

The Young People's Magazine

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

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



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Cover Picture: Cheetahs at the Masai Mara, in Kenya.

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“What Shall I Do Then with Jesus?”

After Jesus had been arrested, and tried before the high priest and others, He was brought before Pilate, who was the Roman Governor over Judaea. Pilate asked Jesus various questions and became convinced that He was innocent; Pilate said, “I find no fault in Him” (John 19:4). He tried to get the Jews to accept that he should release Jesus, but he did not succeed; they wanted Barabbas, a robber, instead.

Pilate then asked them: “What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?” (Matthew 27:22). He must have known what he should do with an innocent man; it was his duty to release him. How great Pilate’s responsibility was! It was to judge every prisoner justly, but especially the God-man.

He tried to escape from his guilt for a wrong decision by washing his hands. That could not change the fact that, before God, he was justly liable to punishment for his unjust decision. He should have recognised the claims of Christ to be a King, but One whose “kingdom is not of this world”. And Christ explained, “If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight”. Christ’s disciples did not fight; so Pilate should have realised that here was a heavenly King, to whom everyone present was responsible – including Pilate himself. But the One being judged was no threat to the Roman Emperor and his earthly kingdom, for Christ’s kingdom did not have its origins in this world.

At that time, the Roman Governor came into contact with the man Christ Jesus, who was also the Son of God. Most readers of this article have many times come into contact with Christ Jesus; they have read about Him in the Bible and have listened to Christ’s ambassadors – preachers of the gospel – telling them about this glorious Saviour. Just as Pilate had a responsibility to give a proper answer to Jesus’ question, so we have a responsibility to give a proper answer, as before God, to the same question as Pilate asked. But before we consider our individual answers, let us notice how four men we read about in the Gospels reacted to Jesus.

1. Andrew. He was one of John the Baptist’s disciples. One day two of them were with John, who pointed them to Jesus and told them: “Behold the

Lamb of God” (John 1:36). What did John mean? He was thinking of all the sacrifices that were offered at the temple; they were offered because of sin, but none of them could really take away anyone’s sin. Each animal offered as a sacrifice had to die, but they were all pointing forward to a better sacrifice. And John was now saying, Here is *the* sacrifice that will really take away sin; here is Someone who will die in the place of sinners.

Yes, Jesus came to offer Himself as a sacrifice, and Andrew was not only to use the eyes of his body to look to Jesus; he was to use the eyes of his soul to look to Jesus *by faith*. He was to trust in Jesus as the Saviour of sinners, One who could truly save because He was the Lamb of God.

Did Andrew ask himself: “What shall I do then with Jesus?” Perhaps he did not need to; the answer to the question was so obvious to him. John’s words carried conviction with them, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and at once Andrew believed in Him as the Messiah promised in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. (The words *Messiah* and *Christ* mean the same thing: the Anointed One. Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Saviour.) And Andrew showed his faith in Jesus as the Messiah by going to his brother Simon Peter and telling him that he had found the Messiah.

2. *The man born blind.* Jesus met this man and made him able to see with the eyes of his body. But the man still could not use the eyes of his soul to see. In other words, he could not look to Jesus *by faith*. So Jesus’ first question to him was: “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” (John 9:35). Jesus was, of course, asking about Himself.

The man answered honestly: “Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?” The man needed to be taught, and he acted wisely, for he put his question to Jesus Himself. That is what Pilate ought to have done. And that is what we ought to do when we realise that there are important spiritual matters which we do not understand.

So Jesus said to the man: “Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee”. Jesus was telling the man: I am the Son of God. And, with these words, Jesus made the man’s soul able to see; the man was now able to believe; he did look by faith to Jesus as the Son of God, who was able to save his soul.

Then he said to Jesus: “Lord, I believe”. And the man worshipped Jesus; he was now spiritually alive. Unlike Pilate, he knew what he must do with Jesus, the Christ: he believed in Jesus Christ and worshipped Him.

3. *Peter.* One day Peter and the other disciples were in Capernaum with Jesus, who was teaching in the synagogue there. But the people did not like what they heard; they called it “an hard saying” (John 6:60) and they went away from Jesus. They did not wait to consider properly what they should

do with Him; they were very sinful in turning away from Him. Pilate did not really consider what Jesus was saying; so he rejected the claims of Jesus. These people in Capernaum were rejecting Him too. Stop for a moment and ask yourself if you are really considering what Jesus is saying to you.

Jesus asked the disciples: “Will ye also go away?”

It was Peter who answered. He said, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” He knew what he should do with Jesus: he must go on listening to what Jesus said; he must go on trusting in Him whatever He taught him and the other disciples. No one else could tell Peter how sinners like him could have eternal life. And why was he so sure that Jesus was the one he should listen to? Because he had already learned that Jesus is God; he said, “We believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God”. We too must be ready to listen to whatever Jesus is teaching through Scripture; we must trust in Him and worship.

4. Thomas. This disciple refused to believe in Jesus after He rose from the dead, unless the Saviour would let him put his finger into the hole made by the nails in Jesus’ hands and put his hand into Jesus’ side. He was setting unreasonable standards for what he would believe. Yet Jesus had, before His death, told the disciples that, not only was He going to die, He was also to rise again from the dead. Thomas should have been fully expecting Jesus to do just as He had said He would.

Yet Jesus gave Thomas permission to put his finger into the holes in Jesus’ hands and his hand into Jesus’ side. But probably Thomas did not need to do so, for just then he exclaimed, “My Lord and My God”. He believed in Jesus as God, the One who had a right to tell him what to do, and so he worshipped Jesus.

The Saviour was very gracious to Thomas, making him willing and able to put away his doubts and to believe. If you have doubts about the Bible, about God, or about Jesus Christ, they are unreasonable. But remember that Jesus is still very gracious. Pray that He would take away all these doubts and make you able and willing to trust in Jesus as the One whom God appointed to be the Saviour of sinners.

Finally, think further about *yourself*. Even in reading this article, you have come into contact with Jesus. What will you do with Him? Will you believe in Him? Will you worship Him? There is no doubt about your responsibility to do so – your responsibility before God and your responsibility to yourself as you make your way through this world, with only two destinations before you: heaven and hell. God tells us in the Bible: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31). Consider the question earnestly and urgently: what will you do with Jesus which is called Christ?

“If You Cannot Argue”

A converted young man spoke to his minister one evening about the other men in the workshop where he was employed. Their job was to dye cloth. “The fellows in our shop”, he said, “are always picking flaws in Christians and arguing against the Bible, and I don’t know how to answer them.”

“The best logic anyone can use,” answered his pastor, “is what a good man has called *the logic of the life*.” He advised the young dyer: “Give them that”, and assured him that the men could not challenge it.

“The logic of the life?” asked the man, not quite understanding what his pastor meant.

“I will tell you,” he said. “There was once employed at a dye-house as ungodly a set of fellows as could well be: scoffers at religion, despisers of the Word of God, swearing, drinking, betting, fighting, gambling. At last one of the number was drawn to attend a prayer meeting, when the Spirit of God laid hold of him. Poor John was almost in despair about his sins, which, he said, looked black and blacker. But Jesus Christ came and spoke peace to his soul. Light broke upon him. Old things passed away, and all things became new.”

John gave up his drinking and he was no longer close friends with those who used to drink with him. He brought home his wages; he started keeping family worship. Everything, both at home and elsewhere, looked so much better.

Two of his fellow workers, Tom and Jem, saw this change in his life and followed John in his new ways. They turned over a new leaf, went to church with him and behaved like good Christians should. John became a member of the Church, and it was said that, instead of being a tiger, he became a lamb.

John’s religion was severely tested at the dye-house. The other dyers teased him, mocked him, swore at him, and brought all their unbelief to bear strongly against him and his religion. Tom and Jem tried for some time to stand up for him and resist the storm of persecution. Yet after a while they gave in and became ashamed of their religion. They deserted John and went back to their old ways. They did not have new hearts.

But John, although it was difficult for him to keep his temper, acted patiently. He knew that he had weak points; so he watched against them and trusted more firmly in Christ. By God’s grace, he stood as firm as a rock. John never tried to say much, but his careful Christian life was a powerful argument for his godly principles.

One day the other workmen were boasting about the great good that came

from infidelity, as they called their refusal to believe the Bible. They boasted too about how much harm the Bible had done, but these were men who were completely biased against God’s Word.

John felt stirred up by all this and knew that he had to speak. He turned round and said gently but firmly: “Well, let us deal plainly in this matter, my friends, and judge of the tree by the fruit it bears. You call yourselves infidels. Let us see what your principles do. I suppose what they do on a small scale they will do on a large one.

“Now there are Tom and Jem”, John said, pointing to the two who went with him and then turned back. “You have tried your principles on them, and you know what they have done for them. When they tried to serve Christ they were civil, good-tempered, kind husbands and fathers. They were cheerful, hard-working and ready to oblige. What have you made them?

“Look and see. They are cast down and cross; their mouths are full of cursing and filthiness; they are drunk every week; their children half-clothed, their wives broken-hearted, their homes wretched. That is what your principles have done.

“Now I have tried Christ and His religion, and what has it done for me? You know well what I used to be. There were none of you that could drink so much, swear so desperately, and fight so masterly. I had no money, and nobody would trust me.” John went on to confess that he used to treat his wife badly, that he was bad-tempered, hateful and hating other people.

“What has religion done for me?” he asked. “Thank God, I am not afraid to put it to you. Am I not a happier man than I was? Am I not a better workman and a kinder companion? Would I once have put up with what I now bear from you? I could beat any of you as easily now as ever. Why don’t I? Do you hear a foul word from my mouth? Do you catch me at a public house? Has anybody got anything against me?

“Go and ask my neighbours if I am not altered for the better. Go and ask my wife. Let my house bear witness. God be praised, here is what Christianity has done for me; there is what infidelity has done for Jem and Tom.”

John stopped speaking. And the dyers did not have one word to say in reply to him. John was right and they were wrong. And they knew it.

The minister was now almost finished. He said about John: “He used a logic they could not answer – the logic of the life.” And then he drew a lesson for the young dyer from his story: “If you cannot argue, you can act. If you cannot reason with the enemies of the Bible, you can live out its blessed truths, and so ‘with well doing . . . put to silence the ignorance of foolish men’.”

The Hardest Thing to Say

Rev Alexander McPherson

This article first appeared in this Magazine for March 1976. It is reprinted with slight editing.

A small boy, bursting with pride in a new achievement, and looking for someone to try it on, is sauntering along. To his delight he sees Dick coming towards him. "Hello, Dick, I can say something you cannot."

Now Dick is not going to be beaten by the likes of Tom; so he replies, "I can say anything that you can. What is it?"

With a knowing nod of the head, Tom says, "It's the longest word in the dictionary, and you don't know it, and it is too hard for you to say". Dick is no scholar and is ready to admit that he does not know the longest word in the dictionary, but he still claims to be able to say it if he is told what it is.

"I knew you didn't know it," crows Tom. "Well, I'll tell you, just once. Then see if you can say it." So, taking a deep breath, and determined to say the word so quickly that Dick will not be able to remember it, he rattles off, "Antidisestablishmentarianism. There now! You say it."

Dick, taken aback, begins hesitantly: "Anti" (pause) "dis" (longer pause) "es", and there he sticks. With a gleeful, "Told you so!" Tom runs away in search of another victim.

Little wonder that poor Dick could not say so big a word after hearing it only once! No doubt though, he asked someone what the word was, so that he too could challenge some friend with the word that was hard to say.

Antidisestablishmentarianism is not really difficult to say once you have learned it. There is a sentence of only four one-syllable words which is a great deal harder to say. It is, "I have done wrong". The pride that made Tom so boastful about his long word, and that made Dick so crestfallen because he could not say it, shows itself again and again in people being reluctant to admit they have done wrong and to be truly sorry for it. This proud, unrepentant spirit is in us all by nature. We inherited it from Adam, our first parent and covenant head.

What did Adam reply when God asked him, "Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?"

Did he say? "I did eat. I have done wrong. I am ashamed. Can I be forgiven?" No! his answer to God was, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

Do you see how Adam avoided confessing his sin? He blamed Eve for giving him the fruit. And worse, he implied that God was at fault in giving him a wife who would tempt him to sin. We all take after Adam in this, and

only grace will cure us of it. Instead of admitting our faults, in our pride we either blame others or deny the charge outright or make up some excuse or make counter-charges against whoever charges us. Anything to escape the humbling need to say, "I have done wrong; forgive me".

There can be no peace between us guilty sinners and God until, like the prodigal son, we humbly and with shame confess our sins and desire mercy. And there can be no real peace and true fellowship between ourselves and anyone we have seriously offended or injured, until we realise our sin, go to the one we have offended and say sincerely, "I have done wrong; I feel ashamed; please forgive me." A true Christian will also confess the sin first to the Lord. The Bible and all human experience have shown that it is a hard, hard thing to say, "I have done wrong". But grace can enable us.

Secret Prayer

James W Alexander

Alexander was an American minister. He wrote a series of letters to his younger brother. They have been reprinted as *Am I My Brother's Keeper?* Here is another of these letters; it has been edited.

What I mean to write to you about is so important that I might write many letters about it. It is secret prayer. I trust that you allow no day to pass in which you do not pray to God in some secret place.

We are nowhere taught in the Bible how often we ought to pray. It is indeed said that we must "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17) – that is, we should all the time be in a fit state of mind for prayer. Also we should be in the habit of having regular times for prayer. Besides, we should very often offer up petitions in our minds, while we are about our ordinary activities.

Almost all Christians have agreed that it is proper to pray to God every morning and every evening. There is a great advantage in having a time for secret prayer. You have often heard it said that what is left to be done at any time, is commonly done at no time. This is true. If you rise in the morning, and put off praying until you feel more ready for it, it is likely that you will be less and less in the right mood. When you become hurried with your studies, your work, or your play, you will feel less like praying than when you first got up. Besides, if you have a fixed hour for secret prayer, whenever that time comes, you will be reminded of your duty. You know that, in a family where the meals are served at regular times, everyone is reminded of breakfast or dinner whenever the time comes.

In another letter, I spoke to you about the importance of forming proper habits. Now having a particular time for prayer is very useful because you thus get into the habit of going into your room to pray at a definite time. I remember that I used to have a particular time for taking a walk in the morning. This became quite a habit with me. Whenever the time came, I always set out on my walk, and I used to feel it was unpleasant when anything happened to prevent it. So it will be if you set a time every morning and evening for being alone to pray.

It is also good to have a particular place, where this is possible. If we go into a room where we have always been used to playing and being happy, it will make us think of these things and we shall be cheerful. If we go into a room where we have seen someone die, it will make us very solemn. What is the reason for this? It is because one thing brings the other into our mind. It is called the association of ideas. So almost everyone feels solemn on going into a church. In the same way, if you have a particular place where you go to read the Scriptures and pray, you will feel serious whenever you go into it. If it is only some corner of your bedroom, it will serve a good purpose.

The best time for prayer is early in the morning. As soon as you have washed and dressed, you should go by yourself and pray. At this time, one's mind is fresh and cheerful, and we should give the best hours to God. You are then free from interruptions, and the bustle and hurry of the day have not yet begun. You will naturally be led to think of the goodness of God in preserving you through all the dangers of the night, and it will be proper for you to ask His blessing on the whole day.

The proper time for evening prayer is when the work of the day is generally over. But you must not fix on too late a time, for then you will often be drowsy and will hurry through the duty, or do it in a careless way. Some thoughtless boys put off their prayers until they have got into bed, and then they pretend to repeat some words as a prayer. They are afraid to neglect the duty entirely, but they go about it in such a lazy way that they often fall asleep before they have finished their prayer.

This is a wicked practice. It is a temptation Satan uses to lead many young people to give up secret prayer altogether. Where more than one sleep in the same room, they are often tempted to neglect prayer. They are ashamed to let anyone else see that they serve God, and this is a dreadful sin. So it would be a good plan to go, before bedtime, to some private place to pray.

Remember that the great thing in prayer is that our heart should be right. The words which you say with your lips are of less importance. You might repeat the best prayer that was ever written and yet, if your heart is not in it, you would only be mocking God.

Praying is asking. It is asking for what you want. Now if there is no desire, there is no prayer. If you ask God for things that you do not wish to receive, you are trifling with Him, and this is most displeasing to Him.

Remember also that prayer is heard only for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, when you pray, you must have faith in Him, or your prayers will not be acceptable. Whenever you kneel down to pray, think what a solemn thing it is that you are about to do. You are going to speak to Almighty God! My dear brother, think of this, and you will no longer hurry through your prayers, as if you were telling some pointless story. Remember the old saying, Praying will make us leave off sinning, or sinning will make us leave off praying. This saying is really true.

For Junior Readers

A Mother's Letter

Have you ever heard of Ecclefechan? It is a small village in the south of Scotland, not too far from Lockerbie. The one thing it is famous for is that a man named Thomas Carlyle was born there in 1795. His father, James, was a farmer and a stonemason. His mother was called Margaret and she had a real care for the souls of her children. Thomas was brought up to know the Bible, to pray and to attend church.

Thomas was a very clever lad and did well in school. At the age of 15 he set off to study in Edinburgh University. He had to walk for three days to get there, something that would be totally unheard of today!

While at university he mixed with people of other views, and no doubt some of no religion at all. His mother was obviously very concerned about him and wrote him letters with good advice.

"O Tom," she wrote, "mind the golden season of youth, and remember your Creator in the days of your youth. Seek God while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. We hear that 'the world by wisdom knew not God'; so pray for Him to go with you and for His counsel to guide you. Have you got through your Bible yet? If you have, read it again. I hope you will not be weary, and may the Lord open your understanding."

Was that not good advice? For Thomas, and for you too! Sadly, although Thomas did well in his studies and became a well-known teacher, historian, mathematician, philosopher and author, he turned his back on his Christian upbringing and on his mother's prayerful advice and finally gave up his belief in Christianity altogether. Is that not very sad? And is it not a warning to you to beware of the world and of any influences which might lead you

away from the truth of the Bible or from the standards of behaviour you have been brought up with?

The wise man in Proverbs says, "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge" – shut your ears to what may make you give up what the Bible teaches; turn away from it. Also, "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother". Will you remember this, when you are away from home and open to other influences? And finally, "Let not thy heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long".

J van Kralingen

Washed or Loosed?

Rev K M Watkins

In previous articles we have seen that modern English translations of the Bible miss out parts of God's Word. In this article we see that they also get words wrong. This is all because the translators are using the wrong manuscripts, especially for the New Testament, instead of the faithful manuscripts used by the translators of the Authorised Version.

The Professor of New Testament Greek was doing his best to persuade his students about the merits of "textual criticism" – the modern approach to the Biblical text. The college labelled itself *Reformed* and claimed that it adhered to *The Westminster Confession of Faith*. The Professor himself had vowed that the *Confession* was a statement of his own personal faith. But clearly he did not believe the part which insists, from Scripture, that God providentially preserves His inspired Word for His Church: "The Old Testament in Hebrew . . . and the New Testament in Greek . . . being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, [are] kept pure in all ages" (*Confession* 1:8).

Most in the class accepted his presentation without question, but one or two of the students were far from persuaded. Things came to a head when the Professor tried to illustrate how easily errors crept into the Greek manuscripts from which the New Testament is translated. One illustration he chose was the end of Revelation 1:5, which in the Authorised Version (AV) is correctly translated: "Unto Him that loved us, and *washed* us from our sins in His own blood". It is the same in the faithful English translations before the AV. William Tyndale had: "Unto Him that loved us, and *washed* us from our sins in His blood"; and the Geneva Bible was: "Unto Him that loved us and *washed* us from sins in His own blood" (spelling updated).

This is a very precious text indeed, that goes to the very heart of the

gospel. Christ loved His people and through the shedding of His blood at the cross they are washed from the filthiness of all their sins. Let Him be forever praised! There is not a word that believing souls would want to lose or change in this text. Feeling their own sinful uncleanness, it leads them to the precious “fountain opened . . . for sin and for uncleanness” (Zechariah 13:1).

But modern translations are different. The English Standard Version has: “To him who loves us and has *freed* us from our sins by his blood”. The New American Standard Bible is similar: “To Him who loves us, and *released* us from our sins by His blood”. Again, the New International Version has: “To him who loves us and has *freed* us from our sins by his blood”.

The older versions leading up to the AV have “washed” – but the modern versions have the idea of freeing or releasing from sin. Why the change? The Professor explained by writing on the board two different Greek words. Converting into English letters, the first word was *lousanti*. The second word was *lusanti*. He pointed out that only one letter was different: in the first word, the Greek letter *omicron*, equivalent to our letter *o*, was present; in the second, it was missing. The sound of the two words, he was quick to emphasise, are exactly the same. So a mistake could easily enter into the text, because many copies of the New Testament were made by dictation, with the writer of the new copy writing down what he heard read out from the existing manuscript, and he could have thought that the reader said *lusanti*, not *lousanti*.

This was not a spelling mistake. Both words are good Greek. But the one with the *o*, *lousanti*, is from the Greek verb meaning to *wash*. The one without the *o*, *lusanti*, is from the Greek verb meaning to *loose*. The older versions, believing that the Lord had promised to preserve the accuracy of the Bible text, went with the word in the reliable manuscripts available to the translators at the time, and which is in the vast majority of Greek manuscripts. That was *lousanti*, including the *o*, which means *washed*. But the newer versions, whose translators have not trusted God’s promise to preserve His Word for His Church, adopted the new word *lusanti*, without the *o*, which means *loosed*, even though it appears in only a tiny minority of Greek manuscripts – and ones that are unreliable in many other ways.

The New King James Version, as usual, tries to straddle the two. Its actual translation agrees with the AV: “To Him who loved us and *washed* us from our sins in His own blood”. But its note in the margin says: “NU-Text reads *loves us and freed*; M-Text reads *loves us and washed*.” NU-Text refers to what is called the “critical text” – a Greek text drawn up on modern and unbiblical principles. M-Text refers to what is called the “majority text” – what the vast majority of available old Greek manuscripts say. The AV

and other Bibles from the Reformation age are based on what is called the "Received Text" (or, as it is often called, in Latin, the *Textus Receptus*). It had that name because the Churches of the Reformation right across Europe *received* it as the Greek text which God had preserved in His providence for His Church, in accordance with His promise.

The Professor's approach was very worrying. If mistakes could enter into the Biblical text so easily, and the Church could have been using the wrong translation for centuries, how can we possibly rely on the Bible as the very Word of God? How many other words are wrong and need to be changed? According to the Professor's modern approach, the AV was already full of errors, and perhaps a lot more would come to light if more manuscripts were discovered in the years to come, with each one requiring the Bible to be "corrected".

But according to the Professor there was no need to worry. Why was that? He said it was because both words taught Scriptural doctrine. Now that is true. It is true that, by His blood, Christ washes His people from sin. It is also true that, by His blood, He frees His people from sin. Other parts of the Bible teach both. But that is not good enough, as one student in the class pointed out, in words to this effect: "Yes, both the doctrines are scriptural, but one of those words is the Word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit, and the other is not. And we need a way to be sure."

The Professor had no way to be absolutely sure. Along with many Evangelicals and Reformed people, he had been blinded by the false thinking lying behind modern textual criticism, even though it contradicted his ministerial vows.

Two very old Greek manuscripts especially have pushed so much of the Church off course. The first is called *Codex Vaticanus*, which was found in a library in the Vatican, the heart and centre of Antichrist's Roman Catholic kingdom. The second is called *Codex Sinaiticus*, because it was found in a monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai – a place dedicated to the unscriptural idea that a person can find holiness by withdrawing from ordinary life and becoming a monk. These are some of the last places we would expect to find the truth of God! God promised to preserve His Word with His Church – His true Church. "As for Me, this is My covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and My words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever" (Isaiah 59:21).

Modern scholars believe that these two manuscripts are the most reliable because they are older than others. But they contain many errors. For example,

even in just the four Gospels, they disagree with each other more than 3000 times! *Vaticanus* disagrees with the Received Text more than 7500 times, and *Sinaiticus* disagrees with it almost 9000 times! (These numbers are taken from Alan J MacGregor's *Three Modern Versions*, a book we heartily recommend.) Clearly, they were able to survive for so long because no one wanted to use them. These manuscripts were seen to be so unreliable that they were just put aside and not used, unlike the faithful ones that were in constant use and therefore wore out and had to be replaced. The modern versions are based on these corrupt manuscripts. Those who use them are being deceived, for in many places they are not reading God's words at all.

Let us keep to the faithful AV. In doing so, we may be absolutely certain that we really are reading God's own words. Yes, God's people are set free from sin through Christ's blood, but when we read Revelation 1:5, we should be saying, "Unto Him that loved us, and *washed* us from our sins in His own blood"!

For Younger Readers

When the Preacher Did not Come

There was an old preacher in Wales many years ago who was invited to preach in a little town. He arrived in the town, but there was no sign of him coming to the church. The time for starting the service had passed.

The people were already in the church waiting for the preacher. The local minister and other men knew they had to do something. They sent a girl back to the house where the preacher was staying. She was to tell him that everything was ready and they were waiting for him.

The girl went and, when she came back, she said, "I did not like to disturb him. He was talking to somebody."

They said, "That is rather strange, because everybody is here. Go back and tell him that it is after the time and that he must come."

So the girl went again and came back. Again she told the men: "He is talking to somebody".

They asked her: "How do you know that?"

She told them that she heard the minister speaking to this other person who was with him. She heard him say he would not go and preach to the people unless the other person would come with him.

Now the minister understood. "It is all right", he said. "We had better wait." They knew now that the old preacher was speaking to God. He was praying. He wanted God to help him when he would preach in the church.

William Hewitson and Madeira

3. Spreading the Gospel in Difficult Circumstances

Last month's section of this Youth Conference paper told about Robert Kalley, who was already spreading the gospel on Madeira before Hewitson went there. There were conversions on the island but some of the converts suffered persecution and a number of them were sent to prison.

Kalley too was sent to prison and had to spend six months there, because he was teaching from the Bible rather than according to the false ideas of the Roman Church. After being set free he went on with his work, but the police still caused difficulties. So the Kalleys sailed to Lisbon and spent a few weeks there, hoping that the situation in Madeira would settle down.

In Lisbon, Kalley met Hewitson, who was now on his way to Madeira and had stopped in Lisbon for a few months to learn Portuguese. The two men set sail together for Funchal, arriving there in February 1844. Not long after they reached Madeira, Kalley was again arrested, because he was teaching what was contrary to Roman Catholicism, the state religion. But he was soon released on bail. He was in a difficult position because, if he continued with his meetings, he would be expelled from the island. So he handed over his work to Hewitson.

By this point, between 20 and 30 people in Madeira had turned their backs on Romanism, but many more were impressed by the truth; they were asking questions, reading the Bible, and no longer going to confess their sins to a priest. A room was set aside in the house in which Hewitson was staying, where he could explain the Bible to those who wanted to come to hear him. Every day a small number of converts and inquirers gathered. Many more would have come but it was thought unwise for a lot of people to come at the same time. Hewitson spoke to them, read and expounded the Scriptures, and prayed, all in Portuguese. But he found it more difficult to understand what the islanders were saying to him than to speak to them in their own language.

Hewitson told about those in Madeira who were "expecting to suffer in the flesh for the name of Christ [but] have sat down and counted the cost"; they were willing to pay that cost. He referred to a woman "whose heart overflows with love to Christ" and would rather be put to death than stay silent when someone was speaking evil of the truth.

Many wanted to come to the Lord's table. Hewitson asked them questions and could see from their answers that they had learned the Bible well; in particular, they had a clear grasp of the meaning of the Lord's Supper. One Sabbath, Hewitson administered the Lord's Supper to 34 converts; more might have come but there was no space for them in the room that he was

using. That may have been the service a woman was referring to when she said, "I would have liked if it had lasted for ever".

Hewitson was convinced that "a wide door and effectual [had been] opened in Madeira". He went on: "He who has opened the door is stronger than all, and no man can shut it" (referring to 1 Corinthians 16:9). In another letter to Scotland, he wrote that the grasp the converts "have generally of the way of salvation is extremely simple, and their confidence in Christ very childlike. Some of them seem to be altogether free from doubts and fears and to be filled with joy and peace in believing . . . The door is standing open, though there are many enemies." The converts' freedom from doubt and fear was no doubt God's special kindness to them in a time when they had to face severe opposition from the enemies of the truth. Yet there were still opportunities to spread the gospel.

It was not long before the door was partly closed. The priests and the civil authorities were now paying close attention to the converts going to and from the house where Hewitson lived, and he felt he ought to stop the services there. Instead he invited them to come to another room, no more than three at a time. Someone commented that "the hungering and thirsting of these good people after instruction in the Scriptures was remarkable". Hewitson's health was still none too good; so he found it very tiring to speak to successive groups of people, over a period of hours, in a language with which he had not yet become too familiar. Yet he did not hold back; he was only sorry that he did not have strength to do more than he did. He was no doubt encouraged to go on when he saw his people growing quickly "in grace and in the knowledge of [their] Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ".

Hewitson believed that the enemies of the gospel were determined to use all possible means to stop his activities, but he knew that it was "the Lord's own work" and that He would "sustain it till the gathering in of His elect has been completed. The good people who know and love the truth have nothing before them but the prospect of suffering for Christ's sake. Meanwhile they wait on the Lord, daily praying and praising God. In this way they are becoming, I trust, strong in the Lord against the day of trial."

Later Hewitson moved to another house where it was easier for people to come and go without attracting attention. At a further communion service, about 60 converts came to the Lord's table, and others also were expressing their desire to remember Christ's death. Hewitson noted, "They suffer much in private in their own homes and neighbourhood" – through persecution from their families and others living nearby.

The authorities again found out where Hewitson was meeting the converts and inquirers and, through the influence of the Roman Catholic Bishop of

Madeira, policemen were posted outside the house to watch. About this time, the Bishop declared he was determined to wage war against the Bible till all the copies of God's Word on the island were confiscated. Hewitson noted that, a day or two later, while the Bishop was preaching, he took a fit and collapsed. Hewitson's only comment was, "This might teach him that the Lord is mightier than he".

He could see that there was a great danger that the meetings would soon be stopped completely. Yet the progress of his work was such that he was considering ordaining three or four elders. He asked one godly young man if he was willing to become an elder; the man answered that he would "refuse to do nothing that was agreeable to the will of the Lord". An attempt had been made to force this man to become a soldier – presumably because he was a Protestant; he went on to say, "I would gladly enlist myself as a soldier [in Christ's army] to defend the Lord's cause and people". The man had an "intense love of Bible truth" and knew much of it; he was a good speaker and Hewitson even hoped that he might yet become a minister of the gospel. What a provision that might be for the group of Protestants if the Scottish minister was forced off the island!

Persecution continued. A brother of Hewitson's servant was sentenced to six months in prison. His crime? He had been reading the Bible in his own home and speaking about it. Then a husband, his wife and one of their children were sent to prison for 25 days – for teaching their neighbours to read. Yet Hewitson went on with his meetings, but only after darkness fell. One evening, when people gathered for the Lord's Supper, three of those present were prisoners; the jailer allowed them to go because he knew that he could trust them to come back at an agreed time.

In early September 1845 Hewitson visited Serra St Antonio, 15 miles from his base in Funchal. He preached twice, and on the second evening 200 people were present. Some came to mock but most of them were seriously impressed. But the preacher did not feel well and soon he was seriously ill, but he slowly recovered. Perhaps, in God's providence, if he had gone on with his services in Funchal, which he was perfectly willing to do, he might have been arrested, but his illness prevented his arrest.

When he recovered he moved house in the hope of being able to continue his work without danger. He thought of appointing catechists from among the men who had made most progress in learning the truths of the Bible, so that they could teach other people thoroughly; besides, they would read the Bible to those present, and pray and exhort them. Hewitson himself had already started a class of about 15 possible catechists, some of whom came from quite a distance away.

Scripture and Catechism Exercises

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Looking Around Us

How Hard Should We Work?

Liam started up an accountancy business and worked so hard that, after three years, he was on the verge of a breakdown. He found he was just staring at his computer screen, unable to function. He could not sleep although he was feeling exhausted. He was clear that he had to take a break from work and, when he started working again, he had to make changes to how he operated.

He bought a van and turned it into a home and office from which to continue his work. The van has an antenna on its roof that links up to satellites, which allows him to pick up a 4G data signal in more places than a mobile phone would; so he can work from remote parts of the country. He can keep in touch with his clients from just about any part of Scotland or even abroad. His new way of operating is so much more relaxing.

Obviously working too many hours and driving oneself too hard can be dangerous for one's well-being. But we should be thankful, if we are able for it, to have something to do. When Adam was still perfect, he was sent into the Garden of Eden to look after it (see Genesis 2:15). It was good for him to have work to do. The same is true for us and, if we are of working age, it is good for us to have employment, and we should be thankful to God if we have a useful job which can be carried out with a clear conscience.

But we need some time to relax – at least, to be able to change from one activity to another. And we need to get enough sleep; that is the way God created us. But we must try hard to do our work well; we are not to be sloppy in the way we carry out our duties. The Bible tells us: “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might” (Ecclesiastes 9:10). In all that we do, we should go about it conscious that God sees us.

Especially, people need to make sure they set aside a suitable amount of time to spend on their souls. They must not allow their work, and other activities that are only useful for this life, to take up too much of their time, if indeed particular activities do any good at all.

Let us remember Jesus' warning: “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). No matter how successful someone might become through their work, or in any other sphere of life, what good will it do them in the end if they are not saved? What good will it do them if they are sent away, as guilty sinners, to a lost eternity? We must put our souls first. To be saved, to get to heaven, to live to the glory of God – these are things of first importance. That is why the Saviour said, “Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

Whatever we are doing, we should seek God's blessing on our efforts. We are always to look to Him for help; we should realise that it is foolish to depend on our own resources. Especially we should seek God's glory in everything we do. Let us ask Him to lead us on safely in every detail of our activities in this world and to bring us safely to heaven at last.

Price £1.00