

# The Young People's Magazine

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**Issued by the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland  
Reformed in Doctrine, Worship and Practice**

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*“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” Ecclesiastes 12:1*



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**Cover Picture:** Plockton, in Wester Ross.

## The Young People's Magazine

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# The Young People's Magazine

Volume 85

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Number 8

## Meeting Again

Dame Vera Lynn has died, at the age of 103. She achieved fame through entertaining troops, in Britain and overseas, during the Second World War. Her songs, including, “We’ll Meet Again”, were credited with raising the morale of men who were away from their homes for long periods of time and likely to face extreme danger.

Such words may have inspired hope; certainly that was what those were looking for who arranged her visits to the troops. But did that hope have any foundation? Just to say, “We’ll meet again”, did not make that meeting certain, or even likely. These men could expect to face danger on the sea, or face battles in some foreign country, or face being shot down from the air over enemy territory. Some of them, sadly, would die; others would face injury, perhaps serious injury; many of them would experience terror in going into battle and the sadness of losing close friends to an enemy bullet.

To sing of meeting again on some sunny day may have sounded good at the time and, no doubt, raised the spirits of many, at least for the moment. But it could give no promise of safety in battle or when confronted by some natural danger, such as a severe storm at sea. Most seriously, it could give no hope to a wounded serviceman facing death and eternity. The hope that lifted the spirits of many had nothing to do with God; so it had no real value.

What these men needed was to hear of God and what He is able to do. They needed to go to the Bible and listen to God speaking to them – and so, of course, do we. Even if we may not face the same dangers, we must most certainly die, sooner or later.

When a soldier, for instance, was about to set out for a battle zone, what solid comfort it would give him to be able to say sincerely, as David did, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want” (Psalm 23:1) – in other words, I shall not lack anything. What David meant was: I will never be without anything that I really need. But he would realise too that he had to leave it to God to decide what his real needs were.

Such a soldier can claim that the Lord Jesus is going before him, will take care of him wherever he may have to go, and will bring him safely at last

into heaven above. Yes, there may be great difficulties along the way; there may be sorrow and pain and suffering, but God is watching over him and will never leave him to himself.

In the same Psalm, David went on to speak about “the valley of the shadow of death” – the place of deepest darkness, which might be death itself or some other serious trouble. But if he had to go through such a valley, he felt able to say, “I will fear no evil”. Why did he speak so positively? Because he knew that *God* would be with him and would support and comfort him, whatever would happen. And that was strong faith. Yet whatever fears others might experience as they look on to the dangers of the unknown future, they find support and strength to the extent that they are made able to lean on God's promises.

But how can people, servicemen or others, find hope through the promises of the Bible if they are not trusting in Christ for the salvation of their souls? The answer is that they must ask the Lord Jesus to become their Shepherd, and to make them willing to follow Him as His sheep. Think of Bartimaeus, the blind man. When he heard that Jesus was passing by, he cried out, “Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me”. He cried out because he felt his need of being able to see, and he cried out to Jesus because he knew this wonderful Person was able to give him his eyesight.

So we should realise that Christ is able to help us when we feel our need of spiritual eyesight, when we feel our need of a living faith, when we feel our need of being made one of Christ's sheep. Christ is able to do these things for us, for He died so that sinners might be saved – that they might be able to see spiritually, that they might have a living faith and become one of Christ's sheep. So let us cry out to God, in prayer, asking Him to save us for Christ's sake. He has never turned a sinner away, and He never will.

And whoever comes to Christ will be saved – whether a soldier or seaman or airman in time of war, or anyone else. After they come, they all have the right to say, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want”. And so they can go on to say, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life”; they can be sure that God, in His kindness, will go with them and help them, whatever kind of situation they may be in.

Does this mean that a believing soldier cannot be shot in battle and a believing sailor cannot be drowned at sea? Of course not. But if they are killed, God will bring them into the perfect blessedness of heaven. So David could look forward to God's blessing following him throughout the rest of his life, and he could add, “I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever”.

The believer facing danger in the armed forces knows that God is in control of everything, including every bullet, shell, torpedo or missile that

is fired in his direction. This believer knows that, if it is God's will, he will be brought safely through the danger; and if it is God's will that his life should come to an end, he trusts that he will be brought to everlasting glory. Yet no one at any time – ourselves included – can be sure of meeting our loved ones again or being taken safely through any danger that may meet us at home, at work or on the road, for instance. All the more reason for seeking the Lord urgently.

There is no greater folly than trying to live life apart from God, while assuming that everything will turn out well whatever the danger. And Vera Lynn's song, no doubt, encouraged many who listened to it to ignore the dangers in front of them and assume that all would work out well in the end, completely ignoring the urgency of preparing for death. Few people today may have to face the dangers of war, but vain songs of all kinds – and entertainment generally – are distracting people from the serious matter of preparing for death and for the eternity that lies beyond.

Yet we *will* all meet again. When the world comes to an end, Christ will come again and call everyone from their graves. He will bring them before Him to be judged, along with everyone who is still alive, "for we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

For those who did nothing but sin, in one degree or another, while they were in this life, how terrible it will be for them to hear the words addressed to them by Christ from the judgement throne: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41)! They did not seek the Lord while they were in the body and, when finally sent away from Christ, it will be too late to seek Him. Among the many things they did in the body, there were no good works. They did not love God; they did not trust in Him for salvation; they never spoke a good word for Him; they went on in rebellion against Him; they continued in unbelief, rejecting Christ, and salvation through Him, when it was freely offered to them.

But there will be many who will go boldly to the judgement seat (1 John 4:17). They too were sinners, but their sins were forgiven. So it is their good deeds, purified for the sake of Christ and what He did for them in this world, that will be brought forward by the Judge. Their good deeds will include their faith in Christ, their prayers, their holy desires and their acts of kindness to other believers (see Matthew 25:35-40). And the Judge will say to them: "*Come*, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34). But they will only hear these words because in this life they obeyed Christ's call, "*Come unto Me*".

# The Tabernacle and Temple

## 5. Some Other Things in the Tabernacle and Temple

*Rev J B Jardine*

Last month's part of this Youth Conference paper spoke of the types in the most holy place. A type was explained as "a thing or a person that is used to represent a spiritual truth; the fulfilment of that spiritual truth – in its antitype – belongs to the future".

**F**ourth, *various other objects* in the tabernacle and temple. (1) *The scroll of the law*. The law, or Torah, was only occasionally read in the temple. It was read on the Day of Atonement and at the close of the Sabbatical year. A golden pot containing the manna and Aaron's rod that budded were in the tabernacle in the wilderness and placed before the ark. They may also have been preserved in the temple.

(2) *The trumpets*. The trumpet had great religious significance, as it was used in connection with many sacrificial ceremonies. Only the priests could blow them (Nehemiah 12:35). The priests would announce the beginning and the end of the Sabbath and festivals by sounding a trumpet.

(3) *The musical instruments*. In the first temple, the sublime lines of the Psalms as sung by the Levites would have been combined with the music of other Levites on their instruments. But the service of praise was mainly sustained by the human voice. Instrumental music was a type of the higher spiritual melody of the whole congregation singing Psalms in the New Testament age. Yet Old Testament worshippers could still be spiritual in their own worship. Of the 150 Psalms, two mention instrumental music at length, and a further 22 mention the use of instruments in worship, either in the psalm heading or in the text itself.

Instruments were introduced into the worship by David when he brought the ark back to Jerusalem. David had God's authority for this change; in 2 Chronicles 29:25 we read that Hezekiah "set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the Lord by His prophets". The change was commanded by God through His prophets; instruments were not used in the worship of God in the Old Testament without His specific instructions. We do not find any such instruction in the New Testament. The only kind of music that is commanded in the New Testament Church is singing, "the fruit of the lips".

Like other aspects of the law of Moses, instrumental music was a shadow of things to come (Hebrews 10:1), and it forms no part of New Testament

worship. John Calvin said, “Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law”. The use of instrumental music came to an end at the same time as the ceremonial law. In Old Testament times, it was regulated like all other aspects of worship. God gave specific instructions that were to be followed.

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# Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland

## 2. Changing the Free Church Foundations

*Rev J D Smith*

The first section of this Youth Conference paper began to describe how the Free Presbyterian Church came into existence. It spoke of how the teaching of the Free Church of the 1800s became weaker as real error entered. Then a Declaratory Act was passed in 1892 which changed the foundation of the Church.

Now we need to understand what this Declaratory Act is – since this was the breaking point. A Declaratory Act makes a declaration; it declares the Church’s position on some matter. And the Declaratory Act passed in May 1892 was in order to explain the teaching of the Church – so they claimed.

The stated purpose of the Act was to explain the doctrines of *The Westminster Confession of Faith*. Why? Was that really necessary? Some thought so. There were men about to be ordained as ministers who had difficulties over some statements in the *Confession*. They thought the *Confession* was too limiting, too strict; they wanted liberty to believe differently, more freedom to hold to what they believed personally. So instead of changing the *Confession* itself, their solution was to *explain* its teaching to suit these ministers. They would declare what they believed the *Confession* was teaching.

But they did not actually explain the teaching; rather they explained it *away*. They watered down the pure doctrines of God’s Word. The words used in the Declaratory Act seem plausible at first glance, even generous and warm. But (a) the Declaratory Act undermined the *Calvinism* of the *Confession*, (b) the statements in the Act tend toward Arminianism, and (c) the interpretations of the Act take away from God’s sovereignty and His honour, speaking of the love of God as if it was universal, almost denying the electing love of God. The Act almost denies the doctrine of original sin, commending some of the affections and actions of the natural man apart from the work of the Spirit.

To use the words of Rev J S Sinclair, “the Act, instead of casting light

upon the doctrines of the *Confession*, does its best to shroud them in obscure and ambiguous language. The language, however, while tending to obscure the Calvinism of the *Confession*, is a *fit vehicle for expressing the doctrines of Arminianism*" (emphasis ours). A person who held Arminian views (like easy-believism) could easily hold on to his own views through the Declaratory Act.

But the most dangerous part of the Declaratory Act is in the last section, where it states the General Assembly has the right to determine what enters into the substance of the Reformed faith. Only the General Assembly (like our Synod) could decide after all what was the real teaching of the Church. The doctrine and teaching of the Church was no longer what the *Confession of Faith* said, but whatever the majority of the Church decided and claimed it to be. This was putting "the substance of the Reformed faith", determined by a majority of the General Assembly, in the place of the *Confession of Faith*. So whenever there was a disagreement about doctrine, instead of going to the *Confession of Faith*, the matter would be decided by the General Assembly. How could a minister be faithful while staying in a Church that claimed it could decide the matter whenever it chose?

Let us note that false teaching is dangerous. Charles Hodge states, when writing on Romans 9:30,31: "Error is often a greater obstacle to the salvation of men than carelessness or vice. Christ said that publicans and harlots would enter the kingdom of God before the Pharisees." In the same sort of way, thoughtless and wicked Gentiles were more likely to be impressed by the gospel, and were more often converted to Christ than the Jews, who were wedded to wrong views of the plan of salvation. If we believe, as Arminians do, that we can believe in Christ of our own free will, we are in danger of never truly believing, because we are tempted to look to ourselves and not to Christ.

Now was this Declaratory Act really a binding document? Did the Declaratory Act really become part of the constitution of the Free Church? Yes, because the majority of the Free Church Assembly voted for it, and it had already received the agreement of the majority of Presbyteries. Thus the Declaratory Act became a binding law in the Church.

When all of this was happening, was there any opposition? Yes, as we said earlier, not everyone agreed with the changes and the new, false teaching. And not everyone agreed to the passing of the Declaratory Act. In fact, there was a whole group of ministers and elders who opposed the Act; they were called the Constitutional Party.

Why were they so called? Because they stood for the constitution of the Church. They did not agree to any changes to the *Confession of Faith* or



anything that declared a different interpretation of it. They opposed the Declaratory Act becoming part of the constitution of the Church.

When the Church was deciding whether to pass the Declaratory Act, the Constitutional Party held meetings and made great speeches, saying that if the Declaratory Act was passed, “then you could pronounce the funeral oration of the once noble Free Church of Scotland”. That is, when the Act was passed, the Free Church would be dead. The Church would not be what it was before; it would be an altogether different Church. The Free Church of Scotland would no longer exist.

Now there were not only a number of ministers at those meetings, but also students for the ministry. Neil Cameron was one of them. Around the time he was first converted, he had great convictions of sin, deep and painful agony of soul. But he confided in a friend that the pain and grief he felt then was as nothing to his agony of soul after the passing of the Declaratory Act, until Rev Donald Macfarlane made his stand. As Rev Donald MacLean writes of Neil Cameron: “During that year [from May 1892], he felt that there was no full-orbed public testimony on the side of Christ and His truth in Scotland”. This was why he was so deeply troubled.

This sorrow is evidence of a real heart-attachment to the truth. When the Church and her doctrines are under attack, the members of the Church should be concerned and should mourn. The Lord takes notice of such people. “And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof” (Ezekiel 9:4).

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## Weddings

*Rev K M Watkins*

**F**or those who were planning to marry during the lockdown period, the unexpected stopping of weddings will have been hugely disappointing. Even now, when weddings are permitted again, the continuing restrictions on gatherings will tinge the joyful proceedings with sadness, and we sympathise with those who are in this situation.

Marriage was instituted by God as a gift to mankind. Adam and Eve, the first two human beings, were made husband and wife, to be a pattern of ordinary life until the end of time. “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).

In the days of Noah, right up to the day the flood came, they were “marrying and giving in marriage” (Matthew 24:38). Not only while the flood lasted, but for years afterward, there were no marriages anywhere in the world. Children would have to be born to Shem, Ham and Japheth, and grow up, before marriages could happen again.

Not least of the provocations of the old world had been the way people connected with the true religion (outwardly the “sons of God”) were enticed by the outward beauty of worldly, ungodly women (the “daughters of men”) and married them. “The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose” (Genesis 6:2). The temporary stopping of marriages was one way in which the Lord showed His displeasure with that sin.

Has there not been much of this in recent generations? Children from Christian homes, who ought to have been a godly seed, have married into the world. The temporary halt to weddings may well be interpreted as the Lord’s protest against the sin whereby the seed of the godly was mixed with the seed of the serpent. In the days of the patriarchs, Rebekah complained to her husband Isaac, “I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth” (Genesis 27:46). Their son Esau had married heathen women, and she did not want Jacob to do the same, so Isaac sent him to seek a wife from Rebekah’s family.

Some have been seeking to marry within the visible Church (“in the Lord”, as it is put in 1 Corinthians 7:39). It is distressing that their weddings have been delayed and their plans have been disturbed. But they may take comfort from this: the Lord honours those who honour Him. They may, as it were, put Him upon His honour, by looking to Him to make it up to them, and more, by putting a special blessing on their marriages.

In the days of Lot, “the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly” (Genesis 13:13). By “going after strange flesh”, they “are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 7). When the Saviour recounts life in Sodom before the fire and brimstone fell, unlike life before the flood, He does not mention marriage (see Luke 17:28), as if Sodom had so distorted right human relationships that there was little left that could go by that name. When the judgement came, there would be no marriages of any kind in the cities of the plain, buried to this day under the waters of the Dead Sea.

The application to our own day is plain, when many nations have gone so far as to credit unnatural, same-sex relationships with the name of “marriage”. We should see the stopping of lawful marriages, as well as unlawful ones, as a voice from God, angry with the world as a whole for its approval of

unnatural immorality. We feel for friends seeking marriage that is lawful and pleasing in God's sight, who have been caught up in the blow against the world for its iniquity, as often occurs when God strikes whole nations. The Lord knows how to provide a chamber of safety and even blessing for His own, even in the midst of wrath.

Later, the people of Judah provoked the Lord so grievously that He banished them from the promised land, and took them captive to Babylon for 70 years. That would involve many sad judgments, including the stopping of weddings in the land. The Lord said, "Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride" (Jeremiah 25:10). One of the happiest sounds in the land – the wedding voices of bridegroom and bride – would not be heard for 70 years. Again God's judgements were seen in the stopping of marriages.

One cause of Judah's captivity was her spiritual adultery in turning to the worship of idols. The Church had ceased to be a faithful bride to her heavenly Bridegroom. For many generations, she had "played the harlot", going "after her lovers" and forsaking the Lord, "her first Husband" (Hosea 2:5,7). For making unholy alliances in religion, and breaking the marriage covenant with the Lord, no marriages between men and women would be celebrated in the land for 70 years.

The worship of idols is not a matter of mere history. Today, false religion is permitted to worship its idol gods throughout the world. Other idols are worshipped too, for anything that takes God's rightful place in our hearts and lives is an idol. "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever", and anything that interferes with that is an idol. It could be a so-called "celebrity" from the world of sport or entertainment; or pleasure, or money, or position. It could even be our family or our respectability. We cannot be surprised that the Lord has testified against this idolatrous generation by stopping marriages for a while, for that is what He did in the land of Judah.

The judgement on the Jews did not last for ever. After 70 years they returned to Jerusalem. Repenting of their former idolatries, they rebuilt the city and temple, and public ordinances were re-established. This joyful return was accompanied by marriages being restored in the land. "Again there shall be heard in this place . . . the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride" (Jeremiah 33:10,11). Hopefully, by the time this article is published, weddings will be proceeding in a more ordinary way, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard once more. But will people have learned to put away their idols?

The Bible often illustrates the gospel union between the Saviour and sinners by the picture of marriage. The Church is the bride, Christ is the Bridegroom.

Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church; and wives are to be subject to their husbands as the Church is to Christ (Ephesians 5:24, 25). "This is a great mystery", said Paul, "but I speak concerning Christ and the Church" (verse 32). Throughout Psalm 45 and the Song of Solomon, the relationship between Christ and His people is pictured by marriage.

For the three and a half years of His public ministry, the Lord Jesus preached the gospel to the Jews, inviting them to "come unto the marriage" (Matthew 22:4). It was more than a mere invitation to attend a wedding. It was a personal marriage proposal, for them to be His bride. But they would not come. They refused His offer. They rejected His invitation. They poured contempt on His proposal. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:11).

The Saviour warned them that if they persisted in unbelief, refusing to come to the marriage, He would send forth His armies and destroy those murderers, and burn up their city (see Matthew 22:7). That happened when the Romans razed Jerusalem to the ground in AD 70, bringing "great tribulation such as was not from the beginning of the world" (Matthew 24:21). The joyful voice of bridegroom and bride was again silenced. The Lord was judging His ancient people, the Jews, for rejecting and crucifying the Lord Jesus Christ, the long-promised Messiah, His own Son.

Let us apply this to our own times. When the churches were open, very few came to hear the Gospel Bridegroom's marriage invitations. Of those who were in church, few accepted His proposal. It cannot surprise us, therefore, that the Lord has visited the world in judgement, by stopping marriages between men and women for a time. So few souls were willing to accept Christ's proposals for spiritual marriage. For so long, the most joyful of all sounds – the voice of gospel union between the heavenly Bridegroom and believing sinners – was so rarely heard. So for a time the voice of earthly marriage has not been heard either.

Hopefully, when you read this article, the churches will be open again in Scotland as they already are in some countries, and the voice of the Heavenly Bridegroom will be heard in the preaching of the gospel, proposing marriage to sinners. And if the Lord is kind, the voice of the bride will be heard as well, saying, I accept His proposal; with all my heart I consent to the marriage. Even now, through the Bible, the Saviour offers Himself to be a spiritual Husband to you. Will you take Him? "Come unto the marriage." Come to this Husband!

Whatever a bride could look for in a husband, Christ will be all that and more. He will be a rich Husband, with all the treasures of gospel grace to bestow on His bride. He will be a handsome Husband, fairer than the children

of men, the chiefest among ten thousand, altogether lovely, without blemish or spot. He will be a loving as well as a lovely Husband, with a love so great that it moved Him to sacrifice Himself for His bride, laying down His life at the cross. He will be a caring Husband, always looking out for His bride, always hearing the cries of her heart, always tending to her needs. He will be a strong Husband, defending and protecting her from all enemies and dangers. He will be a faithful Husband, never leaving nor forsaking her, never casting her off or divorcing her, whatever her failings may be.

Christ holds out His hand, ready to put the marriage ring on your hand. To use the words put to Rebekah when Abraham's servant came seeking a wife for Isaac, "Wilt thou go with this Man?" (Genesis 24:58). For the salvation of your never-dying soul, say with Rebekah, "I will go". By faith, put your hand of acceptance into the proposing hand of Christ.

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*For Junior Readers*

## Harry's Earnest Searching

Harry was busy in his barn when he suddenly realised that he had lost a five-pound note! It must have slipped out of his pocket. He was not a wealthy man, and five pounds was a lot of money in those days. To lose it was a serious matter. He was certain that the note was in his pocket when he entered the barn. "Then it must be somewhere in the barn," he exclaimed, "and I will turn over every straw in the place until I find it!"

He started his search, turning over the straw very carefully, looking out for anything white that might be a bank note. The next day he was still searching, and on the third day he continued looking for the missing note. At last he was successful; he discovered the lost money and he went home rejoicing!

Some time later the farmer was in far greater trouble. He was not now worried about something he had lost, but about himself. The question that was worrying him was, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and *lose* his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). The question rang in his ears night and day. "Where am I going? What will become of me?" he thought.

The gospel was set before him. He was told about the Son of God, who offered Himself instead of sinners. He was told how Jesus had finished the work of salvation on the cross so that poor, helpless sinners who believe in Him would be saved. He was told that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life".

But Harry was slow to accept the gospel. He found his heart was hard and

unbelieving. "I wish I could believe on the Saviour," he said to his wife, "but, alas, I cannot find Him."

His wife replied, "Do you not remember when you lost that five-pound note in the barn? You gave yourself no rest, but searched until you found it! Look for the Saviour like that, and you will find him! Does the Bible not tell you, "Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall *search for Me with all your heart*" (Jeremiah 29:13). Harry promised that he would indeed do so. And it was not long before he was brought to a personal knowledge of Christ and of the forgiveness of his sins.

What about you? Are you concerned about the state of your soul? Are you afraid to lose your soul? Will you not seek salvation diligently like the farmer searched for his lost banknote, like the woman (Luke 15) searched for her lost piece of silver? The Bible tells you: "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near". Then you can claim that precious promise, "I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early *shall find Me*" (Proverbs 8:17).

*J van Kralingen*

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*For Younger Readers*

## **The Smallest Loaf Was Best**

**T**here were lots of very hungry people in a place in Germany long ago. They did not have enough money to buy food.

A rich man had plenty food. He loved children; so he invited 20 hungry children to come to his house. He told them: "In this basket there is a loaf of bread for each of you. Take it home and come back again every day." He promised to give each of them a fresh loaf each time they came.

The children were so hungry that they grabbed the basket and quarrelled over the loaves. Each of them tried hard to get the biggest loaf – all of them except one, a little girl called Gretchen. After the others ran away home with their loaves, she picked up the last one, the smallest of them all. None of the others waited to say, Thank you, before they ran off. But Gretchen smiled at the kind man who gave them the bread and thanked him nicely.

The next day, the 20 children came again for bread. Again they all pushed and shoved each other to get as big a loaf as they could. All except Gretchen. Again she came at the end and had to take the smallest loaf, just about half as big as the others.

Back home, her mother began to slice the loaf, and out fell six silver coins. She told Gretchen: "This must be a mistake. The money does not belong to us. Run as quickly as you can and take it back to the man."

But it was not a mistake. The man told Gretchen: "I had the silver baked into the smallest loaf to reward you. Remember that the person who is content to have a small loaf rather than quarrel for a larger one will find blessings better than money baked in bread."

We should be content with what we have and ask God for what we need.

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## Ruby and Her Father

Someone met a young girl called Ruby on a street and took her to a Sabbath school. At first she did not know how to behave; it seems that she had never been to any kind of school. But, after some time, Ruby settled down and listened to the stories that the teacher read to the class about God and about Jesus. Soon Ruby wanted to learn to read too, and she did. She wished to be able to read these stories herself. After some time, the teacher began to wonder if the truths of God's Word that Ruby was learning were having an effect on her soul.

Ruby learned in Sabbath school about things that God has said are right and also what is wrong. Then she might come to her father afterwards and tell him. One Sabbath, she came to him where he sawed wood and told him: "Father, you must not swear. God says, 'Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain'. God punishes swearers in hell, Father."

"I expect it is so, Ruby," was all he said to her.

But she pressed him, saying, "And you won't, will you, Father?" He did not really answer her, but she was glad he did not get angry.

Another Sabbath, Ruby came home and said, "Father, you must not drink rum, because God says no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God".

"What does that mean?" he asked her.

"No drunkard shall go to heaven, Father. And you won't drink rum any more, will you, Father?"

At another time, Ruby asked, "Father, do you love God?"

"I'm afraid not, Ruby," he confessed.

"Well, Father, the Bible says, 'Thou shalt love God . . . with all thy heart, and we ought to love Him, ought we not to, because He gives us everything?"

Ruby's father was poor; so he thought God had not given them much. But she said, "He has given me to you, Father, and you to me".

"Don't know but He has", he answered, a little moved by the thought.

One evening, as Ruby sat on her father's knee, she asked, "Did you ever hear about Jesus Christ?"

"Well, what about Him?"

"Why, He came to this world to wash all our sins away and to open the door of heaven to us, if we believe in Him and follow Him."

"Where did you learn so much?"

"In my Sabbath school. And, Father, I want you to go with me; my teacher can tell you a great deal better than I. Will you, dear Father?"

He promised to go. The next Sabbath, Ruby and her father reached the school together hand in hand. The superintendent welcomed him (it would seem that grown ups could go as well as children).

"By what I can find out," Ruby's father said to him, "you teach folks what my old grandmother used to think so much of, and she was the best woman on God's earth; so I thought I'd come with Ruby and see."

We are not given further details about what happened afterwards, except that the father was converted. The account about him just tells us: "He left off rum and became a sober man. He left off swearing and became a prayerful man. He left off idleness and became a hard-working man. He left off Sabbath-breaking and became a Sabbath-keeping and Sabbath-loving man. He left off his pride and became a humble man. He turned from his sins and became a godly man."

I hope those of you who go to a Sabbath school will ask God to bless to you what you learn there. He is able to do your soul good, just as He blessed to Ruby's soul what she heard in the Sabbath school that she began to attend. More than anything else we should ask God to bless our souls.

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## Australian Youth Conference

This year's Youth Conference was held in Alstonville in Australia about a 2-hour drive north from Grafton; it was organised by a Committee of the Asia-Pacific Presbytery. On Tuesday, January 7, the Conference began with Mr Hank Optland's paper on "Genesis: The Beginning of Lessons for Christians". He focused on Creation principles and applied these to this generation and the abounding departures from God's unchanging Word. In the evening, Rev G G Hutton gave a paper on Biblical Repentance, in which the various elements of repentance were brought out.

On the Wednesday, the writer presented a paper on "The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland – Past, Present and Purpose", focusing on the formation of the Church in 1893, the principles it stood for, and the ongoing need of faithfulness and perseverance. The young people had the afternoon to themselves, and in the evening Rev Caleb Hembd gave his paper on "Christ's Ordinary Method of Building His Church". He presented an outline of some



revivals in history to demonstrate various conditions the Church has been in before a spiritual revival.

It was with great sadness that the Committee had learned some weeks before the Youth Conference that Mr Calvin MacKenzie had taken ill and was therefore not able to give his paper as expected. As a result it was arranged for Rev S Khumalo to give a paper on the subject of Aaron as a type of Christ, but his flight from Africa was delayed and so he was not able to give his paper. The speakers then decided that since Mr Optland had given a paper before on “Why We Use the Authorised Version of the Bible” and that nearly all of the young people had not heard this paper, he would present it on this occasion.

The discussion following each paper was thorough and edifying. The young people showed great interest in the subjects, for which cause thanks is to be given to the Lord.

(Rev) J D Smith

## Johnnie Thain

The first article in this *Magazine* refers to a vain song whose theme was, “We’ll meet again” – in this world. Robert Murray M’Cheyne, was a well-known minister in Dundee who died in 1843, aged just 29. M’Cheyne wrote a poem in which he expresses, again and again, his confidence that he would again meet a boy who had just died. “Fair boy, we’ll meet again,” M’Cheyne wrote, fully expecting to meet him when they would both rise from their graves on the resurrection day, at the end of the world.

The boy was Johnnie Thain, who lived in Dundee. In contrast with the song, M’Cheyne had good reason for his confidence. The minister had known Johnnie when the boy was seeking salvation and he could see solid evidence that Johnnie had found salvation through Christ Jesus, the only Saviour for lost sinners.

Johnnie was not well when he wrote to M’Cheyne in January 1842, saying, “I feel I am a lost sinner, but Christ has said, ‘Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out’. I would like to be His, to be saved in the Lord. O may the Lord bless this affliction [his illness] to my soul and make me one of His lambs!”

M’Cheyne was glad to receive his letter, and glad to write back although he was very busy. That day he had been riding in the snow. “It was pure, pure white,” he said; no one had passed that way since the snow had fallen. He remembered David’s prayer: “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow”. He wanted Johnnie to make that prayer his own. He should “often go

alone and look up to Jesus", who died to wash sinners from their sins, and say to Him: "Wash me".

"Do not delay", M'Cheyne added, warning Johnnie about "the lake of fire and brimstone [that] stretches beneath every soul that lives in sin, yet assuring him that in Christ "there is room for the guiltiest sinner". Again M'Cheyne warned, "Your time may be short; God only knows. The longest lifetime is short enough. It is all that is given you to be converted in. They are the happiest who are brought soonest to the bosom of Jesus."

Johnnie's time in this world was indeed short; he died about a month later. M'Cheyne wrote to Johnnie's brother, Alexander, and told him about two visits to Johnnie before he died. "I do trust and believe", said M'Cheyne, "that he was a saved boy. You know I am rather slow of coming to this conviction and not fond of speaking when I have not good evidence; but here, I think, God has not left us in doubt." M'Cheyne was wise not to *jump* to the conclusion that someone was converted. But he believed that, in Johnnie's case, there was good evidence that the boy had indeed believed in Jesus.

M'Cheyne said about Johnnie: "Over and over he told me that he was not afraid to die, for Christ had died. [Johnnie said,] 'How kind it was in God to send Jesus to die for sinners'." M'Cheyne found him calm and happy, even when in severe pain. He encouraged Alexander: "You have reason to mingle praise with your tears. Do not sorrow as one who has no hope."

Yet Alexander ought to seek benefit for his soul at this time of loss. In particular, he was to search out the sins of his heart, such as making idols of people or worldly things. And he was to "learn much of Christ" at such a time. He was not to be ashamed to feel sad, but he was to seek relief for this sadness in Christ. M'Cheyne directed him especially to passages in the Bible, such as John 11, which tells us about Christ at the grave of Lazarus; Luke 7:11-15, where we read of Christ at the gate of Nain; and Revelation 1:18, which speaks of Christ in heaven.

M'Cheyne also described Johnnie's position after death: "Happy boy! He shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on him, nor any heat. The days of his mourning are ended, and his eternity of love and holy joy is begun."

Johnnie, by God's grace, was ready to die. Let us seek earnestly, as he did, for the salvation that he found. Let us do so at once, so that we may not be too late. If we find Christ we can be sure of meeting again, in heaven, converted people that we know.

Beginning on the next page you will find the poem that M'Cheyne wrote after Johnnie's death. He himself was to die just a year later. How good that they were both ready to meet in heaven!

## A Believing Boy

I little thought, when last we met,  
Thy sun on earth was nearly set.  
I said what I can ne'er forget,  
"Dear boy, we'll meet again."

Though thou wert tossed upon thy bed,  
And sometimes criedst, "My head, my head!"  
Yet still the smile came back; I said,  
Fair boy, we'll meet again."

No hope thy weeping mother had;  
Thy sister's face was pale and sad;  
But thine was always bright and glad.  
Dear boy, we'll meet again.

"'Twas kind," thou saidst, "in God to die  
For worms like me. Once I would fly  
A darkened room – now Christ is nigh."  
Fair boy, we'll meet again.

"I love you well, my mother dear;  
I love you all, yet shed no tear.  
I'd rather be with Christ than here."  
Farewell, we'll meet again.

"I fain would live to preach to men;  
But if my God should spare till then,  
I would be loth to die again".  
Dear boy, we'll meet again.

The Sabbath sun rose bright and clear,  
When thine was setting on us here,  
To shine more bright in yonder sphere.  
Farewell, we'll meet again.

I stood beside thy silent bed;  
Thy marble brow was cold and dead,  
Thy gentle soul was fled, was fled.  
Dear boy, we'll meet again.

I saw thee in thy narrow rest,  
The clods upon thy coffin pressed;  
The clouds dropped tears, yet in my breast  
God said we'll meet again.

Yes, parents, smile through all your tears;  
A crown of life your darling wears;  
The grave a shady porch appears  
To where we'll meet again.

The precious dust beneath that lies  
Shall at the call of Jesus rise  
To meet the Bridegroom in the skies,  
That day we'll meet again.

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## Looking Around Us

### Facts and the Bible

A professor in Stirling University was putting forward his ideas about how a cause he supports should campaign for what it wants. He argued that less emphasis should be placed on facts and more on stories and “feel good” messages. But it seems foolish to pay less attention to facts. If the facts do not support our argument, we are in a dangerous position.

There is one thing we can be sure of: the Bible is true from the beginning to the end. So we can trust its message; we can trust everything it says. But everything that contradicts what the Bible says is false; it is not a fact.

The Bible tells us about God creating everything; that is a fact. It tells us about the Fall and that we are all sinners; that is true. It tells us that God “the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” (1 John 4:14) – that Christ died in the place of sinners, so that “whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). These are all facts.

We should take all these facts seriously and everything else that God has revealed in the Scriptures. We should receive them as truth – not only as what adds to our knowledge, but what demands a response. The response is to believe, to trust. We are called: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31). Then all will be well. We will have God’s care in this life and a blessed eternity in heaven.

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