

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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Editor: Rev Kenneth D Macleod BSc, 11 Auldcastle Road, Inverness, IV2 3PZ. Tel: 01463 712872; e-mail: kdmacleod@gmail.com. All unsigned articles are by the Editor.

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Volume 87

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Where There Will Be No More Pain

A few weeks ago I found a letter with a handwritten address that the postman had pushed through my door. I receive very few handwritten letters now and I was interested to see who had written this one. I opened it and found no date, no address, and the writer gave only his first name, Andy.

He was keen to draw my attention to what he called “a unique Bible message”. It was Revelation 21:3,4, where the Apostle John writes, “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away”.

From the website that Andy directed me to, it is clear that he belongs to the Jehovah's Witnesses, as they call themselves. The trouble is: they are *not* faithful witnesses to what the Lord Jehovah has revealed in Scripture. They do not deserve their name. They are dangerous as they go around from door to door (at least they did so before lockdown) encouraging people to join their sect. They even have their own version of the Bible with various verses translated inaccurately to favour their false teachings.

Perhaps their most serious error is to deny that Jesus is God; they claim that Jesus is not eternal, but that He had a beginning and was created as an archangel. Our response to such statements should always be, What does the Bible say? If we turn to Hebrews 1, we find Paul, who wrote the Epistle, quoting repeatedly from the Old Testament to show that Jesus was far greater than the angels, that He was the Son of God. Among the verses Paul quotes here, there are two from Psalm 45: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows” (verses 6,7).

Notice that these words are spoken, not to a man or to an angel, but to “God”. Notice also that, when they are quoted in Hebrews, they are introduced

with the words, “But unto *the Son* He saith . . .”. So the words, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever . . .” are addressed to a Person who is God; they are addressed to the Son of God. He was not an archangel; He was far greater – infinitely greater – than that. He is God; He always was God; He never had a beginning.

Consider also John 1:1: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”. John is speaking about a Person who is called “the Word”. He already existed “in the beginning”. At the time of the creation, when other things had a beginning, He already existed. He had no beginning. Besides that, He “was God”. And He “was with God”; so John is telling us that there is at least one other Person besides the Father who can be called God. He is God the Son.

John goes on to say, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). The Word, this apostle is telling us, took human nature and lived among the people of Judaea and Galilee.

John and the other disciples saw Jesus’ glory; He was no ordinary man. Everybody could see the wonderful miracles He performed: He gave sight to blind people; He gave hearing to deaf people; He gave the power to speak to those who were dumb; he healed various kinds of diseases; He quietened the wind and the sea. It should have been obvious to everyone – not only to the disciples and others who did believe in Him – that He was more than a man, and more than an archangel. It should have been obvious that He was the God-man – “God and man in two distinct natures, and one Person, for ever” (*Shorter Catechism*, Answer 21).

And when He spoke, how glorious His words were! How full of grace and truth! Think, for instance, of how He spoke of Himself as the Good Shepherd, who was to give His life for the sheep, for those who would follow Him. He went on to say, “I and My Father are one” (John 10:31). He was claiming, as the Jews recognised on another occasion, “that God was His Father”. They understood correctly what Jesus meant, although they rebelled against what He was saying – that He was Himself God. They also realised that Jesus was “making Himself equal with God”. And they were so much the more guilty in refusing to believe in Jesus as the Son of God.

We speak of the Trinity, because there are *three* Persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Yet there is only one God. It is impossible for human beings, and even for angels, to understand fully how God is three in one respect and one in another, but God has revealed these facts to us in the Scriptures. So it is our duty to believe them.

But it is important to remember that we are not speaking about God *in the*

same way when we say that He is one and when we say that He is three. Jehovah's Witnesses deny the Trinity, and they are wrong to do so. God is worthy to be worshipped, with all our heart. It is also true that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are all worthy to be worshipped with the same supreme, wholehearted, reverent worship that we are commanded to give to the one God.

The Bible teaches us that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). No one less than God could save any sinner. No one, we are told in Psalm 49, "can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him". It is totally impossible. So Jehovah's Witnesses are completely wrong when they deny that Jesus is God. Solemnly, it leaves them without any genuine hope of salvation; their false teaching leaves them without a saviour who is really able to save.

Question 40 in *The Larger Catechism* asks why it was necessary for the Saviour to be God. The substance of the answer is that He must be God if (1) He was to sustain His human nature when He was suffering for sinners, and keep it from sinking under the infinite wrath of God and the power of death; if (2) He was to give worth to His sufferings and obedience; if (3) He was to satisfy God's justice and give the Spirit to His people; if (4) He was to conquer all their enemies and bring them to everlasting salvation in heaven.

What about Andy's reference to Revelation 21 and what he says about God doing away with pain, tears and death? These verses in the Bible, quoted at the beginning of this article, do not point to some wonderful paradise on earth, as Jehovah's Witnesses claim. They point to a place where there will be no more sin, a place where everyone will be perfectly holy – and that is heaven, where God is.

But who will get to heaven? Only those who, in this world, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ – who is God as well as man, who suffered and died in the place of sinners. By the grace of God, they have turned from their sins and have begun seeking to live godly lives.

Can Jehovah's Witnesses be converted? Yes, the call of the gospel goes out to sinners of every kind. Christ is calling, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 45:22). He calls to sinners, whoever they are and wherever they may be, even at the ends of the earth. He calls on them to trust in Him for salvation. He says further: "For I am God"; the Saviour we all need to look to is divine. And He assures us also that "there is none else"; there is no other saviour from sin – only Jesus Christ, the God-man. It is through Him, and through Him alone, that anyone can reach that wonderful place where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain".

The Law of God

1. The Difference Between Right and Wrong

Rev K M Watkins

This is the first section of a paper that was given at this year's Youth Conference.

In the days of the judges, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). In our days too, many people feel free to decide the difference between right and wrong for themselves. They form their own subjective moral code, rejecting even the possibility of an absolute, abiding, unchanging and authoritative standard. But there is such a standard. And that infallible standard is the law of God. It declares the black-and-white difference between right and wrong.

By the law of God, everyone's outward life, along with their inward character, thoughts, desires and imaginations, are either approved or condemned. Most people reject God's law now, but in the end everyone has to meet it in its judgements, "for we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

By the law of God we mean the *moral* law. There was also the *civil* or *judicial* law – the temporary regulations by which Israel as a nation was to be governed during the Old Testament period. Those laws covered matters such as inheriting land, managing slaves, and punishing wrongdoers, including the stoning to death of idolaters, Sabbath breakers, adulterers and even disobedient children. For Israel's national life, these laws were absolutely binding – they determined the difference between civil right and wrong. But they were temporary and bind no nation now, not even Israel, except so far as "the general equity thereof may require", as *The Westminster Confession* puts it (19:4).

Then there was the *ceremonial* law. Until the coming of Christ, it regulated the ordinances of worship. It dealt with sacrifices and offerings, annual feasts, the Aaronic priesthood with its service and garments, the tabernacle and its furniture, and later the temple with its musical instruments. These laws bound the Old Testament worshipper, so that his worship could be right only as far as it conformed to them and was wrong to the degree it strayed from them. They foreshadowed Christ, and therefore they needed to be followed to the letter!

The ceremonial law included instructions about daily life. For example, it controlled in great detail what foods the Israelites could eat and what materials they could use to make their clothes. Constant adherence to these was right;

the smallest deviation was wrong. These ceremonies were also types, as they pointed forward to Christ and His work and to the more spiritual age of the New Testament Church. When Christ, the substance, came and fulfilled them all, these shadows fled away for ever. The ceremonial law is no longer in use, never to be reintroduced to the smallest degree.

Unlike the civil law and the ceremonial law, the *moral* law is permanent and unchanging. It applies to every one of us today as much as it ever applied to anyone in the past. It will never become outdated, whatever this present generation thinks. It sets out the absolute difference between right and wrong, at all times, for all people, in all places, in all circumstances. Everything it requires is so perfectly right, and everything it forbids is so certainly wrong, that it is the absolute standard that can never be altered.

“The moral law is summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments”. So states *The Shorter Catechism* (Answer 41). When God uttered those ten laws with His own voice at Mount Sinai, it was not the first time they had been revealed. Adam and Eve were created in the image of God, and that included the Ten Commandments being written on their hearts. In their state of innocence, they knew the difference between right and wrong and obeyed the moral law perfectly. After the Fall, though man has lost the ability to keep the Ten Commandments, it remains the duty of everyone to obey them. The Ten Commandments still determine all questions of right and wrong.

With His own finger, God engraved the Ten Commandments on two tables of stone (see Exodus 31:18), pointing to the two spheres of man’s duty. The first four commandments deal with man’s duty directly to God. The last six, whilst still being man’s duty to God, focus directly on his duty towards his fellow man. Together, and when fully understood in their broad expanse, the Ten Commandments comprise the whole duty of man. The Saviour said so, when He summarised the two tables of the law in this way: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” – that is, all of Scripture (Matthew 22:37-40). Thus “love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:10).

The moral law shows the indisputable difference between right and wrong because it flows from and represents God’s own holy and righteous nature. The moral standards contained in the Ten Commandments could not be different from what they are, for they summarise the way God Himself divides right from wrong. Some examples will show this. The God of the Ten Commandments is the only true and living God, so the First Commandment requires us to acknowledge Him to be so and forbids us to have any other

god. God “cannot deny Himself” (2 Timothy 2:13); so the moral law cannot permit us to deny Him.

God is holy, so the Third Commandment requires us to treat everything to do with Him in a holy and reverent way. God Himself can speak only the truth and “cannot lie” (Titus 1:2), so the Ninth Commandment requires us to speak only the truth and never lie. Morally there cannot be any alternatives to these. The same may be said for all of the Ten Commandments.

Perhaps this makes it sound so simple. Why then do we find it difficult sometimes to distinguish right from wrong in a particular situation? For example, the Sixth Commandment's prohibition of killing seems to conflict with the Bible's teaching about capital punishment of murderers, self-defence, and fighting in a just war. The answer lies in understanding that it is only unlawful killing that is forbidden. The Fifth Commandment requires us to obey those in authority over us, but what if they command us to sin? Are we to render blind obedience? Not at all, for in those circumstances “we ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). It is only in their lawful commands that we are to obey our superiors. “The law of the Lord is perfect” (Psalm 19:7) and cannot contradict itself, so all our perplexities arise from our own lack of understanding.

The Larger Catechism (answer 99) sets out eight most helpful rules for interpreting and applying the Ten Commandments. We shall discuss these in the next article.

A Reformation Tour

2. Dundee to St Andrews

Rev David Campbell

This year's Youth Conference included a tour of Reformation sites, mainly in St Andrews. In the last article we spoke about the beginning of the Reformation in Perth and the events there which should be remembered. We also explained the three periods of about 50 years each, into which the great events of the First and Second Reformations are divided. Between around 1550 and 1700 the Lord brought wonderful blessing to Scotland. We are surely obliged, as the heirs of this heritage, to recall these events and to value the privileges which the Lord secured for us in that famous era. This article follows the tour to Dundee.

3. Dundee city walls. There are three events associated with George Wishart's ministry in Dundee, which we mentioned in the lecture (the Youth Conference included a lecture on the life of George Wishart). I will just remind you of them.

1. It was in Dundee that Wishart had preached with much success and

with the protection of the godly magistrates of the town. He lectured through the Epistle to the Romans sometime in 1544. When opposition was raised against him publicly during his sermon, he gave a fearful warning to the people of the town that God's terrible judgements would come against them for despising and refusing the Word of God through His messenger. He left Dundee for Ayr.

2. On a later occasion in Dundee, a monk was hired by Cardinal Beaton to assassinate him when he came down from the pulpit. He noticed the monk's knife under his coat and seized it. When the people turned on the monk to take vengeance, Wishart intervened and saved his life.

3. John Knox says that, four days after Wishart left Dundee, the plague broke out in the town, and in deep fear, the people sent to Ayr for him to return to preach to them. His friends in the west tried to dissuade him from returning, but his reply was full of zeal and courage: "They are now in trouble and they need comfort. Perchance this hand of God will make them now to magnify and reverence that Word, [on] which, before, for fear of men, they set light price."

I will read to you from D P Thomson's account, which largely draws from the *History* written by John Knox: "Coming to Dundee, the joy of the faithful was exceedingly great. Master George delayed no time, but gave signification that he would preach. Because the most part were either sick or else were in company with those that were sick, he chose the head of the East Port of the town for the preaching-place. The whole [healthy] sat or stood within, and the sick or suspected without the Port.

"The text on which his first sermon was made he took from the 107th Psalm: 'He sent His word and healed them,' and therewith joined these words: 'It is neither herb or plaster, O Lord, but Thy word healeth all!' In which sermon he most comfortably did entreat of the dignity and utility [usefulness] of God's Word; the punishment that comes for contempt of the same; the promptitude of God's mercy to such as truly turn to Him; yea, the great happiness of them whom God taketh from this misery, even in His own gentle visitation, which the malice of men can neither eke [incite] nor impair.' By this sermon he so raised up the hearts of all that heard him, that they regarded not death, but judged them more happy that should depart, than should remain behind; considering that they knew not if they should have a comforter with them at all times". It would seem from this account that John Knox was present or heard the report directly from someone who was.

But Wishart did more than preach, says Thomson, "healing, comforting and strengthening" as his preaching must have been. According to Knox, "he spared not to visit them that lay in the very extremity [of disease] and

comforted them as he could. And he caused minister all things that were necessary to those that might use meat or drink; and in that point was the town wondrously benevolent; for the poor were no more neglected than were the rich." Wishart's famed generosity was clearly in evidence, and he quite deliberately avoided the shameful hypocrisy of the monks, who neglected the poor while they lived off the charity of others.

The old walls of the city of Dundee are long gone, but the East Port, in the Cowgate area, is thought to date from very early times. It fittingly represents the scene of one of George Wishart's most significant sermons. This is the only remaining part of the ancient city walls of Dundee, and it has been preserved largely to commemorate the preaching of George Wishart here in 1545. It would be good if modern Dundee held his name and fame in such high regard, but there is reason to hope that this small memorial to a godly man may yet be looked at with admiration and thankfulness.

An interesting note in passing is that near the spot where the East Port gate still stands is the Wishart Memorial Church, which was begun in 1837. It was from this congregation that Mary Slessor (who worshipped there from 1869 to 1876) went out to Calabar, in modern Nigeria. The memorial to Wishart on the remaining wall was set up in 1877 and is a fitting reminder of his labours in the town. It records that those plagued, who were outside the walls, lay in booths listening to his preaching. He remained during the plague, preaching every day to hundreds of people.

In the next article we will take up, God willing, some details of what happened in two places on our journey between Dundee and St Andrews

The Power of the Bible

2. "Only God Can Forgive Sin"

This is the second article about a family from Calais, in France. The older daughter went to England and came in touch with Protestants. She and her younger sister began to read the Bible and stayed away from mass. On a visit back to Calais, she and her sister decided not to confess their sins to a priest.

Back in England, the older sister went on studying the Bible carefully and prayerfully. She became fully convinced that it should be her only guide in spiritual things. But she asked herself: "Can I not keep my principles, without making any public show?" Her conscience told her that she ought to give up everything and follow Christ. But she decided not to do anything until her father agreed.

On her next visit to France she found both her mother and her sister

convinced of the errors of Roman Catholicism, yet not ready to acknowledge the truth publicly. Not long before, this younger sister had heard a sermon from a priest and she was struck by some of the things he said, using expressions like “being saved by Christ only”. She wanted an explanation of what he had said; so she went to see him at the place where people confessed their sins to him. She could go there without the priest knowing who she was.

She went wearing a veil hiding her face. She did not begin as was expected, with the statement that she was confessing all her sins to God, the Virgin Mary, Peter and Paul, all the saints in heaven, and to the priest – all her sins since the last time she had been to confession. The priest told her to begin; she replied that she had not come to confess but to have a simple conversation with him.

Instead of continuing the conversation, he wanted her to come to his house that evening. But she made clear she wanted to speak to him where they were. Then he invited her to speak. She reminded him that he had said in his sermon “that it was by the merits of Jesus Christ that we are saved”. And she asked, “Are the merits of our Saviour sufficient for our salvation?”

He answered, “Yes, I trust you do not doubt it”.

She pointed out that she had always been taught to believe that good works and sorrow for sin were the means of salvation. “If,” she asked, “as the Bible teaches us, the merits of our Saviour are sufficient, why are they spoken so little of, and we are left to believe that we can save ourselves?” It was a very good question.

The priest noticed her reference to the Bible and asked, “Do you read it?” She told him that she had been reading the Bible for some time.

He warned her that she was in danger of making “bad applications” of the Bible – as if the Holy Spirit was not able to bless God’s Word to her, so that she might apply its teachings rightly. He recommended a Roman Catholic catechism and assured her that all her doubts about salvation would be solved if she followed it.

She asked another excellent question: “Why should I seek the instructions of men when I can have those of God Himself?”

The priest accused her of falling into error and went on: “It is true God has left us His instructions in the Holy Scriptures but has, at the same time, established His Church that it might explain them to the faithful”. But it was the priest who was in error, when he put his church above the Bible. Yes, it is the duty of the Church to explain the Scriptures, but it is also the duty of the Church to submit to all the teachings of Scripture, and not to bring in teachings from any other source.

But Romanism brings in many other teachings, claiming that they have come by tradition from the Apostles. But there is no good reason to believe such teachings; indeed there is every reason to reject them. It was good that the sisters and their mother were realising that such teachings were against Scripture and so were false.

The younger sister's answer to the priest was: "I never remember having found a single passage in the Scripture which says that the Bible is only written for the priests; while I have found many which clearly tell us we ought to read the Bible and to make it our study". She then tried to bring the priest back to her original question.

But he again wanted her to come to his house and discuss things there. He asked what priest she usually confessed to, and she told him that she had not been to confession for more than a year and added, "I have learned that only God can forgive sin".

The priest now suspected that she knew some Protestants, telling her that she was in danger – on the edge of a cliff. But she told him that she did not know any Protestants.

Then, he thought, she must have been reading Protestant books. He put that to her, and she answered, "I have only ever read one, and some little tracts. But I have nothing to do with Protestants. It is the Bible alone that has led me to see that strange things have crept into our religion, which I believed to be the true one. And on hearing you yesterday, it seemed to me that you approach nearer the Bible than the other priests that I have heard, and this is what led me to hope that you would explain to me the reason which the Church has in teaching what is not in the inspired Word."

The priest replied that she must have understood him badly or that she must be understanding the Bible badly. He told her to bring him the book she had read, along with the tracts. She was to come back in a week and he promised that he would then answer her questions.

But she asked, "Why not now, sir? If you believe me to be in error, why not enlighten me at once? Who knows but I may be called to account for this error at the tribunal of my Creator, before the time you mention? And if, as I think, the error is in the Church of which I have been a member ever since I was born, I have not an instant to lose in being enlightened on this subject. Do you not hear how I tremble? Do you not understand the agonies of doubt with which my soul is perplexed? You have just told me that I am on the edge of a cliff. Will you not stretch out your hand to save me? In pity to me, I plead with you to answer me." And she burst into tears.

The priest too was moved. He promised to do what he could to help, but not then. He told her she was too upset, and so was he. He said he needed

time to think. She was to send him the book and the tracts. He asked her to come back the next day and they could talk together. He also advised her to pray much, but he did not say who she was to pray to. He wanted her not to read any more Protestant writings; he would send her some books and she could often come to see him.

Back home, she went to her room and threw herself on her knees. When at last she got up, she was perfectly clear as to what she ought to do. She was convinced that a sinner, as the priest was, could not give her light on her difficulties; it was God alone who could give her the light she was seeking (though one may seek help from people who do truly understand the Bible and follow its teachings). The younger sister was very struck that the priest always avoided answering questions. Indeed, she wondered if he was thinking seriously about these things himself.

The next day she parcelled up her book and the tracts and sent them to the priest, along with a note. She told him that, after leaving him, she prayed much – to God. And, from then on, she was going to pray only to God, “for He alone can give light for darkness”. She also told him that she was sending the book and tracts, not for him to answer her, but “hoping that it will please the Lord to bless them to you, as He has done to me”.

For Junior Readers

“A Table in the Wilderness”

Mr Hunter and Mr Mather were Christian missionaries to China at the beginning of the 1900s. They began their work in mission stations where they were working along with other missionaries. But they both felt called to travel further afield to remote areas. There they could contact isolated tribes who had never before heard the good news of the gospel. They were based in a town, now called Urumqi, in Central Asia. If you look on a map you will find it in the far north-west of China, where it borders Russia to the north and Kazakhstan to the west.

These men had to learn the local languages the hard way, by living among the people – there were no dictionaries or textbooks. They made long treks to places difficult to reach, to spread the gospel in the summer months. Mather also decided that he would try to prepare dictionaries and other books to help missionaries learn the local languages in the future. This was a huge task, and he worked long hours, even into the night, during the winter months, when the weather made it impossible to travel on the roads.

In the summer of 1929, they set off to visit faraway Ghulja, 440 miles

away, to distribute Scriptures to the Manchu settlers who lived there. Today it can be reached quite directly by main roads, but they had to cross mountain ranges, over high passes and very rough land on horseback or on foot. They carried a tent as their only shelter, because there were no inns of any kind in these far-flung places. They took with them their faithful helper, Nimgir. He was a Mongolian boy who lived with them and helped them with their language studies.

Although it was the end of June, the weather in the mountains was still bitterly cold with showers of snow and hailstones. Then Nimgir took very ill with a high fever, vomiting and diarrhoea. He was so weak he could not be moved and was faithfully nursed in their tent by Hunter and Mather. They were far away from help. There was no possibility of buying food and, before long, they were faced with running short of food. Also they could not see any trees anywhere around them; there was no firewood to be found anywhere.

They heard that there was a camp down in the valley, but Nimgir was still too ill to be moved. They badly needed milk and food to help strengthen him. But Mather was encouraged by the Bible verse, "We walk by faith, not by sight". In the tent they had a "Cheering Words" calendar, and one day the text on it was, "Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?" The missionaries were encouraged by this to believe that somehow the Lord would indeed provide for their needs.

Two days later the only food they had left was two bowls of rice and one of lentils – "and God", Mather added. This cheered the men up. Then another verse from Psalm 78 came strongly to his mind, "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" By faith he believed that it was indeed possible, even in that lonely wilderness.

That very morning, they were surprised to see an English army officer, with two Indian servants, approaching their tent. They had been travelling in the distance and had spotted the tents; so they left the road to investigate. "I intended going on," he said, "but would like to stop and enjoy some English company, if you will have me."

Needless to say, the missionaries agreed, and imagine their delight when the officer's followers arrived, set up their tents and invited them to come along for a cup of tea! What did they see but tea, bread, butter, cheese and jam – all set up on a folding table? How clearly the verse from the Psalm came back to Mather's mind, and how overwhelmed he felt by the Lord's rich provision for them in their time of need!

Not only that, but before he departed the next day, the officer insisted that

they accept a generous selection from his stores. He gave them tinned milk, medicines, cocoa, rice, flour, sugar, butter, cheese, jam, and even a tin of Lyle's Golden Syrup!

Strengthened by these wonderful gifts, the missionaries and Nimgir were soon able to resume their journey. They received more donations of food from some nomads they met on the road and were also able to buy some more from a group of merchants travelling in the opposite direction.

The long delay actually brought them into close contact with some Mongol and Kazak nomads who had never heard the gospel before. So they saw that the Lord was working in this also. At last, in August, they arrived safely at Ghulja thankful to the Lord for all His goodness to them. *J van Kralingen*

For Younger Readers

When You Get Angry

Do you get angry? I think you do, at least sometimes. Perhaps you think it is natural for you to get angry.

There was once a man called Mr Clark. He did not like people to get angry and then say that it was natural.

Mr Clark used to say that he could get angry just like other people. But when he started to feel angry, he would pray about it. He would confess to God his sin of feeling angry. He would then ask Jesus Christ to take control of him. He wanted Jesus to stop him being angry. He knew that Jesus is able to do so. He is able to keep you from doing wrong.

You too should ask Jesus to take control of you. He is not only able to keep you from being angry, He is able to keep you from other sins too. Ask Him to do so. Nothing is too hard for Him.

The Shoemaker and the Sabbath

Robert Gribble was a preacher. He went to take a service on a Sabbath morning in November, in a Devon village called Chawleigh, 20 miles from his home. The wife of the local shoemaker had been convinced of sin. She wished her husband would come to hear the gospel preached. The fact that a stranger was to take the service seemed to her a good opportunity to urge him to go along to the service with her.

But the shoemaker did not want to go; he made many excuses. For one thing, he told her that “he had to take to his customers the shoes he had made during the previous week”. But at last she persuaded him to go. He said that perhaps he might have time to take the shoes to his customers after the service was over.

The preacher's text was 2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”. He did not remember ever feeling the Word having so much power on his soul as when he preached that Sabbath morning in Chawleigh. Nor did he ever remember seeing anyone so deeply moved by the preaching as this shoemaker. The shoemaker became “a new creature” and, Gribble said, “the whole course of his future life gave ample proof that old things had passed away and all things had become new”.

And what about the shoes? The fact that the shoemaker had become a new creature meant that he was now a Sabbath-keeper, not a Sabbath-breaker. He knew now that it was completely unnecessary to deliver shoes to his customers on a Sabbath; that could easily wait till the Monday – not just till the service was over. The Sabbath is the Lord's day, the day that God has given us to use for the good of our souls – not for what is unnecessary, like delivering shoes.

Felix Neff: Pastor of the High Alps

7. Eagerly Pursuing Eternal Life

In 1823 Neff became pastor of a large mountainous area in the High Alps district of France. He began his work energetically, seeking the good of souls. In the May issue, we saw how people in various villages were listening more seriously to the Word of God. But Neff was conscious of the solemn fact that not all who become earnest about their souls continue serious and go on to believe truly in Christ.

After seeing some evidence that God was blessing his ministry, Neff wanted to do all he could to teach the converts. He hoped that they would not only learn more about the Scriptures but also become more holy. For some time, he had wanted to begin a Bible society. Now, in April 1825, along with an elder, he gathered 10 people from the surrounding area and addressed them on the importance of such societies. They all agreed with what Neff said and at once went on to form a Bible society.

They set to work right away. They collected information about the number of Bibles and New Testaments in people's homes, and also the names of those who wanted to have the Word of God for themselves. They discovered

that, before there were any Bible societies, there were fewer than 12 Bibles in the valley. There were also a few New Testaments, but most of them were not in good condition. But, more recently, about half of the local families had bought Bibles, mostly provided by the Bible society in Paris. The Bible society that Neff had established was now supplying other poor families with a Bible, which they were going to pay for, a little at a time. Neff expected that it would take two or three years for these poor people to pay off the whole amount. They did not often have any money, except when they sold some cattle.

Neff often went to the nearby district of Champsaur, a separate parish from his own. No minister had ever lived there, but Neff tried to do what he could for the people of that needy district. In early May, Neff climbed up to a pass between two mountains on his way to Champsaur. Some young men from his Bible class went with him to show him the way, which was both difficult and dangerous.

Neff was glad that their conversation was profitable. One of them said, "How often have I braved danger while pursuing the wild goats among these cliffs. I was careless both of time and trouble. I endured cold and hunger and tiredness, and hundreds of times my life has been in the greatest danger when I have recklessly crossed these ragged rocks. And now will I not do as much for Jesus Christ? Will I pursue eternal life less eagerly?"

That evening they reached the village of St Laurent and at once held a service. The Protestants in this district were only a small minority of the population, yet they were having a good influence on the Roman Catholics. Dancing had now stopped completely, while there was much less card-playing and drunkenness. In the past there had been many violent quarrels; now there were very few.

On the Saturday of that week, Neff received 52 into the Bible class that was kept in the village. He trusted that several of them were truly awakened to a sense of their need as sinners. So many came to church on the Sabbath for a communion service that Neff found it difficult to breathe – even though a large hole had been made in the ceiling the previous evening. He was very glad to hear that only one Protestant had been seen on the bowling green that day; it showed that some attention was now being paid to keeping the Sabbath properly.

Several of the people in a nearby village came to the evening service. They were overheard saying on the way back home: "If this man was to come here often, our wine and spirit merchants would not get rich". Yet Neff felt that, in spite of all the encouraging signs, truly spiritual religion was making only small progress. An outward form of religion is not enough for

anyone; we need the truths of God's Word to be applied to our souls by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The people of Neff's district knew very little about true religion when he came there. But they also lacked ordinary education and were very poor. They depended on the few animals they could rear and the uncertain crops they could grow. Although no rain came after the snowfalls of spring, the local people did nothing to irrigate the ground. Neff, who had some training in agriculture, was ready to show them how to make channels that would bring water from a nearby river to water the ground. But the people thought that it was too difficult, even impossible, to do so.

Neff told them: "You are just as careless about these streams as you are about the waters of eternal life. God has sent you both in great abundance, and yet you are content that your meadows, as well as your hearts, should remain in a state of barrenness." But Neff encouraged the people and at last they began the work under his supervision. He also taught them better ways of growing their crops.

Several of the young men in the area were now anxious to spread to others the knowledge of the truth that God had blessed to their own souls. Some of them began to hold little meetings in their own villages. But they faced a big difficulty: they did not know much; they had not been educated. Scarcely any of them could read French fluently; they had their own local dialect. They could not make themselves properly understood by those who heard them. Neff thought hard about what he might be able to do for them.

In the end, he decided he ought to start a school; so in November 1825 he gathered some of the brightest of the young men and began to teach them. He used a room in the minister's house in Dormilleuse for the school. Some of Neff's friends in Geneva helped by giving towards the expenses. He only had the four winter months to instruct his students; as soon as spring began, all of them had to go back to their ordinary work. The children had their own school, but there was no provision for the young women; so Neff organised teaching for them in the evenings.

He spoke about how thankful he was to Almighty God for how He had blessed this work. He gave thanks to God for strength of body and mind, and also for how God had made him able to endure tiredness. May He "give me," Neff went on, "unworthy as I am, the happiness of serving Him to the end of my life".

But Neff's great aim at that stage was to give some basic education to the young men who hoped that God would use them in spreading the gospel. And 12 of them were soon to become preachers in various villages throughout the district.

Looking Around Us

The Sabbath as an Opportunity

The local newspaper in Inverness reported recently: “City streets . . . were transformed into a sea of pink as people from across the area took part in the Race for Life”. One reason for the race was to raise money for research into cancer, of which there are 200 forms. One could wish that every effort would be made to find cures for forms of cancer that cannot yet be cured, and that more would be done to improve treatments already available.

But there was a problem with that race: it took place on a Sabbath. No doubt the organisers would argue that it was the day when the race would least interfere with normal activity, and that is probably true. Yet there are more important matters that most people today, when arranging an event like this, would not consider – especially that God has given us the Sabbath for the good of our souls.

Cancer is a very serious disease, but it affects the body, not our soul; it affects our situation in this life. Yet our soul will last for ever, either in heaven or hell. If we are to get to heaven and escape endless punishment for our sins in hell, we need to seek the Lord. We need to have our sins forgiven and to be made holy. So we very much need to use our Sabbaths to get good for our souls. We should use our opportunities on every day of the week to seek the Lord, but on weekdays most adults have to earn their daily bread, look after their homes and families, and children have to go to school.

God has given us the Sabbath to focus on our souls, as far as possible, so that those who are able can go to church and hear the gospel – to hear how people can be saved through Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners. Yes, there are things that have to be done on a Sabbath – works of necessity and mercy, but a race to raise money for cancer charities is not among them. Fundraising for cancer charities can be done on other days.

It is sad that when the authorities decide on which day of the week roads may be closed, the needs of churchgoers seem not to be very important. It is even more sad that the authority of God and His command to keep the Sabbath Day holy are almost everywhere rejected.

We should not think of the Fourth Commandment as what restricts us from doing better things. It does not. Rather, we should regard it as an opportunity, a special opportunity to get good for our souls. We should treat it as a welcome opportunity, in normal circumstances, to put aside worldly things for 24 hours and focus on spiritual things – on worshipping God and seeking good for our souls. Let us make the best use of it that we can.

“Looking unto Jesus”

In this poem, John Newton is thinking of Hebrews 12:2. In the fourth verse, Newton is speaking of seeing Jesus *by faith* as the One who died on the cross for sinners.

By various maxims, forms and rules,
that pass for wisdom in the schools,
I strove my passion to restrain;
but all my efforts proved in vain.
But since the Saviour I have known
my rules are all reduced to one:
To keep my Lord, by faith, in view;
this strength supplies, and motives too.
I see Him lead a suffering life,
patient amidst reproach and strife;
And from His pattern courage take
to bear and suffer, for His sake.
Upon the cross I see Him bleed,
and by the sight from guilt am freed.
This sight destroys the life of sin
and quickens heavenly life within.
To look to Jesus as He rose
confirms my faith, disarms my foes.
Satan I shame and overcome,
by pointing to my Saviour's tomb.
Exalted on His glorious throne,
I see Him make my cause His own.
Then all my anxious fears subside,
for Jesus lives and will provide.
I see Him look with pity down,
and hold in view the conqueror's crown.
If pressed with griefs and cares before,
my soul revives, nor asks for more.
By faith I see the hour at hand
when in His presence I shall stand.
Then it will be my endless bliss
to see Him where and as He is.

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