

# 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*



**March 2021**

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**Cover Picture:** A robin gathering material for its nest.

## The Young People’s Magazine

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Volume 86

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Number 3

## Questions

One day Jesus saw a man who had always been blind, from the time that he was born. Jesus, in His great kindness, made the man able to see. Later He met the man again and asked him a very important question: did he “believe on the Son of God?” (John 9:35).

But the man did not know who the Son of God was. He did not try to hide his ignorance, which was good. He assumed, rightly, that if Jesus was speaking about the Son of God, He must know who that was. So he asked Jesus a question: “Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?”

So Jesus told the man who had been blind that He was Himself the Son of God. He said to the man: “Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee”. This was Jesus revealing Himself to the man, and at the same time He sent the Holy Spirit to work in the man’s heart so that he was able to believe in Jesus as the Son of God.

The man then told Jesus: “Lord, I believe”. And we can be sure that this was saving faith, because we are told that the man worshipped Jesus; he worshipped Jesus as the Son of God, treating Him as a divine Person. Jesus was and is not only a man, but the Son of God. He should therefore be worshipped; He should be given the glory that belongs to God.

You may have questions about Jesus and about believing in Jesus. What do you do with these questions? Do you just bottle them up in your own mind? You should bring your questions before God in prayer; you should pray that Jesus would answer your questions. He is the best teacher that ever was or ever will be. He is well aware of what you know and what you do not know. He knows the most effective way of bringing you to understand what you need to know about Him and the way of salvation through Him.

Of course, you cannot go to Jesus as people did when He was in this world, going about teaching those He met. But He is still able, from His throne in heaven, to answer your questions. His answer may come through the preaching in church. The minister may know nothing about your difficulty, but as he explains the Word of God, he may say something that is a suitable answer to your question.

Lots of people have asked, How can the minister know the things I am thinking? They may imagine that someone has told him. But no one has told the minister; it was God in His providence that led the minister to speak as he did. And if that happens to you, take it as an encouragement to tell all your difficulties to God in prayer and ask Him to explain them.

The same thing may happen as you read the Bible on your own; a verse in God's Word may give you an answer to your question, and another part of the Bible may shed light on another difficulty. Again, if you are thinking over your problems, God may bring a verse to your memory that provides you with an answer to one of your questions. And at some later time, He may give you an answer to some other question that you have been asking.

God encourages sinners to come to Him for help. In the first part of Isaiah 1, God was pointing out to Israel how sinful they had been in going away from Him. They had provoked Him to anger; their sins deserved to be punished. Yet He was still encouraging them to repent, to turn from their sins and seek His grace. He was still willing to forgive them; so He told them: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). Yes, they could still be forgiven – completely forgiven. They were encouraged to tell God what their situation was, and they should expect Him also to reason with *them*: to tell them how they should live, especially their duty to seek salvation urgently.

When they would speak to God in prayer they were to bring their questions to Him – their questions about spiritual things, especially to ask Him how they could be saved. Think of the jailer in Philippi after the earthquake that shook the prison so forcefully and opened all the doors. He was so disturbed at the thought of the prisoners escaping that he was ready to take away his own life and throw himself into a lost eternity. Paul and Silas were among the prisoners, because of what they had been doing in serving Christ. And when Paul saw the jailer draw his sword, he shouted out: "Do thyself no harm" (Acts 16:28).

This led to the jailer asking a question, a very good question. Perhaps by this time he recognised that these men were indeed the servants of the true God. He asked them: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" It is a question for you to ask anyone you believe could answer it scripturally. Perhaps you already know what they are likely to say – the answer Paul and Silas gave to the jailer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved".

Perhaps then you ask, What does it mean to believe on Christ? The answer to this question is: not only are we to believe what the Bible tells about Him as the Saviour who died in the place of sinners, but we are to trust in Him as

that Saviour. Perhaps you want to ask more questions about what believing means, but you should also pray to God that He would send the Holy Spirit to put life in your soul and make you able and willing to believe in the Saviour. The Spirit blessed what Paul and Silas said to the jailer, and the Spirit is able to bless your soul in the same way. Keep praying that He would do so, for Christ's sake.

There is an answer in the Bible to every proper question about spiritual things. An example of a question that no one should ask is: How long can I safely put off believing in Christ? The reason it is not a proper question is that we have no right to go on one moment longer in unbelief. The Bible tells us: "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2); now is the time that is acceptable to God for coming to Him through Christ; it is the time He has appointed.

Yet we should be able to work out an answer to that question, on the basis of Psalm 90:12, where Moses prays, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom". If we try to count the days that are left to us in this life, we will find it very difficult, because life is so uncertain. But if God teaches us to number them wisely, we will say something like this: They will be few, and to promise myself that I will live beyond the present moment is presumption. So we should add, I must seek the Lord, and salvation through Him, at once; it is dangerous to put off seeking Him.

John Newton was a wise old minister who died about 200 years ago. Someone mentioned during a meal that a lady had died. A young woman sitting opposite Newton asked, "How did she die?" The young woman wanted to know if the lady showed signs, at the end, of being ready for heaven.

Newton answered, "There is a more important question than that, which you should have asked first". When the young woman asked what could be more important than how the lady died, Newton told her the more important question: "How did she live?" A godly life is better evidence of being ready to die than what the person may say on their deathbed.

We should also remember that God asks questions. We will take only one example: "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" (Isaiah 55:2). It would be silly for someone hungry to pay good money for a piece of plastic that looks like a loaf. Just so, we should not waste our time and effort on what will not feed our soul or satisfy our deepest spiritual needs. So ask the Lord to help you distinguish between good spiritual food and what looks like it but is dangerous for your soul. God goes on to tell us: "Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good". We are to listen earnestly to what God tells us in the Bible; that is where we will find good food to satisfy our souls.

# Assurance of Being Saved

## 1. Salvation

*Rev George Macdonald*

This is the first section of a paper given at a Youth Conference in Australia in 2013.

The Apostle Paul was blessed with an assured faith and hope in God His Saviour. He writes: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Timothy 1:12).

We all want to feel assured that we are right with God; indeed it is a deeply-felt need of the human heart. To be sure about something often brings a sense of peace and satisfaction. To be assured that your husband or wife loves you, to be assured that your friends value you, to be assured that you have done enough study to feel hopeful about that exam tomorrow, brings a sense of peace, does it not? How much more should we all desire to be saved and to be assured that we are saved, to be assured that God loves us and that we have peace and salvation as we journey on to eternity? Assurance of personal salvation is an assurance we should all strive for.

Jeremiah wrote, "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jeremiah 31:3). Yet many believers struggle with assurance of salvation, and not just young believers. Some who have followed Christ for many years have found at times that their assurance has almost gone. Assurance may be stronger or weaker at different times. It is my prayerful desire that each and all of us would obtain salvation through faith in Christ and then know the assurance of it.

In looking at this important subject I want to make the following six points: (1.) Sinners must be saved. (2.) The message of the gospel. (3.) Is assurance of salvation possible in this life? (4.) How can we get assurance of personal salvation? (5.) Can assurance of personal salvation be lost? (6.) Is there a place where assurance of personal salvation will be perfect?

**1. Sinners must be saved.** Paul wrote to Timothy: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief". Thus we learn (1) there are sinners, (2) sinners need to be saved by Christ.

The Bible speaks much and often about sin. From Genesis 3 onwards we learn of the fact that man is a sinner. He was not, of course, created as a sinner but rather became a sinner through the fall of Adam. The doctrine of original sin is humbling. *The Shorter Catechism* puts it like this: "The sin-

fulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it" (Answer 18).

The American theologian R L Dabney notes that "original sin (so called because native, and because the fountain of all other sin) is the general term, expressing both elements of imputed guilt and total depravity". Since the fall of man, all those descending from Adam by ordinary generation sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression. Thus we are all born in sin and shapen in iniquity, as David put it in Psalm 51. Such is the dreadful condition of man as a sinner that he needs God to save him. We sing:

"He took me from a fearful pit, and from the miry clay,  
And on a rock He set my feet, establishing my way" (Ps 40:2).

No genuine assurance of salvation is possible unless we are first convinced of our sin and misery. What need do unconvinced sinners see of salvation, far less assurance of salvation?

No, before assurance of personal salvation, there must be an assurance of personal sin. Most people today, even professing Christians, show clearly that they have no sense of sin. Some have an alarming tendency to speak of having great assurance of God's love, while they are utterly ignorant of sin as a dreadful reality; they know little of sin as a great evil, and so do not see clearly their need of a divine Saviour from sin.

Sometimes it is those who, by the grace of God, are most deeply conscious of their sin that are most clearly assured of their salvation. That may seem paradoxical, but when we see sin, in a measure, as God sees it, we are led to look to Christ for salvation. So looking unto Jesus, the sinner is assured that he shall never perish. Not because he is not a sinner, but rather because he is a sinner saved by Christ, the Son of God.

A sense of sin is consistent with assurance of salvation. Naturally, if all we have is remorse, a consciousness of sin without looking to Christ, we will only be assured of our lost and undone condition. So it is necessary for us now to look at the message of the gospel as what underpins true assurance of personal salvation.

**2. The message of the gospel.** How can a sinner be assured of salvation when he knows nothing about the gospel of salvation? Sinners are saved by Christ, the Saviour of sinners. He is the one Mediator between God and men, presented to us in the gospel of God's grace.

The message of the gospel comes to us by the authority of God. Our warrant to believe is the bare gospel command, such as was set before the

Philippian jailer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved". Little wonder that the Apostle Paul could say to believers in Rome: "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). And he could add, in the next verse, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

The true, good news of the gospel is what is announced in that most famous of Bible verses, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

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*For Junior Readers*

## The Bible and the Bullet

John Mackenzie was brought up near Bonar Bridge, in the north of Scotland, in the early 1800s. He was an adventurous lad and careless about spiritual things. When he was old enough, he wanted to be a soldier and joined the army much against his parents' wishes. This was at the time of the Peninsular War, when the British were helping the Spanish fight against the French invaders in Spain. So, once John was trained, he would have to travel across Europe and face many dangers.

A godly lady who lived near his family heard the news that he was going away; she asked him to call on her before he left. When he went to say goodbye to her, she gave him a Bible to take with him. She told him about the verse in Psalm 91 which says,

"A thousand at thy side shall fall, on thy right hand shall lie  
Ten thousand dead, yet unto thee it shall not once come nigh".

She solemnly told him to keep the Bible carefully and never to part with it. She also said that she believed he would be brought safely through the dangers that lay ahead.

Although he had no real regard for the Bible itself at that time, John decided, out of respect for the godly lady, to do as she had told him. Not long after this, he had to leave for Spain to join the army which was fighting there under the command of the Duke of Wellington. John took part in many battles but the Lord kept him safely through all these dangers. He still carried the Bible with him but made no effort to read it.

At last the French army left Spain and the regiments fighting under Wellington were transferred to Belgium. There they fought the French at the famous Battle of Waterloo in June 1815. On the morning of the battle, when



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the soldiers were taking their places in the ranks, John realised that he had left his Bible behind. He ran back, snatched it up and, in his haste, just popped it into his waist belt. During the battle, the Bible slipped out of its place and fell to the ground. As John bent down to pick it up, a bullet whizzed over his head and killed the officer who was standing right behind him.

John was now brought to see clearly that his life had been wonderfully preserved by the God whom he had so long neglected. He was awakened to serious thoughts about his past careless life and to a concern for the salvation of his soul. The Bible, which for so long he had not read, became his constant companion and his most precious treasure. He read it eagerly and prayed that the Lord would have mercy on him. By the grace of God, his heart was changed and he became “a new creature” in Christ Jesus.

Once he was discharged from the army, he made his way back to visit his old home. He specially wanted to visit the godly old lady who had given him his Bible all these years before, and to thank her for what she had done. But she had already been taken home to heaven.

What about you? I am sure you have a Bible of your own, probably more than one. Do you value it? Do you read it regularly? What did the Saviour say? “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.”

*J van Kralingen*

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## The Missing Text

*Rev K M Watkins*

The minister had not been to that church before. Certainly he should have found out more before he agreed to preach there, and we would not expect Free Presbyterian ministers to get into the same position. Strangely, he was not asked to take the first part of the service; a man from the congregation did that. Only when it came to the time of the sermon was he invited to the pulpit. So he went, the people watching and waiting for him to announce his text. There was silence as the minister turned the pages of the pulpit Bible, backwards and forwards. He seemed to be taking a long time. Did he not know where to find his text? Eventually, looking around at the congregation, the minister asked, “Is there anyone here that has a Bible with my text in it?” The verse he wanted to preach from was not in the version of the Bible used in that church.

I do not know what the minister’s text was. Perhaps it was 1 John 5:7. The Bible in the pulpit was not the faithful Authorised or King James Version (AV), for in the AV, the version that we always use in our English services,

that verse reads clearly and fully: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one".

Perhaps the pulpit Bible was the New International Version (NIV), which has been popular among Evangelicals for many years. In the NIV, most of 1 John 5:7 is missing. It reads: "For there are three that testify". The English Standard Version (ESV), now used by many calling themselves Reformed, does the same. The Good News Bible (GNB), more of a paraphrase than a translation, has just: "There are three witnesses". The New American Standard Bible (NASB), even though it claims to keep very close to the original languages of inspiration, does not have verse 7 at all. Neither does the American Standard Version (ASV) of 1901, on which it was based. The Revised Standard Version (RSV) is the same.

1 John 5:7 is a full and clear declaration of the vital doctrine of the Trinity. As *The Shorter Catechism* explains, "There are three Persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory". Included in the *Catechism's* proof texts is 1 John 5:7. Users of these other Bibles will be confused at that reference, because their Bible says nothing at all about the Trinity in 1 John 5:7.

Or perhaps the minister's text was John 5:4, which in the AV records the wonderful miracle taking place at Bethesda: "For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had". Perhaps he had prepared a sermon using the various diseases of the poor people gathered at Bethesda as a picture of the different ways the disease of sin shows itself. Then the sermon might go on to speak of the water being like the gospel, which when it is set in motion by the Lord's heavenly influence, whoever goes to that provision is healed of sin.

That would have been a sermon to look forward to! But it would have been a sermon very hard to preach if the pulpit Bible had been the ESV, or the NIV, or the RSV, or almost any of the modern English translations, for those Bibles have no such text. Verse 4 does not appear in them at all. Poor sinners need every encouragement and example that they can get, in order to believe that there could be mercy for them. But these modern Bibles deprive them of John 5:4.

The minister's text might have been Mark 9:44 or 46, both of which appear in the AV: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched". Both of these verses are missing in almost all the modern English translations. It might be said that it does not matter, for the minister could have used verse 48 as his text, which says exactly the same thing. But what if the minister

had planned to preach on all three verses together, just as Jesus said these words three times and just as the Holy Spirit recorded them three times? In this way, out of the mouth of the three verses as witnesses, the most unwelcome truth of the terrible reality of eternal punishment is emphasised. In hell, the fire of God's anger never ceases to burn, and the accusations of a guilty conscience never cease to gnaw away deep in a man's soul.

No one wants to hear about hell. The devil likes to deceive men by telling them that there is no hell at the end of a godless life. It is what he did at the beginning with our first parents, assuring Eve, "Thou shalt not surely die". These modern versions with their missing verses are helping the devil with his work. It is far too easy to deceive our own souls and put hell away from our minds. By repeating the solemn truth, the Lord is faithfully warning us. If we are wise, we will want to use a Bible that warns us fully of what will happen if we die without Christ. But these modern Bibles do not do that.

The minister's text might have been the last part of Luke 9:55 with the first part of verse 56, where the Saviour corrects His disciples for wanting to call for fire to fall from heaven on the people who would not welcome Him, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." These words are omitted from the modern versions. Leaving this out is especially grievous because this is not recorded in the other Gospels.

We can imagine the sermon the minister might have been going to preach from this text. He would have explained the sinful, judgemental attitude that sinners are ready to hold against their fellow-sinners who actually are no worse than themselves. And then he would have compared that with the gracious and compassionate heart of the Saviour. He had every right to destroy men's lives instantly, especially those who resisted Him, but instead His mission in the world was to save. What important instruction is here! What conviction we should feel about our cold-heartedness towards others! How we should marvel at the wonderful compassion of Christ! Here is great mercy indeed. What then can we say about Bibles that miss out these words? Who would want to use such Bibles?

These are just some of many examples where modern translations leave verses out of the Bible. Next time we will find out why. We will also see that the New King James Version has its problems, even though it includes these verses. Meanwhile we should remember three verses of Scripture. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35) – so what has happened to so many of His words in these modern versions? Through Moses, the Lord warned Israel, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye

diminish ought from it” (Deuteronomy 4:2) – so what are these Bibles doing, reducing the Word of God? Almost the last words of the Bible threaten: “If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:19) – so what can be said about Bibles that take away from God’s words?

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## The Covenanters: What They Teach Us

### 3. Persecution

*Rev Caleb Hembd*

Another section of a paper given at a New Zealand Youth Conference. Last month’s section spoke about covenants made by individuals and by nations.

**T**imes of blessing are often followed by times of testing. The 20 years after Judah, under King Asa, entered into a covenant with the Lord were times of great blessing. But a time of testing followed. Baasha the king of Israel invaded Judah, and King Asa relied on the king of Syria to defeat him, instead of relying on the Lord. “Herein thou hast done foolishly;” Hanani boldly declared to Asa, “therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars” (2 Chronicles 16:9).

The same sequence of blessing and trial occurred in Scotland. For 22 years after the National Covenant was signed, the Church of Scotland enjoyed remarkable spiritual blessing, despite war, famine and disease in different parts of the nation. Vast numbers professed to be converted. In many places, the taverns were empty, no swearing was heard anywhere, and family worship was held in every home. But in 1660, King Charles II began his time on the throne of Britain, and a time of intense trial began.

Charles II aimed to be a king who had no limits whatever on his authority. One of the biggest obstacles to his goal was the Church of Scotland, which had a *Presbyterian* form of church government. In other words, the Church was governed by presbyters, or elders, who acknowledged Christ to be the only Head of the Church. This form of government made it difficult for the King to control the Scottish Church.

By contrast, the Church of England was ruled by bishops, and the King was recognised as the head of the Church. All he had to do to control the Church was to appoint bishops who agreed with him.

The King therefore moved quickly to change the government of the Church of Scotland by introducing bishops and requiring ministers to recognise their authority. But hundreds of ministers refused. They believed that Christ is

King over the Church and that He alone has the right to say how the Church should be organised and governed. The King then ordered them to leave their congregations and manses in the middle of winter, and many of the ministers and their families fell into poverty.

But many of the people refused to co-operate with the government's schemes to change the way the Church was governed. Instead, they began attending conventicles – public worship services held outdoors and led by expelled ministers. The local churches were largely deserted. The government was surprised to find such determined resistance to their schemes. At first, they tried to force the people to submit. For example, they passed laws that threatened heavy fines on people who did not attend the local church. They would imprison them if they could not or would not pay these fines. The prisons rapidly filled with impoverished Covenanters, but nothing could change their minds. Their Bible and their Covenants required them to obey God rather than men, even in the matter of church government.

After some years of trying to make the people conform, the government decided to try to win them over by offering their ministers an “indulgence”. The indulgence allowed some of the expelled ministers to return on certain conditions. At the same time, the indulgence declared that the King still had the right to govern the Church. Some of the expelled ministers accepted the indulgence and were restored to their pulpits. Other ministers rejected it, saying that the King had no right to regulate their ministry. The result of the indulgence was a sad division between ministers who had all suffered persecution.

But what were the people to do? Should they follow the indulged ministers back to the Church? If they did, they would find a church that *seemed* little changed from the Church in its best days. They could go to the same church building, sing the same Psalms without musical instruments, and hear many of the same doctrines preached. Yet so much had changed. The indulged minister could not declare all the counsel of God. He could not say that Christ alone rules the Church. Therefore, if the people went to hear the indulged minister, they would hear a man who, in practice, denied the kingly authority of Christ.

This was something that thousands in Scotland refused to do. They did not want to be associated with a denial of Christ's kingship in any way. They continued attending conventicles in remote places. Increasingly, armed men on horseback would stand guard at these meetings, sounding the alarm whenever they saw government troops approaching. The government became increasingly hostile, and eventually gave soldiers permission to shoot Covenanters on the spot if they refused to take an unbiblical oath.

These sad years were called “The Killing Times”, when the sufferings of the godly abounded.

Yet, as we shall see, they were also times when the consolations of the godly abounded. The courage, peace, joy and triumph of the Covenanters astounded their persecutors and inspired others to take up their testimony for the crown rights of Christ, the only King of the Church.

## Children Walking in Truth

### 4. A Call to Come to Christ

*J C Ryle*

Ryle directed this sermon to children; probably he was including young people. But everyone, young and old, should be able to read it with profit. It is taken, with editing, from Ryle's *Home Truths*, volume 5. Last month's article gave some reasons why John rejoiced to find children walking in truth. Here Ryle gives one last reason before going on to give some final advice. This article finishes the series.

2 John 4. *I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth.*

(4.) Lastly, John rejoiced because he knew that walking in truth in the life that now is *would lead to glory and honour in the life to come.*

The life to come is the life we should all think most of. Many people seem only to care for what happens to them in this life. But they are sadly mistaken. This life is very short; it will soon be over. The oldest man will tell you that it seems only a few years since he was a child. The life to come is the life of real importance; it will have no end; it will be never-ending happiness or never-ending pain. What a serious thought that is!

Children, I do not doubt John was thinking of the life to come when he rejoiced. The Lord Jesus Christ had often told him of the glorious rewards prepared for those who walk in truth. John thought of the rewards laid up in heaven for these children and he was glad.

I do not doubt that John looked forward in his heart to the day when Jesus shall come again. He may have imagined these dear children clothed in robes white as snow, having golden crowns on their heads and standing at Jesus Christ's right hand, enjoying pleasures for evermore. He saw them and their beloved mother meeting again in heaven, meeting in that blessed place where parting and sorrow shall be known no more. These must have been pleasant thoughts. I do not wonder that John rejoiced.

Now I have finished what I have to say about our text. I have done what I promised. I have told you what it is to walk in truth; that is one thing. I have told you why John rejoiced so much to find this lady's children walking in

truth. That is another. Let me now wind up all by saying something which, by God's help, may fasten this sermon in your minds. Sadly, how many sermons are forgotten! I want this sermon to stick in your hearts and do good.

Ask yourselves then, everyone, these questions: Would John, if he knew me at this time, rejoice over me? Would John be pleased if he saw my ways and my behaviour, or would he look serious and sad?

Children, children, do not neglect these questions. This is no light matter. No wise man will ever rejoice over bad children. They may be clean and pretty, have fine clothes and look well outwardly, but a wise man will only feel sad when he sees them – he will feel they are wrong inwardly. They do not have new hearts; they are not going to heaven. Believe me, it is far better to be good than to be pretty. It is far better to have grace in your hearts than to have a lot of money in your pockets, or fine clothes on your backs. Only children who love Christ are the children who rejoice a wise man's heart.

Children, hear the last words I have to say to you. I give you all an invitation from Christ, my Master. I say to you, in His name, come and walk in truth.

This is the way to gladden the hearts of your parents and relations. This is the one thing above all others which will please your ministers and Sabbath school teachers. You little know how happy you make us when you try to walk in truth. Then we feel that all is well, though we die and leave you behind us in this evil world. Then we feel that your souls are safe, though we are called away and can help you and teach you no more. Then we feel that you are in the right way to be happy and that you are prepared for troubles, however many may come upon you. For we know that walking in truth gives peace now, and we are sure that it leads to glory hereafter.

Come then tonight and begin to walk in truth. The devil will try to make you think that it is too hard, that you cannot do it. Do not believe him, he is a liar. He wants to do you harm. Only trust in Christ and follow Him; you will soon say His way is a way of pleasantness and a path of peace. Pray for the Holy Spirit to come into your heart, and you will soon feel strong. He can guide you into all truth. Only read the Bible regularly, and you will soon be made wise unto salvation. The Bible is the word of truth. Read and pray. Pray and read. Begin these habits and keep them up. Do these things, and before long you will stop saying that it is impossible to walk in truth. But come; come at once.

Children, I find Jesus Christ saying, in the third chapter of Revelation, "Behold I stand at the door and knock". Who knows but this may have been going on tonight? Who knows but Jesus may have been knocking at some of your hearts all through this sermon? If it is so, do not keep Him waiting

any longer; if it is so, go to Him this night on your knees in prayer; go to Him and ask Him at once to come in. Ask Jesus to come and dwell in your heart and take care of it as His own. Ask Him to make you able to walk in truth.

Think how many children in the world have never been invited as you are; think of how many boys and girls have never had the chance of being saved. Beloved children, *take care*. You, at least, cannot say you were not invited. Jesus invites you; the Bible invites you; and I, the servant of Christ, invite you all tonight. O come to Christ. Come and be happy. Come, and *walk in truth*.

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*For Younger Readers*

## **So Thankful for a Bible**

**H**ow many Bibles are in your house? In many homes I am sure there are a lot of Bibles. But I have been reading about a village where there were no Bibles. And lots of people very much wanted one, or even a small part of the Bible.

They wanted to read what God had to say to them. They would have been happy to get a Bible that was old and worn.

Two men from the village went away one day to some other place. They wanted to earn some money by shifting earth with a shovel. They were ready to work all winter if only they could have enough money to buy an old, worn Bible that they could take back to their village.

After earning some money, the two men went to someone's house. They explained, I am sure, why they came. To their great surprise, they were given – not an old, worn Bible – but one that was brand new. They could hardly believe what was happening. They wanted to pay for the Bible. But the person who gave them the Bible had not paid for it. This person was given some Bibles to hand out free to people who needed one. At once the two men set off for their village with the Bible.

A few days later, a letter arrived giving thanks for the gift of the Bible. The letter was signed by 30 very happy people, not just two. But how were 30 people to share just one Bible? They cut up the one Bible very carefully into 30 parts. All of them would read their



part of the Bible and then they were going to exchange their part with someone else. And this would have gone on until everyone had read the whole Bible. I am sure they would then start to read it again. See that you will make good use of your Bible.

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## “My Mast is Broken”

This account comes, with editing, from an article by Rev John Tallach that appeared in *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* for September 1927. It tells, in his own words, of the conversion of Joel Bulu, who lived on one of the Fiji islands that was then called Vavan.

I was born in Vavan in the heathen days, nor was it till I was a big lad that the gospel came to our land. When I heard the report of it, I was full of anger and my soul burned with hatred against it. “And shall our gods be forsaken?” I cried, in great wrath. “As for me, I will never forsake them.” One day I heard a man telling of the gospel, who said it promised a land of the dead different from the place of which our fathers spoke – even a home in the sky for the good, while evil men were cast into a dreadful place whose fire no one could quench.

On that very night I went out with the lads of the town. It was a fine night, and looking up to the heavens, where the stars were shining, this thought suddenly smote me: “O the beautiful land! If the words are true which were told us today, then indeed these gospel people are happy,” and my soul longed with a great longing to reach that beautiful land. I could not rest; so I went to a town where a Christian chief dwelt, to tell him that I wished to be a Christian.

“Good is your coming,” cried the Chief, for great was his joy. “But why do you want to be a Christian?”

“I have heard”, was my reply, “of the good land where you go after death. So I wish to repent that I also may be a dweller in the sky.”

So they prayed with me, and thus was I turned to Christianity, but I knew nothing of its meaning. Then the missionary came to Vavan and, standing under a tree in the public square, he preached to us of the tares among the wheat. It was a sermon that pierced my soul, for I had thought that I was one of the wheat, but now I found that I was among the tares.

As I heard, I wept and trembled, for I thought, “I shall never see the good land”. When the sermon was over and the people rose to go, I sat in my place quaking for fear and weeping in great anguish, for all the strength had gone out of my body.

“What is the matter with you?” they asked.

I replied, “Pray for me, pray for me, I beseech you!”

So they knelt down and prayed for me, first one and then the other, till they were tired. But I found no comfort, so I rose and, going into an empty outhouse, I knelt down there by myself, weeping and praying before the Lord, for now I felt I was a very great sinner, the wrath of God lay heavy on me. And I hated myself because of my evil ways. I cried, “O what is that repentance of which the preacher told us? Lord, let me find it that I may live.” . . . Thus I continued a long time, seeking the Lord in prayer with many others.

At last there came a day in 1834, when the missionaries assembled us to communion. In preaching, the missionary told of the work of God in his own soul. My heart burned within me as I listened to his words, for in speaking of himself, he told me all I felt. And I said to myself: “We are like two canoes sailing bow and bow, neither being swifter than the other”. Thus it was with me when he told of repentance. But when he began to speak of his faith in Christ, the forgiveness of sins, and the peace and joy which lift the spirit that he found in believing, I then said, “My mast is broken, my sail is blown away, he has gone completely out of my sight, and I am here drifting helplessly over the waves”.

But as I eagerly listened to his words, telling of the love of Christ, my eyes were opened. I saw the way and I, even I, also believed and lived. I was like a man fleeing for his life from an enemy behind him and groping along the wall of a house in the dark to find a door that he may enter in and escape, when, lo, a door suddenly is opened before his face, and at once, with one bound, he leaps inside. Tears streamed down my cheeks.

Often had I wept before, but not like my former weeping were the tears which I now shed. Then I wept out of sorrow and fear, but now for joy and gladness, and because my heart was full of love to Him who had loved me and given Himself for me.

The people called on me and asked how it was with me. I tried to stand, but it seemed to me as if my soul was parted from its body, and I remembered nothing more until I found myself on a mat, and the missionaries anxiously gathered round me. “What is the matter?” they said.

“I live, I live!” I cried. “Let me rise that I may declare the mercies of God. O what a day! I can never forget it. The prayers! The praises! The tears of joy!”

Mr Tallach added, “Joel lived for nearly 40 years after this happened, and was used in bringing many others to experience both his sorrow and his joy. Three steps, three awakenings – the result of one was self-righteousness, the result of the next was true sorrow for sin, and the result of the last was joy in the Redeemer.”

# Looking Around Us

## Suicide

An American student took his own life after he had been using an app to trade on the stock market and understood that he was £530 000 in debt. He obviously felt he could not face the consequences of his situation. He was not alone in deliberately bringing his life to an end. It is very sad when anyone commits suicide. It is especially sad for parents and other close relatives when this happens – and there is the fearful solemnity of a soul plunging into eternity having broken God’s commandment, “Thou shalt not kill”.

But such is the extent to which this generation in the Western world has departed from the Bible that very few take seriously the fact that there is a God. And if people do not believe that there is a God, where can they go when they are in serious trouble? God tells us, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me” (Psalm 50:15). If they do not believe that God exists, people will not call on Him in prayer; they will not do so even when they are in serious trouble. So they cannot expect God to deliver them, which He is able to do.

And He is able to deliver us when we are in trouble of soul – when we feel the guilt of our sin and know that we deserve that God would send us to a lost eternity because we have sinned against *Him*. He is the one who created us, and so He has a right to expect perfect obedience from us. But we are to call on God to forgive us, for the sake of Christ, who died in the place of sinners. He died to bear their punishment instead of having to bear it themselves. So Christ is calling us, however discouraged we may feel, “Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:22). We are to believe in Christ, who is God, so that we may be saved – wherever we may live, and however difficult our circumstances may be.

Lots of people were turning away from Christ one day in Capernaum. Then He turned to His disciples and asked them if they too would go away. Peter answered, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:68). We should realise that there is no one but Jesus to whom we can go if we recognise that we need eternal life.

However difficult our situation may be, we are not to despair. God still lives. He still hears prayer. He can supply all our needs. You may see no way out of your difficulties. But God knows how to deliver you. Go to Him and ask Him to do so. But remember that Christ tells us: “Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these [other] things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

# Among the Children?

This poem by John Newton is based on God's words in Jeremiah 3:19: "But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? And I said, Thou shalt call Me, My father; and shalt not turn away from Me".

Alas, by nature how depraved,  
How prone to every ill!  
Our lives to Satan how enslaved,  
How obstinate our will!

And can such sinners be restored,  
Such rebels reconciled?  
Can grace itself the means provide  
To make a foe a child?

Yes, grace has found the wondrous  
means  
Which shall effectual prove,  
To cleanse us from our countless sins,  
And teach our hearts to love.

Jesus for sinners undertakes,  
And died that they may live;  
His blood a full atonement makes;  
And cries aloud, "Forgive".

Yet one thing more must grace  
provide  
To bring us home to God,  
Or we shall slight the Lord, who died,  
And trample on His blood.

The Holy Spirit must reveal  
The Saviour's work and worth;  
Then the hard heart begins to feel  
A new and heavenly birth.

Thus bought with blood and born  
again,  
Redeemed and saved by grace,  
Rebels in God's own house obtain  
A son's and daughter's place.

## 2021 UK Youth Conference Update

This year's Youth Conference was arranged for April 7-9, God willing, at Strathallan School, Forgandenny, Perth, PH2 9EG. At the time of sending this Magazine to the printer, the Conference has not been cancelled. Those who are interested will find up-to-date information about the Conference on the Church website: [www.fpchurch.org.uk](http://www.fpchurch.org.uk) – when a final decision has been made.

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