

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



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Contents

Patrick Hamilton's "How Long?"	123
Attacked by Terns	126
Happy Dick	129
Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland:	
1. The Past: How the Church Came Into Existence	130
The Message of the Rainbow	133
The Tabernacle and Temple:	
4. The Types in the Most Holy Place	135
For Younger Readers:	
The Raven and the Ring	136
For Junior Readers:	
Missing the Train and Finding Christ	137
Nature and the Bible	139
Looking Around Us	140

Cover Picture: A beach beyond Northton on the Isle of Harris. See page 126.

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Number 7

Patrick Hamilton's "How Long?"

Patrick Hamilton was born around 1504 and was closely connected with the royal family in Scotland. More importantly, in a time when there was little gospel light in the country, he found Christ, who is the Light of the world. He became one of that "royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9), who offer to God spiritual sacrifices such as thanksgiving.

Hamilton came in contact with Martin Luther's writings and the truths he found in them influenced his thinking. What is more, he trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of his soul. He studied at a University in Paris as well as at St Andrews; he also visited Wittenberg University, where Luther was a professor. Hamilton had a strong desire to spread the truth in his own country; so he returned to Scotland at the beginning of 1528 and began to preach the truths of the Bible. In particular he did so in St Andrews, where an earnest Romanist, Alexander Alane, did his best to convince him that Rome was right and Luther was wrong. He failed. Instead Hamilton convinced Alane that Rome was wrong and Luther was right – more accurately, that what Luther taught from the Bible was right.

Sadly, Hamilton was not allowed to preach the truth for long. James Beaton, Archbishop of St Andrews, put him on trial for his faith and found it easy to have him convicted of heresy – not because his beliefs were out of line with the Bible, but because he opposed the false teachings of the Church of Rome. Hamilton was cruelly sentenced to death, by burning.

When Hamilton reached the place of execution, on 28 February 1528, he gave his outer clothing to one of his servants, telling him: "These will not profit in the fire; they will profit thee". Afterwards, Hamilton declared, this servant could receive nothing useful from him "except the example of my death, which I pray thee to bear in mind; for [although] it be bitter to the flesh, yet is it the entrance into eternal life, which none shall possess that deny Christ before this wicked generation". Hamilton's last words were the last words of Stephen, the first Christian martyr: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit". And we can be sure that the Lord Jesus did receive Hamilton's spirit into heaven, just as He had received Stephen's spirit.

Beaton had hoped that, by getting rid of Hamilton, he would prevent the Reformation movement getting a hold in Scotland. He failed completely. Instead, people started to speak about Hamilton's views, to ask questions about them and to discuss them – and then to doubt what the Church had taught them. So one of Beaton's servants advised him that, if anyone else was to be burned, it should be done in a deep cellar, because the smell of Hamilton's burning had infected everyone it blew on.

Just before his death, Hamilton asked, "How long, O Lord, shall darkness cover this realm?" Scotland was indeed dark in the early 1500s. One of the most serious problems was lack of access to the Bible. A few people might have had some handwritten pages of the Bible in English, as translated by John Wycliff over 100 years earlier, and by 1520 his New Testament was translated into Scots; in any case, few would have been able to read.

William Tyndale's New Testament in English was first printed in 1526; only after this were printed copies of the Scriptures brought into Scotland. But then the Church did its utmost to prevent people from reading them, trying to keep them in darkness – to stop them from finding out the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. The bishops and the other priests refused to teach the people this truth, and in almost every case they did not know the truth themselves. Indeed one of the charges laid against Hamilton was that he taught that everyone had a right to read the Bible. How deeply the darkness of ignorance covered the kingdom of Scotland in Hamilton's time!

The people were taught that, when a priest said certain words (in Latin, not in Scots), the bread and wine in the mass were turned into the body and blood of Jesus – and that priest might have been as ungodly and immoral as anyone in the country. The teachings about the mass, of course, had no authority from the Bible, and many other unbiblical teachings were adding to the darkness of the time.

For the short time he was able to do so, Hamilton told people the truth about how a sinner may be saved – not by any supposed good works that the sinner might do, but only by faith – faith in Jesus Christ alone. No doubt Hamilton was praying that the light of the gospel would penetrate into the darkness that covered Scotland. His cry, "How long?" was not so much a question as a prayer that God would not allow the darkness to continue. It was, no doubt, a prayer that God would send light, the light of truth – of Scripture truth – and that it would penetrate into the hearts of many sinners throughout the nation.

And God heard Hamilton's prayer; He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20). God raised up others after Hamilton, sending them out as lights in a dark country: men like George

Wishart and John Knox, who preached the true gospel. God blessed their preaching; so people were converted, and in 1560 Roman Catholic teaching came to an end. The true light was now shining.

Yet there was still much darkness. Kings, queens and governments did not often have much sympathy for true religion. In 1560 and afterwards, there was a serious shortage of ministers; in other generations there have been plenty ministers but a serious shortage of ministers who preached according to the Bible. And how can the darkness of sin and spiritual ignorance be removed unless the pure gospel is preached everywhere, by men called by God, who themselves have believed the gospel?

Today God's people have great reason to cry out, like Patrick Hamilton, How long, O Lord, shall darkness cover this nation? Scotland does now have the Bible, but most people ignore it; most of its teachings are largely forgotten; God and His demands for obedience are generally rejected – and this is true, more or less, throughout the world.

Such is the darkness in Scotland now that the Sabbath is not very different from any other day; very few people consider it a day to be kept, as far as possible, for activities that will benefit their souls. Such is the darkness in Scotland that the law permits babies to be killed before they are born, and to allow men to "marry" men and women to "marry" women. Such is the darkness in Scotland that not only the ungodly, but even Churches, approve of these so-called marriages, in spite of what the Bible says. Such is the darkness in Scotland that most people seem to think that there is no problem in a couple living together as if they were husband and wife although they have never been married to each other.

And the darkness is such that few people recognise that they are sinners before God, that a life of sin leads on to eternal punishment, that God commands them to prepare for death, that they need to be born again and that they are called to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, so that they may escape a lost eternity. How long will this sad state of affairs go on? We cannot tell. But we ought to be concerned about it. We should pray.

First, we ought to pray that light would shine from God's Word into our own hearts, so that we may look to Christ as the Saviour of sinners, live a godly life and be prepared for eternity. Then we should pray that light from God's Word would shine into many other hearts. We ought to pray that God would send out ministers to preach the gospel everywhere and that the Holy Spirit would apply the truth to multitudes. We should pray that God's children would live godly lives and so shine as bright lights in a dark world. Let us remember that nothing is too hard for the Lord (Jeremiah 32:17). He can take away the darkness that covers Scotland and everywhere else.

Attacked by Terns

Rev K M Watkins

The coronavirus lockdown meant that we had not been able to go to that beach for many weeks. Located some distance from the nearest road, not many people make the trek to it, even at the height of summer. Other beaches are more accessible. But during the lockdown, no one had been going there. When lockdown easing made it possible, we headed for the beach again. As we came over the hill, the beach came into sight. It was a beautifully calm and sunny day, and from that distance it was just as we remembered, with the waves of the turquoise sea gently breaking on the broad expanse of sand, backed by dunes running its whole length.

As we descended and came nearer, we saw three groups of birds on the beach. Nearest to us were about a dozen sanderlings, scurrying backwards and forwards at the moving edge of the water as each wave came in and out. At the far end were a number of oystercatchers, with their stunning black and white plumage and long orange beaks. It was nothing unusual to see these. But in the middle, from the water edge going back into the dunes, there were many whitish-grey birds we had not seen there the previous year. Some were on the sand; others were in the air. Approaching nearer, it became clear that they were terns, with their black-capped heads, red beaks and legs, angular wings and white tail streamers.

We stayed close to the water so as not to disturb the terns, but more of the birds took to the air, wheeling round and round above our heads, and swooping down menacingly. Terns are known to attack humans and draw blood, if they think their nests are in danger. We moved on briskly, glad to leave the noisy, whirling terns behind.

During the lockdown, with none of the usual walkers and their dogs there, the terns had found the beach empty. They had seized the opportunity to take it over for themselves. This pictures what can happen to us spiritually. Our spiritual enemies are looking out for empty souls, that they might come and dwell there, taking them over for themselves. If our hearts and lives are empty of good things, they will soon fill up with evil things.

If faith is not present, unbelief most certainly will be. If there is no godly sorrow for sin melting the heart, there will be a hardening of the conscience. If there is no repentance, then a determination to go on in sin will take over. If there is no love to Christ, there will be love to the things of this life. If there is no fellowship with Christ, there will be friendship with the world. If there is no sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, there will be the defiling

work of the devil. If there is no gospel desire to keep God's law, there will be hatred to it and disobedience to its commands. Is your soul empty of gospel grace? Is it empty of faith in Christ? Is it empty of hope in the promises? Is it empty of God's Word? Is it empty of sincere love to Christ?

Being empty of grace is a dangerous state to be in. The Saviour spoke of a man who at the beginning had only one unclean spirit, but when his soul was found to be "empty", that spirit found seven others worse than himself, and they all came to dwell in him, so that "the last state of that man is worse than the first" (see Matthew 12:43-45). It was not just one or two terns that took over the beach and the dunes, but many! And they had come to breed many more. As long as our souls are empty of Christ and grace, it is not just one or two sins that take over. When spiritual enemies come, they "come in like a flood" (Isaiah 59:19). The sinner is overrun with everything the world, flesh and devil can bring.

If the beach had been as busy as the previous year, the terns would not have taken it over. The only defence against spiritual enemies taking over our souls is to have them full of grace. If we do not have faith, we must seek for it. If we have some faith, we should ask for more, saying, "Lord, increase our faith" (Luke 17:5). If we have little or no sorrow for sin, we must ask for it. If we have no zeal for God and His truth, we should pray for it. If we have a vain, sinful heart, we need to pray for a new one, pleading the Lord's promise, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you" (Ezekiel 36:26). If we lack the fruit of the Spirit, we ought to go to the Lord, to be "filled with the fruits of righteousness" (Philippians 1:11). If we fear that our religion is nothing but an outward form, we must ask the Lord for the power of godliness. When these things are in us and abound, then our spiritual enemies will find it difficult to take over.

The terns took over the beach because people were not walking along it as before. We may liken this to using the means of grace. If we are not coming to Scripture and the throne of grace, enemies will certainly come and take over our souls. If we are not taking frequent "walks" through the pages of our Bibles, no wonder if our minds are filled with unprofitable and sinful thoughts. If we are not frequent visitors to the throne of grace, no wonder if our lives fill up with worldly vanities. If we do not seek to walk in fellowship with the Lord, no wonder if worldly desires fly around our souls in noisy flocks.

We found that returning to the beach after a long time absent stirred up the terns. Spiritual enemies are stirred up when souls start to use the means of grace diligently. The devil will rise up as "the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2), seeking to keep hold of them. The world will come

menacingly, to laugh and scorn at their new-found seriousness. Members of their own family may notice them withdrawing to be alone with God, and seek to drive them away from their Bibles and prayer. The lusts of their own flesh, under threat, will rise up aggressively, with noise and clamour, to preserve their hold on their souls. Let not serious, seeking souls be surprised or discouraged when this happens.

Scientists working with tern colonies have to wear helmets to protect their heads when they go out among the birds. The world, flesh and devil will never completely leave us, as long as we are in this life. They are not going away. Our souls need a spiritual helmet for protection against their aggressive attacks. The spiritual armour includes a helmet – “the helmet of salvation” (Ephesians 6:17). Nothing less than the salvation of our souls will keep us safe. We need to be busy in the means of grace, but that itself will not keep us safe. To be safe, we need to find salvation.

Salvation is found in the Lord Jesus Christ. He was called Jesus for that very reason: “Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). He is His people's Substitute. With no sin of His own, the Lord laid upon Him the guilt of all their iniquity. Upon the cross, there was no protection for Him from the wrath and curse of God against sin. The sword of divine justice fell. The fire of divine anger burned. “Snares, fire and brimstone” (Psalm 11:6), the reward of the wicked, rained down on Him who was punished in His people's place. His enemies mocked, saying, “He saved others; Himself He cannot save” (Matthew 27:42). But how true! To obtain salvation for sinners, He could not save His own life, but laid it down as the sacrifice for sin.

To have this salvation as the helmet to protect you from God's wrath, you must put your trust in Christ. The jailor in Philippi asked, “What must I do to be saved?” He was told, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:30,31). As soon as he did that, he had on the helmet of salvation. That gave him eternal protection from the blows of divine justice. When you believe in Christ, you too will have the helmet of salvation, so that nothing of God's wrath will ever fall on you.

But how does the helmet of salvation protect from the aggressive attacks of the world, flesh and devil? In 1 Thessalonians 5:8, this helmet is called “the hope of salvation”. Hope is the opposite of despair. Those who have no hope of being saved become despondent when attacked by spiritual enemies, like those who said, “There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart” (Jeremiah 18:12). Without hope, they see no way to resist temptation, falling prey to unbelief and sin.

But those who believe in Christ have hope in Him too. “Looking unto Jesus”, they “lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset” them (Hebrews 12:1,2). When spiritual enemies attack, tempting them to sin, their hope in Christ acts like a protecting helmet. They have a Saviour who will defend them; so they do not need to fall prey to sin. They have promises that He will uphold them and strengthen them in the day of trial. In the end, Christ will deliver them from all trouble and every evil thing. This hope will never let them down, for “hope maketh not ashamed” (Romans 5:5).

Happy Dick

Everyone knew the old, grey-haired man as Happy Dick. He was a slave, but he was now blind; so he was no longer able to work. His master was kinder than many and gave Dick and his wife a hut to live in, as well as providing them with other necessary things like food and clothes. He spent his days sitting at the door of his hut weaving baskets and carving little toys for children to play with. Most importantly, he was a God-fearing man.

A lady once asked Dick: did he not feel uncomfortable thinking of himself as a slave? Did he not want to be independent of others and have something to call his own? She no doubt wanted to see how he would react.

“Don’t ask me that”, Dick answered. There was a time, he told the woman, when “I longed for freedom mightily”. But “these days are all gone by”. Now he could say, “I long for heaven too, and that’s a great deal better. I never allow myself to reflect on the bad things that happen to me, nor the good things that I never had. And when I think about something to call my own, it seems as if I had a big treasure right here that I don’t owe any man for.” He had the blessings of salvation – treasure in heaven.

“How is that, Dick?”

“When all the rest of the world are saying, ‘This is *my* house’, ‘That is *my* sugar-mill’, ‘There is *my* great cotton-patch’, I say, ‘There is *my* hope and there is *my* Saviour’. And when I have the Lord Jesus, it seems as if I owned all the rest, for the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof. The air is mine and I can breathe it; the sunshine is mine and I can sit in it; the earth is mine and I can lie down in it to sleep.” Here was a man who indeed had treasure in heaven.

“But wouldn’t it be nice to own a great farm like Job [who we read about in the Bible] and have cattle and horses and things to give away?”

“Ah, old Dick couldn’t take care of it. I tell you, what a man has beyond enough to take care of – and look out for his own soul too at the same time

– is stealing the Lord's. But I believe everything is ordered for the best." He believed that "the good Lord" allowed "some folks to have the first pick, and some to have the leavings, and some to get both". Dick thought Job had both the best things and the leftovers, and Dick was content with what God gave him. At the same time, he did not forget the needs of his soul. Nor should we.

Dick went on: "Why shouldn't I be thankful? I get the leavings of the tables; I get the leavings of the time; I get the leavings of the money, the leavings of my strength, the leavings of the young master's learning, the leavings of heaven. And why shouldn't old blind Dick be happy?" Little though He had of the good things of this world, he knew he had enough to make him happy.

"But if the Saviour is yours, Happy Dick, and He owns everything, you ought to have the first pick if you want it."

"I do get the first pick in the way I mean, but not in the way the world understands. I live like good old Paul, 'as having nothing, and yet possessing all things'. The more world I want, the less Christ Jesus I get; and the more Christ Jesus I get, then I come nearer to having all things; for all things are His, and I have the first pick because I have Him."

"You mean then, my good old friend, that your interest in the world's people and property is a spiritual one, not a money one?"

"I suppose you'd call it so. You see, men have a conscience and that gives the humble good man a power over them, in spite of themselves. Mr Hammond, overseer on the plantation, is very proud and wicked and laughs at my religion. But I know, if the day of judgement should come now, he'd ask me to pray for him first."

Slavery is wrong, taking away someone's freedom for selfish reasons, but Dick showed a remarkable degree of being content with what he had (see Hebrews 13:5). May God make us "content with such things as [we] have", and thankful for our freedom.

Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland

1. The Past: How the Church Came Into Existence

Rev J D Smith

This is the first part of a paper given at this year's Youth Conference in Australia. Its sub-title was: "Past, Present and Purpose".

Suppose you and your friends agreed to have your voice heard on a particular issue, and you made plans for it, and everything was ready to make your case known – and then, one by one, your friends dropped out.

They felt the issue was no longer important, or so they claimed. But you do. You feel it is so urgent that you cannot go back and you must do something. Will you persevere? Will you have the courage to go *alone*?

Now let us suppose you are at a conference hall with 20 times more people than in this room, and most of them were advocating something wrong, and others who truly felt it was wrong remained silent. What would you do now? Would you have the courage to stand up and voice your opposition in the face of the crowd?

This scenario that I have presented was basically the situation in a certain period in the history of the Church. If you thought I was going to refer to Martin Luther, I would not have blamed you. He was alone, and if he did not actually say the words, "Here I stand; I can do no other; so help me God;" yet in principle he did. But a few hundred years later, another stand was made, and that was the situation behind the founding of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, through a minister named Rev Donald Macfarlane.

Though he did not need to fear being burned at the stake by his enemies, courage was just as necessary to face the opposing crowd. The great majority took the Free Church down the path of error. At first there was a good number of ministers giving loud cries of dissent. But these ministers one by one stepped back. And only a single voice in the General Assembly was heard in a way of protest.

The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland is the legacy of Rev Donald Macfarlane and his stand in 1893, when the Church was founded. It is the story of faithfulness and dependence upon God to build up His Church when other hopes faded and failed. From the stand of one man, by the grace of God, the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland came into existence.

When Rev Donald MacFarlane protested against the Free Church and formally separated, he and others joined together in what is now the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the Church that we belong to today. In our paper we will consider: (1.) The Past: How the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland came into existence. (2.) The Present: How the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland stands today. (3.) The Purpose: What should the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland aim for?

1. The Past: How the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland came into existence. In order to understand the position of the Free Presbyterian Church let us go back to the Reformation in Scotland. While the Reformation in Germany began in the early 1500s, it took place later in Scotland. The Reformation in Scotland was formally established when Parliament adopted *The Scots Confession* on 17 August 1560. As time progressed, the Reformed Church of Scotland experienced spiritual ups and downs, at times was

oppressed by the state – even enduring persecution, as during the days of the Covenanters.

But in 1843 the Disruption took place. Before then the state, or government, supported the Church of Scotland. But often the state interfered with the spiritual affairs of the Church, which it should never do. Ministers were placed in congregations who were not called by those congregations. So eventually a great many ministers and hearers felt they could not tolerate this interference and, by the grace of God, a large portion of ministers separated from the Established Church. They called themselves the Free Church of Scotland – that is, the Church of Scotland now free from connection with the state and its interference. This event was called the Disruption because there was a breach in the Church in Scotland.

The Free Church still embraced the establishment principle, based on Scripture – they still believed the state ought to support the Church, but they were willing to give up the privileges of an established Church connection, in order to be free of the state's interference in spiritual matters. They cut that formal connection with the state in order to serve Christ as the only Head and King of His Church. Christ's authority must be obeyed, not the state, in spiritual matters within the Church.

But the Free Church of Scotland suffered spiritual declension over the next 50 years. Uninspired hymns were introduced into the worship of God, organs were permitted, professors began to teach false doctrine, denying the inspiration of Scripture, eventually even tolerating false views on the resurrection of Christ and the divinity of Christ. These professors were allowed to go on training divinity students. The future ministers of the Church were being tainted with error and even heresy – false teaching and blasphemous views.

Was there no resistance? There was. Ministers and elders and members were grieved. They sighed and cried for the abominations of the land. The question arose and it remained: should they separate? Were things bad enough to leave the Free Church? That was the question. Christ's Church must not be divided unless it is really necessary, but at the same time He calls us to come out from among those who have sunk so low it would be sinful to continue being identified with them. "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4). How bad do things have to get before you say, "I cannot remain in this Church. I have to leave. My conscience will not allow me to stay. I must separate"?

Sometimes things come to a point and the question no longer remains. The situation comes to a crisis. And that happened in the Free Church when

the very constitution of the Church was altered. By passing the Declaratory Act in 1892, the constitution of the Church was changed, and the Free Church was really no longer the same Free Church of 1843, the time of the Disruption. The Church was now a different Church, whose teaching was diluted and included grave error. And those who wished to continue as the real Free Church of Scotland had only one choice – to separate.

The first lesson we learn is that we must not follow the majority in sin. It is tempting to do this because we naturally do not want to be alone. But the Word of God is clear: “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgement” (Exodus 23:2).

The Message of the Rainbow

Matthew Vogan

Have you seen lots of rainbows recently? Many houses are displaying, in their windows, rainbows painted by children. Perhaps you cannot help noticing them as you go for walks. It has been happening all over the world. It was first started in Italy and Spain and it has been called “the rainbow trail”. Why are they doing this? They are using the rainbow as a symbol of hope during times of difficulty and trouble. Sometimes people use the rainbow in a very wrong way to make it a symbol of a lifestyle that God condemns. That makes those who love God doubly sad, because of the sin being promoted and because the rainbow is being misused when it is torn away from its original meaning.

Who made the rainbow that we see in the sky? God, of course. Can you remember what the Bible says the rainbow means? It speaks of God’s promise never again to destroy the world by a flood. There is much more to the rainbow than a general symbol of hope in stormy times. God made it for a purpose and gave it a particular meaning. And the Bible speaks about the meaning of the rainbow in other places, as well as in Genesis.

God told Noah: “I do set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth” (Genesis 9:13-16).

God made the rainbow special; He called it, “My bow”. God’s glory is shown in its beautiful bright colours that attract our attention. He is still working in all the things that He made. They all point to the One who created them. It is also a special token or sign of His covenant. It helps remind us of His promise (a *covenant* is something that contains promises). It reminds us that God is faithful and keeps His promises. Perhaps someone made a promise to you but then they forgot about it, or things changed and they could not keep it. This does not happen with God. After thousands of years, God is still keeping the promise He made to Noah. It is not because people have been less sinful since the Flood that God has not destroyed the earth by another flood, but only because of His promise.

Why does God call it a bow? It is like a bow without any arrows. It has no bowstring. That is a bow that cannot be fired at anyone. But have you thought about where it is pointing? It is pointing, not down towards the earth, but up towards heaven. It speaks of mercy and peace. It speaks, not just of the mercy that the world is being preserved, but of grace in Christ. In Isaiah 54:8-10 the covenant made with Noah is connected to the covenant of grace made in Christ. In Revelation 4:3 the rainbow is also a sign of grace. Christ sits on the throne with a rainbow round about it. This shows that the throne of Christ is surrounded with mercy.

In Revelation 10:1 Christ is presented in a vision where He is described as a mighty angel. He is crowned with the rainbow. He is the Prince of peace (Isaiah 9:6) and His crown is the rainbow, representing peace (Genesis 9:13-14). The rainbow has a variety of colours and is all glorious. The “manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10) has a variety and a glory – the word translated *manifold* originally means many-coloured.

The rainbow begins with red and, in the Bible, this colour often reminds us that it was necessary for the Lord Jesus Christ to shed His blood and die so that the sins of His people would be forgiven. The last colours in the rainbow are purple (or indigo) and violet. In the Bible, purple is often associated with royalty. So when we think about Christ’s kingdom of grace, we should remember that it will never come to an end. The heavenly throne is surrounded by a rainbow to show that it is a throne of grace to those who have obtained mercy (Revelation 4:2).

All the colours blend together in a spectrum. Can you tell exactly where one colour ends and another begins? It would be very difficult. In the same way there are many glorious and unsearchable mysteries in the grace of Christ.

We cannot see a rainbow unless the sun is shining. The light of God’s Spirit and truth must reveal His mercy through His Word.

It is “the bow in the cloud in the day of rain” (Ezekiel 1:28). The darker

the cloud, the more vividly the colours of the rainbow stand out. So it is with God's just wrath against sin and God's mercy. When we think of God's judgement against sin on the cross, we see mercy and truth met together against a dark backdrop; the backdrop is sin being punished in the Saviour's sufferings. The cloud of infinite judgement had to be poured out on Christ's head.

The rainbow reminds us of God's faithfulness and mercy, and it reveals much to us of His grace in Christ. If we have a spiritual understanding of it, it speaks to us about the gospel. You have this mercy of God in Christ and of an eternal hope revealed to you. It is a sure and certain hope, so it is a perfect provision. It deals with the nature and consequences of sin, a disease infinitely worse than the coronavirus.

The Tabernacle and Temple

4. The Types in the Most Holy Place

Rev J B Jardine

Last month's part of this Youth Conference paper began to describe the typology of the tabernacle and temple. A type was explained as "a thing or a person that is used to represent a spiritual truth, and the fulfilment of that spiritual truth – in its antitype – belongs to the future". The types in the court of the sanctuary (outside the temple) and of the holy place were explained briefly.

Third, we will look at *the most holy place*, or the holy of holies. This was the dwelling place of God. No one was allowed to enter, except the High priest on one day each year. On that day he went in with blood to make an atonement for his own sin and the sins of the people. As he entered, incense was burnt, which surrounded the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat.

The ark of the covenant, or ark of the testimony, or ark of God. The name *ark* just means a wooden chest; it was of shittim wood overlaid with gold inside and out. Its contents served to impress on the people the holiness of God and His demands on Israel. In it the Ten Commandments were preserved, engraved on two tables of stone. These "tables" contained the terms of God's covenant with Israel.

The ark was the symbol of God's presence with His people, but its full significance can only be grasped in connection with the law that lay inside it, the mercy seat which covered it as a lid, and the cherubim above the mercy seat.

[1] *The law*. It revealed God's will to His people. Its universal and timeless principles of righteousness were revealed as the spiritual and moral standard for every generation of the world. What was forbidden and what

was required spoke of the Lord's holiness; this was the standard of holiness He required from His people.

[2] *The mercy seat*. This was the solid lid of gold over the ark. The blood of reconciliation was sprinkled on and before the mercy seat as a covering. The mercy seat was where the holy eye of God could always see the blood of reconciliation. On the basis of the sacrifice that had been offered, the blood satisfied the demands of the law. The work of reconciliation was completed when the blood was presented and accepted at the throne of God, before His presence.

When we move from the type to the antitype, we see the law demanding perfect obedience, and death as the wages of sin. The elect of God were unable to render perfect obedience, and God was unwilling that they should endure eternal death. Therefore the Mediator of the covenant, Jesus Christ, endured the penalty of the law instead of them and met all its claims by His perfect obedience unto death (Romans 3:23-25).

[3] *The cherubim*. Two cherubim of one piece of beaten gold sat at the ends of the mercy seat. Their outstretched wings overshadowed the mercy seat. Their faces looked toward each other and toward the mercy seat (Exodus 25:18-21, 37:7-9). That the cherubim and mercy seat were of one piece points to Christ and His redeemed and glorified Church as one, united to each other and having the same human nature.

[4] *The Shekinah glory*. The Shekinah was the name given to the visible symbol of God's presence, which filled the space between the mercy seat and the overarching wings of the cherubim. It seems to have been a supernatural brightness, resembling a very bright cloud or flame. What symbol could be more appropriate of Him of whom it is said: "God is light"?

The ark was God's throne. Only the High Priest, the people's representative was allowed to approach. Christ Jesus is the true sacrifice in the place of sinners; at the ark and nowhere else can God and sinners meet. If we do not have Christ dwelling in our hearts, then we have nothing.

For Younger Readers

The Raven and the Ring

Long ago, a man called Dobry lived in a village near Warsaw, which is the main city in Poland. He was very poor, but he was a good man; he loved God; he trusted in Christ Jesus. And that was far better than having a whole lot of money.

Dobry worked hard, but for some weeks he was ill and was not able to

work. He could not earn any money. So he could not pay the rent for his house. The man who owned the house was not pleased; he was not a kind man. He wanted his money and came to the house several times for it. But Dobry had no money to give him. At last the man said he must get the money that day, or else he would put Dobry and his family out of the house.

Then they would have nowhere to live, and there were several small children in the family. What is more, it was winter and very, very cold. But Dobry knew where to go with his troubles. He knew to seek help from God, who always helped him when he was in difficulty.

That evening the family gathered together to worship God as usual. Dobry read Psalm 50, where God says, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me". That day was indeed a day of trouble, and Dobry called on God. He prayed that God would not let them be put out of their home, especially as it was in the middle of winter.

After the worship was over, they heard a bird pecking at the door. Dobry opened the door and a raven walked in. It was a raven that Dobry looked after when it was young. He noticed something in the bird's beak. When he stretched out his hand, the raven dropped a ring into it. The ring was worth a lot of money because it had some jewels set in it. Dobry knew that God sent it to help him in his need, and he was very thankful.

What should Dobry do with the ring? He went at once to his minister to ask him. The minister looked at the ring and saw that it belonged to the King of Poland. The minister went at once to the King.

We can be sure that the King was very pleased; it was his ring. He sent for Dobry, and gave him a large reward. He could now very easily pay his rent. But the King did more for him; he built a new house for Dobry and his family, and gave him a little farm and some cattle to keep on the farm.

On a stone above the door of the new house, there was carved a raven with a ring in its beak. Underneath there was a text from the Bible. What do you think it was? It was this: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me".

You should try to remember this verse. God still hears prayer. Ask Him, more than anything else, to take away your sin and make you trust in Jesus.

For Junior Readers

Missing the Train and Finding Christ

Many years ago, when trains were still powered by steam, a smartly-dressed man rushed onto a station platform. He was red in the face,

very angry and complaining loudly about a bus driver, whom he blamed for making him late. His train had already left.

What could he do? He had no choice but to wait a whole hour for the next train. He paced up and down the platform, still very angry. Eventually the station master approached him and said, "There's a comfortable waiting room inside, sir, if you would like to have a seat".

The man agreed and went in. There he found, to his surprise, a table on which were spread some gospel tracts. To pass the time he picked one up and began to read it. He got interested in what he was reading, and the time passed quickly.

When the next train arrived he was still absorbed in the message he was reading. As he rushed from the room he quickly asked the station master, "Can I buy this tract, please? I would like to read it again".

"Take it, and welcome, sir," replied the station master; "the kind lady who supplies the tracts will be very glad if you will accept it."

"Thank you, and please thank her," he said, as he popped it into his pocket and jumped onto the train.

About a month later the man got out at the same station. He went up to the station master, shook his hand warmly and asked, "Do you remember me?"

"I do, sir. You missed your train a few weeks back and were very upset about it."

Yes," he replied, "but I need not have been. I missed the train that morning, but I found the Saviour. O what a tract that was! I had been so taken up with my business that I never took time to think about God, or to read His Word. I could not get away from the solemn questions that the tract asked. Please tell the lady that her tract has led me to the Saviour, and that I would like to buy as many as possible to give away to others. I never knew what real happiness was before."

He returned to his train and the whistle sounded. There was a solemn joy in the heart of the old station master as he waved goodbye to the man and saw the happy look on his face, a new creature in Christ Jesus!

What about you? Do you make time to think about God and to read His Word every day?

Have you faced the most important matter that can engage your attention: where will you spend eternity? Sin is a reality, and the judgement of God on sin is a reality.

You need a Saviour! The Saviour was presented to the man by the tract he picked up in the station, and He is presented to you in the Bible. He says to you: "Search the Scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39).

J van Kralingen

Nature and the Bible

Reprinted from volume 1 of *The Young People's Magazine*, where the name of the poet is given as Letham.

O what beauty and perfection
Through the works of nature shine!
Who but must, on calm reflection,
See in all a power divine?
Every object bears impression
Of His all-creating hand,
From the sun that cheers creation
To the smallest grain of sand.
Is there one endowed with reason,
One who views the earth and sky,
One who marks each change of season,
Can this sacred truth deny?
Air and water, light and darkness,
Every animal and flower,
Do continually bear witness
To His wisdom, love and power.
Yet, the volume of creation
Speaks not to the troubled breast,
Tells it not of a foundation
Where its hopes and fears may rest.
Never have the works of nature,
Yet to mortal man revealed,
How this much-offended Maker
May to him be reconciled.
Man could never yet discover
From the sky, the earth, or sea,
When his days on earth are over,
Where or what his state should be.
But the page of inspiration,
Casts a light upon the whole,
Bringing peace and consolation
To the never-dying soul.
Guiding every true believer
To a land of pure delight,
Purchased by a dying Saviour,
Far above the starry height.

Looking Around Us

Holy Water?

A priest in Michigan state, in the USA, wanted to keep on using “holy water” during the coronavirus pandemic. But he did not want to be in danger of passing on the infection by dipping his hand repeatedly into the container of holy water as he sprinkled it on different people. So he came up with the idea of filling a water pistol with holy water and firing it at those who drove up in their cars to where he was standing.

But what is holy water? It is just ordinary water that has been blessed by a priest. And it is claimed that those who have it sprinkled on them get a blessing as a result. The first question to be asked is, Where do we find teaching about holy water in the Bible? And the answer is, Nowhere. So we must come to two conclusions: first, God has not appointed the practice of using holy water and, second, water which a priest has blessed is no more holy than any other water.

All kinds of blessings are claimed to follow the sprinkling of people with holy water. But no, it can do no good to anyone, no matter how it is applied. What we should do is seek God’s blessing through His Word, when we read it and when we hear it preached. We should ask the Lord to bless it by the Holy Spirit applying it to our souls. Water, in the Bible is sometimes a symbol or sign of the Holy Spirit. Water cleanses our bodies, and the Spirit can cleanse our souls. Water can be poured on our bodies to wash them, and the Spirit can be poured out on our souls to wash them from sin.

So we should be praying to God like David did: “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Psalm 51:7). David was not asking for his body to be washed by some kind of holy water, but for his soul to be completely cleansed from sin – for the guilt of all his sin to be taken away and for all the power of sin in his soul to be removed also. And God did take away all his sin. God made him whiter than the snow; God made him perfectly holy. That is why he can now be in heaven.

Sprinkling a little holy water – or even a lot of it – cannot bring us God’s blessing. But we may go to God in prayer asking for His blessing. We may ask for whatever we need; but we should ask, more than anything else, for spiritual blessings. Let us ask, earnestly and urgently, to be made holy and to have our sins forgiven. Let us ask for such things for Christ’s sake, because of what He suffered in this world for sinners.

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