the next morning he called Cuffey and said, "I do not want to quarrel with you, my man, but I'll have no praying on my premises; so you just drop it".

"Master," he said, "I cannot leave off praying; I must pray."

"I'll teach you to pray, if you are going to keep on at it."

"Master, I must keep on."

"Well then, I'll give you 25 lashes a day till you leave off."

"Master, if you give me 50, I must pray."

"If that's the way you are impertinent to your master, you shall have it directly." So he tied Cuffey up, gave him 25 lashes and asked him if he would pray again.

"Yes, Master, I must pray always, I cannot leave off." The master looked astonished; he could not understand how a poor saint could keep on praying, when it seemed to do no good, but only brought persecution on him.

He told his wife about it. She said, "Why don't you let the poor man pray? He does his work well. You and I do not care about praying, but there's no harm in letting him pray if he gets on with his work."

"But I don't like it," said the master, "he almost frightened me to death. You should see how he looked at me."

"Was he angry?"

"No, I should not have minded that; but after I had beaten him, he looked at me with tears in his eyes, as if he pitied me more than himself."

That night the master could not sleep; he tossed to and fro on his bed; God made him remember his sins; he realised he had persecuted a saint of God. He pulled himself up in his bed and said, "Wife, will you pray for me?"

"I never prayed in my life," she answered; "I cannot pray for you."

"I am lost," he said, "if somebody does not pray for me. I cannot pray for myself."

"I don't know anyone on the estate that knows how to pray except Cuffey," his wife answered.

A bell was rung, and Cuffey was brought in. The master took hold of his slave's hand and said, "Cuffey, can you pray for your master?"

"Master, I have been praying for you ever since you flogged me, and I mean to pray always for you." Cuffey went down on his knees, and in tears he poured out his soul before God. The result was that both husband and wife were converted.

Cuffey was a sincere believer, and so he could not live without praying; he wanted to pray to God, no matter how difficult it made his life. Spurgeon pointed out that he could not have done this without faith; "without faith he would have gone away at once and said, Master, I leave off praying; I do not like the white man's whip. But because he persevered through his faith, the Lord honoured him." He heard Cuffey's prayer for his master's soul. How patient he was, and how forgiving, in spite of his master's cruelty!

We need, first of all, to pray for our own souls and seek salvation on the basis of what Christ has done for sinners. Then let us pray for the salvation of others, depending on the Lord for grace to pray earnestly and sincerely. God still hears prayer.

The Tabernacle and Temple

1. History of the Tabernacle and the First Temple

Rev J B Jardine

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

The Tabernacle and the Temple, in all of their ritual, are to stir up more than a mere historical interest in us. Alfred Edersheim (a converted Jew who became a minister) says that "the temple and its services form part of the life and work of Jesus Christ". The Word of God is full of illustrations that convey spiritual truths. God designed both the tabernacle and temple,

and they speak of His glory. It was His purpose that they would show a pattern of spiritual and heavenly realities. Their materials were designed to be emblems of spiritual, heavenly and divine glories.

I want to take a short look at the following areas: (1.) The history of the tabernacle, (2.) The history of the temple, (3.) The typology of the tabernacle and the temple, (4.) The people of the tabernacle and the temple, (5.) The sacrifices of the tabernacle and the temple, (6.) The Day of atonement.

1. The history of the tabernacle. The Children of Israel were brought out from Egypt under the shelter of the blood of the Passover lamb. On their way to Canaan, God spoke to them as a redeemed people about a sanctuary for Himself among them. This would be God's dwelling place with man on earth. On Mount Sinai He gave Moses a pattern for the tabernacle and directed him to follow the pattern God showed him (Exodus 25:8-9). The tabernacle in the wilderness represented the Church of God in its present wilderness condition. The Lord is with His redeemed people, as He has said, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (2 Corinthians 6:16).

The Children of Israel remained at Sinai for about a year to construct the tabernacle and begin services there. It was then moved from Sinai to Kadesh, from where plans were made to invade the promised land. But, owing to their unbelief, the Children of Israel were sentenced to die in the wilderness, and the invasion was postponed until the fortieth year of their wanderings. During this time, we believe, the tabernacle was carried with them through the wilderness.

It was first pitched in Gilgal after it was taken across the River Jordan. It was later moved to Shiloh, where it remained for 300 years. The Philistines captured the ark of the covenant in Shiloh. After it was recovered from them, it was taken to Kirjath-jearim, and then David brought it to Jerusalem. He prepared a tent for it, and Solomon later placed it in the temple. There are several references to people like Hannah going up to the "temple" before the first temple was built, but the word *temple* then refers to the tabernacle.

2. The History of the Temple. *The First Temple.* This temple was built on Mount Moriah, already a place of significance. In about 2000 BC, Abraham met Melchizedek, King of Salem (that is, Jerusalem) and "Priest of the most high God" (Genesis 14:18-20, Hebrews 6:20-7:22). Later Abraham journeyed for three days, from Beersheba to Mount Moriah in Jerusalem to offer Isaac his son as a sacrifice, in obedience to God's command, but God provided a substitute instead of Isaac. Mount Moriah later became the temple mount (Genesis 22, Hebrews 11:8-10). This place was called Jehovah-Jireh, "in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen".

In about 950 BC, Solomon built the great temple to God in the city of Jerusalem, on the mount where Isaac was bound as a sacrifice, and where King David saw the hand of the destroying angel. God did not allow David to build the temple, as he was a man of war, but he prepared stone, iron and timber for it. The preparations David had made allowed the temple to be built with all its elaborate fittings in just seven years (1 Kings 6:37-38).

Solomon was assisted in the work by Hiram of Tyre and 183 600 workers. He used local limestone, cedar from Lebanon and great amounts of gold and silver (1 Kings 5:9, 2 Chronicles 2). Israel was to be the guardian of spiritual truth, which in time would be revealed to the whole world. This is signified in the temple and its services. Yet Gentiles were involved in building the temple. God in His gracious providence not only allowed the best available materials to be used but also the best craftsmen of the ancient world. In the co-operation of Gentiles in the building of the temple we have a symbol of their higher union in the “spiritual house built up” of “lively stones”.

We see the combination of Jew and Gentile in the work. So it is Jesus Christ, risen and glorified, of whom Solomon was a type, who is building the temple of God; Christ has reconciled both Jew and Gentile unto God in one body by the cross. Christ, risen and glorified, is the chief cornerstone of the heavenly temple, uniting Jew and Gentile in Himself, “in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord” (Eph 2:20-21).

In 910 BC, the temple was plundered by Shisak, Pharaoh of Egypt, who removed a great deal of gold and silver (1 Kings 14:25-28, 2 Chronicles 12:1-11). In 835 BC, Joash repaired the temple and a time of revival followed (2 Kings 12:5). Over time the worship of God was centralised at Jerusalem. King Hezekiah (716 BC) and King Josiah (640 BC) destroyed the “high places”, where sacrifices had been offered to God, (2 Chronicles 32:12; 34:35). By the time of the Babylonian captivity, Jews believed that sacrificial worship could only be offered to God at the temple in Jerusalem.

But during the First Temple period, there were several times of spiritual decline. In order to keep his subjects from visiting Jerusalem, Jeroboam in his rebellion built two idolatrous temples in the Israelite Kingdom. Ahaz (720 BC) later rebuilt the temple altar according to one he saw in Damascus (2 Kings 16:10-18). He also actively encouraged pagan practices and even offered his son as a sacrifice (2 Kings 16:2-4). King Manasseh also desecrated the temple (2 Kings 21:4-7).

The life of Joash, sets before us how unreliable many of the kings were. Until the twenty-third year of his reign, he showed strong zeal for the worship of Jehovah but, after the death of Jehoiada the high priest, he gave himself

up to idolatry. Yet in this we can also detect the influence that the high priest had over the kings.

So neglected was the worship of God before Josiah's reign that even the "book of the law", was lost. A reformation began under Josiah (2 Kings 23: 4-20), when the "book of the law" was found. Josiah "rent his clothes" as a token of mourning for the guilt which Israel had incurred in their long period of breaking God's commandments.

The First Temple came to an end when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC. The temple was set on fire and reduced to ashes. Everything of any value in the temple that could be removed, whole or after being broken up, was taken by the Babylonians.

For Junior Readers

God, the only Mender of Souls

The soul is more precious than the body. We need a God who can save our soul. We all have countless sins that must be pardoned. We have wicked hearts that must be made new and good, or we can never be happy. We need a God who can do this for us. And the soul-maker is the only one who can save the soul.

There was a poor heathen man in India who felt that he was a sinner. His conscience troubled him greatly because of his sins, but he did not know how to get rid of them. He spent years asking heathen priests and visiting different temples to try and find relief. He did everything they told him to do but nothing did him any good.

At one temple he was told to take a long journey on his hands and knees. He did so but was no better. He washed in various fountains, he fasted till he was worn to a skeleton. He did very many things, but none of them helped. At last he was told to put pebbles in his shoes and walk to a distant temple where he would be relieved if he made an offering to an idol. He obeyed every detail but was still no better.

Feeling sad, he started his journey home, and the pebbles in his shoes still made every step a torture. Tired with his journey, he stopped one day in the shade of some trees where a small crowd had gathered and were listening to a stranger. The stranger was a missionary who was preaching the gospel.

The heathen man listened with great interest, for the missionary was preaching on the words, "The blood of Jesus Christ [God's] Son cleanseth us from all sin". He showed how Jesus was able and willing to save all who came to Him. The heart of the heathen man was drawn to Jesus. He took off

his shoes and threw away the pebbles, exclaiming, "This is the Saviour I need. Thank God I have found salvation."

The poor man had spent all these years carrying his broken soul to useless helpers. At last he had found the only Soul-mender and all was right. Jesus says, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else". Truly, as the Bible tells us, "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved". So will you not come to Him with all your sins, for He has promised, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out".

[Adapted from an old magazine.]

J van Kralingen

Christ Is the Son of God

A young Jewish soldier attended a service in a home for soldiers that was staffed by Christian people. He hesitated to attend the meeting as he had been brought up to despise Jesus, whom he described as "the so-called Messiah of the Gentiles". He had been warned that any Jews who accepted this false teaching would be accursed and rejected by other Jews. He was deeply moved by the story of a Jewish doctor who became a Christian and was forsaken by all his relatives, including his wife. Then he dismissed the whole story as false, but he accepted a copy of the Gospel of Mark, and promised to read it.

He began to read this Gospel and to wonder if it could be true. If it was true that God sent His Son to atone for our sins, how wonderful that was! But again he was inclined to dismiss it as false. How could God have a Son? He was convinced of the power and majesty of God but could not believe that he could have personal access to Him or that Jesus was the Mediator between God and man.

He read the account of the transfiguration in Mark 9, and the words that Jesus spoke to the distracted father of an afflicted son: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out and said, Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief."

The young Jewish soldier was impressed with the honesty of the prayer of a man who believed and asked the Lord to help him believe more strongly, to strengthen his weak faith. The soldier used to pray sometimes and finish his prayer as Christians do, "In the name of Jesus Christ, Thy Son". And he would add, "If He is Thy Son", but he knew this was not right.

One evening he went to the small week-night meeting and the large texts on the wall caught his attention: "Come now, let us reason together, saith the

Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18), and, “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

During the prayer at the end of the service he repeated the prayer of the man in Mark’s Gospel: “Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief”. From that moment he knew that he was accepted in Christ, that Christ had truly risen from the dead and was at the right hand of God. He felt that God, whom he once regarded as so far off, was now very near and was revealing Himself as a loving Father. His former doubts and unbelief gave place to praise and thanksgiving to God for His unspeakable gift. God worked this great spiritual change, using His holy Word as His instrument.

Adapted from Cheering Words

For Younger Readers

God Kept Them Safe

It was long ago. They were a group of people who gathered on the side of a hill because they wanted to worship God properly. They were called Covenanters. They wanted to worship God just as He says in the Bible. But they were not allowed to gather to worship in the right way.

This group of Covenanters found out that soldiers were not far away. That was dangerous for them. The soldiers would probably shoot them with their guns, if they got near.

The obvious thing was for the Covenanters to run away. But many of them could not run far; some of them were young children. And one of them was a minister who was old and could not run.

What could they do? They had no guns to defend themselves from the soldiers. They could only pray to God, asking Him to hide them from the soldiers. There was nothing better they could do.

They did pray and God heard their prayers. While those soldiers were still a short distance away, a thick mist rolled over the hills and came down over those who prayed. They could now see very little.

More importantly, neither could the soldiers. The soldiers could not see the Covenanters. They were safe. It was God who made them safe.

They kept quiet so that the soldiers would not hear them. But they heard the soldiers making a great noise. The soldiers had lost their way in the mist and they were very annoyed.

When the soldiers found the path they were looking for, they rode away quickly. So the people who prayed were safe again. God kept them safe.

Then the mist moved away and the sun shone brightly. And what did the people who prayed do now? They did what it was right to do. They praised God for taking care of them. They sang from the Psalms, because they were so thankful to God.

We too should pray to God for what we need, and we should thank Him for the good things He gives us.

Bible Teaching for a Young Christian

Robert M M'Cheyne

M'Cheyne was a godly minister in Dundee who died when he was only 29. This is a letter to C (we only know the initial of her first name). C seems to have been converted not long before; she is the same person as was sent the letter printed in *The Young People's Magazine* for April 2019. This letter, written in November 1842, has been edited.

I pray for you that your faith may not fail. Hold fast by Jesus for a little while, and then we shall be for ever with the Lord, where the unbelieving will never be. I got safely to London without stopping. I preached twice on Thursday, and once last night, and now I am preparing for tomorrow. I feel I am, like John the Baptist, the voice of one crying in the wilderness. The mad world presses on like a bird hasting to the snare. They do not know that the dead are there, and her guests are in the depths of hell.

I thank God without ceasing when I remember you all – how God opened your eyes and hearts, made you flee from the wrath to come and to believe the record which God has given concerning His Son. “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer . . . be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10).

Do not be surprised if worldly people mock you and say all manner of evil against you falsely. Jesus told you it would be so. “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own.” You have belonged to the world for long enough. Did the world ever hate you then? So now, when you have come out from among them and are cleaving to Jesus, do you think they will

love you? Remember, Jesus loves you. God is for you, and who can be against you? Remember, all who have gone to heaven before you suffered the same things; see Revelation 7:14: "These are they which came out of great tribulation".

You wish to understand more about Christ's death being an atonement. I shall try and explain. The curse which Adam, by his sins, brought upon us all was this: "Thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). This included the death of the body, the death of the soul, and the eternal destruction of both in hell. This is the curse that hangs over every unpardoned sinner. And our sins have only added certainty and weight to the awful curse, "for the wages of sin is death".

Now when the Son of God said He would become the Surety and Saviour of sinners, the Father said, Thou must die for them; (see John 10:17,18): "I lay down My life . . . This commandment have I received of My Father." It is true that Christ did not suffer eternal destruction in hell, but He was a Person so glorious and excellent – God's own Son – that His short sufferings were equal in value to our eternal agonies. So, in the eye of the law and in God's account, Jesus has suffered all that you and I were condemned to suffer.

Hence that sweet, sweet passage, "Comfort ye, comfort ye . . . for she hath received [in Christ] of the Lord's hand double for all her sins" (Isaiah 40:1,2). Christ's dying for us is as much in God's account as if we had twice over borne the eternal agonies of hell. Hence that sweet song which God enabled you and G to sing: "I will praise Thee; though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me" (Isaiah 12:1). Hence also that triumphant question, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died" (Romans 8:34).

Keep looking then to Jesus, dear soul, and you will have the peace that "passeth all understanding". Whenever Satan accuses you, send him to the wounds of the Lord Jesus. Deal gently and tenderly with your unconverted friends. Remember you were once as blind as they are. "He was despised, and we esteemed Him not" (Isaiah 53:3).

Honour your mother in the Lord. Give her all reverence and obedience in things not sinful. Ask [name not given] to read and pray over Matthew 18:3-6. I would love much to visit the cottage when I return, but I fear I shall be kept in London till Friday, so that I must spend a night and a day travelling home.

The Lord bless you and keep you cleaving to Christ, the true vine. You have found the pearl of great price. Go and sin no more. "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." God is able to keep you from falling. In His dear arms I leave you.

The Two Sermons

Adolphe Monod was at one time a minister in Paris. One Sabbath he preached on the words of John 3:16: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life". In his sermon, Monod emphasised that Jesus is truly both God and man. At the end he announced that he would preach again on the same text the next Sabbath. He was going to show how what he had said is connected with the salvation of sinners.

A lot of people in the congregation did not like his sermon, especially the elders. There was a strange, and unscriptural, arrangement in the church: the elders were not the most godly men there; they were the 25 men who paid the most in tax; that was then the law in France. And their ideas of doctrine were dangerously unscriptural. They warned Monod that, if he preached his second sermon or if he preached on such subjects in the future, they would complain to a government official and demand that he be removed from his position as minister. French law was such that nothing more was needed than a complaint from the elders. The minister was automatically dismissed; it did not matter how good his sermons were.

Monod knew perfectly well what the law said, but he did not hesitate. He went ahead and preached the second sermon. The next day, the official sent Monod a message ordering him to send him a copy of his two sermons. The official was a Roman Catholic, but he never paid much attention to religion of any kind. It was his duty to examine the sermons and he had to do so at once. He did not welcome the duty; he did not like sermons, especially Protestant ones, and he complained to his wife about having to read what Monod had said. She offered to read them with him, in order to make the task a little easier.

Yet it was not long before the first sermon caught their attention, and they then went on to read the second one. They did so eagerly although it was now late in the evening. And God blessed these sermons to them both; they became Protestants and were brought to trust in the only begotten Son of God, who became man so "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life". Yes, the official had no alternative but to dismiss Monod from the congregation after he had consulted the Government Minister of Public Worship. Yet Monod must have been very glad that, in spite of having to leave his congregation, the Lord had blessed the sermons to the spiritual good of two people – perhaps among the most unlikely in all of Paris. These were the sermons that so many people had rejected. And these conversions proved once more that nothing is too hard for the Lord.

The Christian's Assurance

1. I cannot see into the future,
Or tell what tomorrow will bring;
It may be the darkness of winter,
Perchance will be sunshine and spring.
The hope fondly cherished may wither;
The friends I have trusted forsake;
But Jesus my Lord is unchanging;
“He knoweth the way that I take”.

2. For many long years He has led me,
O'er mountains of doubting and fear,
Down valleys of sorrow and trial,
By pathways both stormy and drear.
His voice hushed the tempest to stillness;
The ocean was calm when He spake;
My ship will be safe with its Pilot;
“He knoweth the way that I take”.

3. Though darkness may shroud all the future,
His presence the gloom will dispel;
The sea shall divide at His bidding;
With Jesus to lead, “all is well”.
And still as I go on my journey,
A path through the desert He'll make.
Though briars and thorns may obstruct me,
“He knoweth the way that I take”.

4. He knoweth the past and the present;
The future my Lord can foresee;
Jehovah who feedeth the ravens,
Will not be unmindful of me.
At night He will compass my pillow,
Nor leave me when morning does break.
His arms, everlasting, protect me;
“He knoweth the way that I take”.

5. He knoweth, and when He has tried me,
And fashioned me into His mould,
My spirit made perfectly holy,
Shall shine in His presence as gold.
Then, then from these dull earthly visions,
In His likeness at last I shall wake,
To sing of His goodness for ever,
Who “knoweth the way that I take”.

Looking Around Us

Remembering David Livingstone

An article in *The Herald* newspaper earlier this year drew attention to projects intended to remind people, in Scotland and Africa, of David Livingstone's achievements. Born in 1813, he is described as a "great explorer". The article begins, "He was the boy from the cotton mills of Lanarkshire, who rose to become one of the greatest heroes of the Victorian age by opening up some of the darkest corners of unexplored Africa". Among these projects is work, at a cost of £6.1 million, on Livingstone's birthplace in Blantyre, which is already a museum. The redeveloped museum will tell "the story of how a poor millworker became one of the most popular Scottish figures of the Victorian era and a well-known name in parts of Africa".

One of Livingstone's main aims in his journeys of exploration was to help bring slavery in Africa to an end. This was why he trekked such enormous distances; he wanted to find routes that could be used for trading. He hoped that trading in various products might replace the slave trade. One of these treks involved walking over 5000 kilometres across Africa, with no map to guide him.

Yet the article says nothing about what was the most important feature of Livingstone's life: he went out to Africa as a missionary. But an entry in a historical dictionary does better than *The Herald*. While it does tell about his "extraordinary wanderings" and his activities, such as making maps, learning languages and making careful drawings of the plants and animals of the districts he passed through, it adds, "And always preaching". So, whatever else Livingstone was involved in, he never lost sight of the main purpose that brought him away from Britain: to spread the gospel among people who knew nothing about the teachings of the Bible.

For most people today, Livingstone's preaching is at best a side issue – not worth mentioning in comparison with exploring parts of the world that no Westerner had ever visited. It is an example of how people today get their priorities wrong. The needs of our souls are by far the most important. To spread the gospel is the most important activity that human beings can undertake. Livingstone was indeed a great explorer, but what he set out to do in Africa was far more important: to tell people their need as sinners and that the great God, who made all things, sent His Son to be the Saviour of people in all parts of the world.

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