

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



March 2023

Vol 88 • No 3

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Cover Picture: *Outside St Leonard’s Chapel, St Andrews. See page 25.*

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Published by the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Scottish charity number SC003545.

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.

Material for the magazine should reach the editor by the beginning of the previous month.

Subscriptions, Renewals, Changes of Address should be sent to the General Treasurer: Mr W Campbell, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE; e-mail: wc.fpchurch@btconnect.com; tel: 0141 332 9283. The subscription year ends in December, and subscriptions should be sent in January each year for the following 12 months. Subscription rates, including postage, are: *Free Presbyterian Magazine* £28.50 (£2.20 per copy); *Young People’s Magazine* £16.50 (£1.10 per copy); both magazines £43.00. All queries should be directed to the General Treasurer, not to the printer.

Free Presbyterian Magazine: The Church’s main magazine is *The Free Presbyterian Magazine*. Send to the General Treasurer at the above address for a free sample copy. See above for subscription rates.

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Volume 88

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Number 3

Just Do It?

Walking along a street some days ago, I saw someone wearing a piece of clothing on which was the slogan, "Just do it". Perhaps many of those who wear such clothes do not expect others to take the slogans seriously. Yet this particular slogan may have some influence, and many people often put it into practice. We should be clear that we should not rush into just doing something, without thinking about it. We should stop long enough to consider the questions, Is it right? Has God something to say, in the Bible, about what we are thinking of doing?

One reason why God has given us the Bible is to teach us what is right for us to do, and what is wrong – what He has commanded and what He has forbidden. So we must not run on blindly and just do whatever is in our mind; we should stop to consider whether it is right to go on or whether we ought to give up the whole idea at once. Maybe a split second will be enough for us to come to a proper conclusion.

One of the blessings we have in the Bible is that God has given us many examples of people deciding to do what is right and of others deciding to do wrong. We are to learn from them. Right at the beginning of Genesis, we read about Satan coming to Eve in the Garden of Eden. He spoke to her about the fruit from that one tree which God had forbidden Adam and Eve to eat. Satan did not use the words, Just eat it, but that was certainly what he was suggesting. And Eve just did that: she ate the food without thinking; she did not stop to consider carefully what God had said to them.

She ignored God's warning; she fell into sin; and His words of warning came true. She most surely died. From that moment on, she was mortal; her soul was to be separated from her body. But more, she was now spiritually dead; she could no longer do anything that was spiritually good and pleasing to God. And she was on her way to eternal death.

Then she gave the fruit to Adam. He too took the fruit and ate it without considering God's command and His warning. He just did what Eve was suggesting (even if she did not speak). He ignored God's command; he fell into sin and came under the sentence of death. So did all Adam's descendants,

because Adam represented every human being who will ever be born. We are all under the sentence of death – natural, spiritual and eternal – unless we have found salvation in Christ Jesus.

Let us take another example from Scripture: Achan. The Israelites were about to conquer Jericho, and Joshua – as God's representative among them – told them not to take anything for themselves that belonged to the people of that city. But Achan thought to himself: Just do it. He paid no attention to what Joshua had said; he took some gold and silver and a fine garment that had been brought all the way from Babylon. He coveted these things – he wanted what he had no right to have – and he just took them. But there were consequences; he was found out, and he and his family had to die.

Let us also consider Ahab and Jezebel. Ahab, the King of Israel, coveted a vineyard belonging to a man called Naboth. The vineyard was very near the King's palace, which made it very attractive to him. He went to negotiate with Naboth, but Naboth did not want to sell, because God did not allow people in Israel to convey family property to anyone else.

Ahab was not pleased. His wife Jezebel decided to get rid of Naboth so that Ahab could have the vineyard. She told herself: Just do it. She contacted leading men in the city and arranged for a court to try Naboth on false charges, to find him guilty and stone him to death. She thought nothing of God's commands; she went ahead and did what she wanted. When Naboth was dead, she told her husband to take possession of the vineyard. He said to himself: Just do it. But their ungodly actions had consequences. God sent his prophet Elijah to the vineyard to warn him about them. In the end, Ahab was killed in battle; Jezebel too suffered a violent death.

Today also, many people say to themselves too often: Just do it. They never stop to consider what God, and the Bible, may have to say about the matter. Even on the human level, to rush on and do what has just come into one's head may be hugely selfish. And God has called us to love our neighbour as ourselves.

He has said, for instance, "Thou shalt not steal". When someone sees – as Ahab did – something that attracts them but belongs to somebody else, they may tell themselves: Just do it. But no, we must not take what belongs to another person (at least without their permission).

A man called Nott was a missionary to Tahiti, an island in the Pacific Ocean. One day he preached on the text, "Let him that stole steal no more" (Ephesians 4:28). When he went outside the next morning, he saw several people sitting in front of his house. He asked them why they were there.

They told him: "We have not been able to sleep all night; we were in the church yesterday; we thought, when we were heathens, that it was right to

steal when we could do it without being found out. . . . But we heard what you said yesterday from the Word of God, that Jehovah had commanded that we should not steal. We have stolen, and all these things that we have brought with us are stolen goods.” One of them, for example, lifted up an axe, another a chisel, both of them confessing that he had stolen the tool from the carpenter on some ship. The people had brought all sorts of things to the missionary’s house, whatever they had been able to steal and carry away.

The missionary suggested that they should take everything home until they could return it to the rightful owner. But they all said, “No, we cannot take them back; we have had no peace ever since we heard it was displeasing to God, and we shall have none so long as they remain in our houses. We wish you to take them and give them back to the owners whenever they come.”

These people had been used to taking whatever they coveted. They saw something they liked and told themselves: Just do it. Now they realised, through hearing the Word of God, that they were wrong. They recognised that it was wrong to take what did not belong to them. What is more, they could see they ought to give back what they had stolen. Their consciences had begun to work, warning them about what is wrong.

God has also said, “Thou shalt not commit adultery”. It is wrong to tell oneself, Just do it – it is sinful – when applied to relationships between individuals. God has given to mankind the gift of marriage – between one man and one woman. Today so many couples live together without getting married. They say, Just do it, to each other as they move in together without waiting for marriage. They may say, We cannot afford a wedding.

But all that is necessary is the marriage ceremony – in particular, the vows of faithfulness to each other while they are both spared in life. It is good to have a wedding service where the minister asks for God’s blessing on the husband and wife. But an expensive reception for a large group of relatives and friends is not necessary, while it may be a very pleasant occasion.

We could think about other commandments. But let us notice God’s call to sinners: “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:6,7).

Let us remember that sin has terrible consequences in a lost eternity. So we should seek God now; we are to do so earnestly; we are to confess our sin to Him; we are to look by faith to the Lord Jesus as the One who died for sinners. If we believe, we will be saved from the consequences of sin in hell. Remember Jesus’ promise: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7).

Lessons from the Life of Jacob

4. Jacob in Canaan

Rev J B Jardine

Last month's section of this Youth Conference paper told about Jacob's return home from his 20-year stay with his uncle, Laban.

3. Jacob's life in Canaan. Like Abraham before him, Jacob wandered about in Canaan for some time. He dwelt for a time at Succoth, east of Jordan, near Peniel and at Shechem and Bethel.

While Jacob and his family were at Shechem, "Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land" (Genesis 34:1); this resulted in a local leader committing adultery with her. Then her brothers Levi and Simeon took revenge by killing the leader and his people. This story shows that there was a mixture of both the moral and immoral in Jacob's family.

Yet there is a growing sense of the family being separate from the other people in the land and a sense that they felt superior to others (Genesis 34:7,14 and 31). This stands in contrast to their own indifference to their moral situation among the tribes, and to the treachery and cruelty of Simeon and Levi (Genesis 34:25-29). It was Jacob's concern for the safety of his family and their wealth that forced him to leave the area rather than dissatisfaction with the society.

The Lord then brought Jacob to Bethel in safety. "They journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob" (Genesis 35:5). Here they set themselves apart to God again (Genesis 35:2-8). The new name of *Israel* was adopted; his father's God became his God; his seed were to inherit the land of promise. His sons were to become great tribes (Genesis 35:9-12). Jacob raised a monument of stone, an emblem of the "stone of Israel" again (Genesis 49:24).

Jacob's life at this stage was one of losses and griefs. First, the death of his mother's nurse at Bethel (Genesis 35:8, 24:59) and then the death of his beloved wife Rachel at Ephrath when Benjamin was born (Genesis 34:19, 48:7). This was followed by the wicked sin of Reuben his firstborn, a sin that showed the effect of living among the Canaanites (Genesis 35:22). Lastly there was the death of Isaac his father. "Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him" (Genesis 35:29).

On the death of Isaac, Jacob became the head of all the family. He moved

to Hebron. He told Joseph: "Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again" (Genesis 37:14), and the narrative moves on to consider the family as a whole as "the generations of Jacob" (Genesis 37:2).

That Jacob and not Joseph is the true centre of the narrative until his death is seen in Genesis 38, which is devoted to Judah; in Genesis 46:8-27, in which the family are numbered; and in Genesis 49, where Jacob blesses his sons. Saying that Joseph is not the true centre of the narrative certainly does not, of course, take anything away from what is said about Joseph. Jacob is the head of the house as long as he lives. Joseph's most loving thoughts are for his father (for example, Genesis 43:7,27).

Lesson Seven. *One of Jacob's great failures was not to take up fully the position of leadership in his family. He lost control over his wives. Genesis 30 records the strife and jealousy that engulfed his marriage, which was to two wives. Rachel, his favourite wife, felt free to deceive him; she stole her father's "strange gods" and hid them in the camel's saddle (Genesis 31: 31-34). Jacob also lost control of his children. Genesis 34 is a sad account of immoral behaviour, deception and murder. His only daughter Dinah was defiled, and his sons Simeon and Levi deceived all the males of Shechem and then killed them. Jacob failed to raise godly children. We should learn that every Christian husband should be the spiritual leader of the family, teaching his children to pray and to read the Bible. He should set a godly example before them.*

Jacob as a father, with his own family, failed to learn from the mistakes of his parents. He had two wives, Leah and Rachel. However, he loved Rachel more than Leah. Because of this, Rachel and Leah, who were sisters, are now in competition for the love of Jacob.

Lesson Eight. *The story of Jacob shows us how children tend to repeat the errors of their parents. Jacob's parents, Isaac and Rebekah, had their own favourites. Isaac loved Esau while Rebekah loved Jacob. This fatal mistake led to the rivalry between Esau and Jacob. Parents possess great power over their children's future. They must use this power according to God's will and purpose. So parents must recognise the importance of setting a good example. Whether they like it or not, their actions will speak louder than their words. They must serve as an example to their children. The future of these children depends greatly on the parents' effectiveness as parents – on how faithfully they fulfill this duty and responsibility.*

When Jacob had children, he favoured Joseph more than his other sons. Because of this, the children of Jacob grew up to hate Joseph. His brothers eventually sold him to Midianite traders (Genesis 37:28). Even after this,

Jacob did not learn the lesson and had Benjamin, his younger son by Rachel, as his new favourite child.

To become a good example, parents must first have a developed character. The godly character God wants to see in us does not come naturally. Parents must constantly seek God's wisdom so that they will really be a man or woman who is equipped with the right character to guide their children. God said of Abraham: "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgement; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Genesis 18:19).

A Reformation Tour

9. St Andrews University and John Winram

Rev David Campbell

The previous article looked at the Cathedral of St Andrews and noted two important graves amidst its ruins – those of Samuel Rutherford and Thomas Halyburton. This article will briefly notice St Andrews University and its three colleges before looking more closely at the life of John Winram and at St Leonard's Chapel, where he is buried.

In the Middle Ages, Scottish students who had money usually went abroad for a university education. By the early 1400s most went to Paris because access to the universities in Oxford and Cambridge was greatly restricted by the Wars of Scottish Independence with England. At this period the Roman Catholic Church was divided by two rival popes. Pope Boniface IX was supported by the French cardinals, but the Church in Scotland remained loyal to Pope Benedict XIII. As a result, Scottish students found themselves in a difficult position. To remedy this, a plan was made to establish a place of education in Scotland and this plan coincided with the rise to prominence of St Andrews as the seat of the largest bishopric in Scotland.

St Andrews was also the site of a monastery noted as a centre for learning. The St Andrews University website tells us that "in May 1410, a group of masters, mainly graduates of Paris, initiated a school of higher studies in St Andrews, and by February 1411 the school had established itself sufficiently to obtain a charter of incorporation and privileges from the Bishop of St Andrews, Henry Wardlaw". This charter gave the masters and students "recognition as a properly constituted corporation, privileged and safeguarded for the pursuit of learning".

Yet university status, with the authority to grant degrees, could only be

conferred by the Pope or the Emperor as heads of Christendom; this illustrates the control exerted by the Papacy. The account goes on to say that “Bishop Wardlaw turned to the exiled Pope Benedict XIII to seek his blessing. King James, despite being a prisoner of the English, added his weight to the petition. In return for Scotland’s loyalty, Pope Benedict readily agreed, and on 28 August 1413 full university status was conferred by a series of six papal bulls – one of which survives to this day.” By the middle of the sixteenth century, St Andrews had three colleges – St Salvator’s (established in 1450), St Leonard’s (established in 1511) and St Mary’s (established in 1538). The present buildings of St Mary’s College and St Salvator’s Chapel date from this period.

A detailed and very interesting account of the system of teaching and student life from the early Reformation period in the sixteenth century can be found in the *Autobiography* of James Melville. He was taught at St Andrews, and went on to join his more famous uncle, Andrew Melville, in teaching and very significantly reforming the university education system. Thomas M’Crie in his *Life of Andrew Melville* explains in full detail the reforms that were brought in, some of which were more successful than others.

The remaining influence of Romanism and Medieval methods in education lingered for some time. It was on the basis of the reforms, first carried out by Andrew Melville in Glasgow University, that a new university was established in Edinburgh in 1588. Edinburgh University was a solidly Protestant institution. St Mary’s College, being the last of the three colleges, is sometimes called the New College, and it was here that the Reformed theology was taught after Melville’s reforms. But it is interesting to note that, even during the earlier period leading up to the Scottish Reformation, many of the Protestants who were either martyred, or forced to flee abroad, were taught in St Andrews. And it is certain that Protestant teaching was creeping into all the colleges over an extended period. This was especially true of St Leonard’s College and the monastery that was connected with it.

St Leonard’s chapel is among the oldest buildings in St Andrews that are still complete; it is a very simple structure. It was the university chapel and remains in use. It is here that John Winram is buried, and his life is of some interest and importance. John Winram was the sub-prior of the monastery attached to the Cathedral and was evidently a very learned man, with skills in the ancient languages.

He first came to prominence at the time of the trial of George Wishart. He was required by Cardinal David Beaton to preach before the gathering that condemned Wishart. His sermon is mentioned by John Knox; for his information, Knox seems to be relying on John Foxe, who wrote about the

martyrs. Winram preached on the parable of the sower in Matthew 13, and also drew from the parable of the tares in his sermon. Knox says that his sermon was divided into four parts. The details are worth repeating.

“The first was a short and brief declaration of the Evangelist. The second, of the interpretation of the good seed, and because he called the Word of God the good seed, and heresy the evil seed, he declared what heresy was, and how it should be known. He defined it in this manner: ‘Heresy is a false opinion, defended with pertinacity [stubbornness], clearly repugning [opposed] to the Word of God’.

“The third part of his sermon was, the cause of heresy within that realm, and all other realms. ‘The cause of heresy (said he) is the ignorance of them which have the cure of men’s souls, to whom it necessarily belongs to have the true understanding of the Word of God, that they may be able to win again the false doctors of heresy with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; and not only win again, but also to overcome’. . . .

“The fourth part of his sermon was, how heresy should be known. ‘Heresies (said he) are known in this manner: as the goldsmith knows the fine gold from the imperfect by the touchstone [whatever he would use to test it], so likewise may we know heresy by the undoubted touchstone, that is the true, sincere and undefiled Word of God.”

It seems clear from this account that Winram had, by this point, adopted distinctly Protestant principles and that he was not afraid to give voice to them, even in the circumstances of the trial of George Wishart. It perhaps illustrates the ignorance and blindness of the judges of Wishart that they did not seem to grasp that the sermon was in fact a vindication of Wishart and a condemnation of themselves.

Wishart seems himself to have recognised John Winram as having a sympathetic outlook towards him, as Wishart requested to have him visit him on the morning of his execution. Some writers from the period (George Buchanan and Robert Lindsay of Pitscottie) have an extended account of this meeting in which they explain that Wishart in fact conducted a communion service, following the Reformed practice, with the Captain of the Castle and others and offered to have Winram join them. They also say that Winram went to the Cardinal to protest that Wishart was innocent of heresy. These events clearly identify Winram in a very favourable light, in spite of his involvement in Wishart’s trial.

John Winram went on to show increasing sympathy towards the Reformers and was present when John Knox preached his first sermon in St Andrews Castle in 1647 after the Cardinal’s murder. He afterwards invited Knox to a debate at the Cathedral and showed the shift in his position by neither

pressing his case, nor trying to challenge Knox effectively. He is known to have been present at the trial of Walter Mill in 1558, but similarly to have shown no zeal for the result. Soon afterwards he openly joined the Reformers.

Remarkably soon after these events, in 1560, John Winram was one of the six Johns who are credited with compiling and revising *The Scots Confession* – the first creed of the Scottish Reformed Church. This trust in one so recently brought into the fold of the Protestant Church illustrates the power of God that was at work and also illustrates the wisdom of our Reformers in using such instruments as the Lord had provided. Like Saul of Tarsus, the former persecutor began at once to build the faith he once destroyed. John Winram was appointed the first Superintendent of Fife in 1561 and continued in his work in the Reformed Church and all its endeavours, up to his death in 1582. His grave is in St Leonard's Chapel but we were not able to see it on our visit. An engraving of it can be seen online.

The next article will look more closely at the work of Andrew Melville and Samuel Rutherford in St Andrews, both of whom made a very significant contribution to the preserving and advancing of the Scottish Reformation through their work in the University there.

John Rock

2. “I’ve Got a Priest Already”

John Rock was an Irish Roman Catholic who settled in Edinburgh. A missionary, named Hay, who worked in the city, visited John when he was ill. John was converted; there was a real change in his life.

In some ways, life became very difficult for John after he was converted. But his health improved and he was able to go back to work. The problem was that, when his workmates noticed that he was now a different man, they mocked him and tried to annoy him in all sorts of different ways. But God protected him.

When they found out that John was now a Protestant, they showed real hatred for him. John heard that they had decided to beat him up and found other work, but his new workmates too started to persecute him when they heard that he had become a Protestant.

One evening, six of them came to his house in the Grassmarket. Some of them had blackened their faces and the others were wearing masks. Each of them was carrying a candle in one hand and a heavy stick in the other. But a friend was visiting John at the time and they both picked up whatever they could use as weapons to protect themselves. John's enemies lost their courage and fled down an outside stairway; the first of them stumbled and

they all fell. The next day, John met them again at work, and they were so angry that John recognised them that they threatened to kill him.

Then John again decided to change his work, but the persecution continued on the streets. One day someone threw a brick at him but it missed. God was protecting him. Then one of John's children died. Some Roman Catholics came to see him and tried to convince him that this was a judgement from God because he had become a Protestant. They were cruel enough to tell him that, as a result, the child was now in hell. John used his Bible to answer them and, before long, the visitors had nothing more to say. John continued on his way "looking unto Jesus"; he believed that he was on a "sure foundation".

Yes, these were very difficult times for John, but he no doubt profited from them. As a result of the opposition he faced, he would have become more dependent on God in every situation; his faith in Jesus would have been strengthened. God does not leave His children to themselves even in the most difficult of circumstances.

Later these Roman Catholics challenged John to a debate about which is the true religion. He accepted the challenge, and an evening was arranged when they would meet. At the start, it was agreed that they would appeal to the Bible to decide the question; otherwise, John told them, he would have nothing to say. The discussion began about 7 o'clock and went on for about six hours. On every issue they discussed, John was ready with verses from the Bible. In the end, all the Roman Catholics gave up the argument and their leading speaker stated that he believed John had the true answer to the question.

By early 1849 John was very seriously ill and had to spend some time in hospital. Like the Apostle Paul, John believed that "to depart and to be with Christ . . . is far better" (Philippians 1:23), but he felt that "to abide in the flesh [was] more needful" for his family. But God's will was different, and John committed them all to Him.

A few days before his death, John wanted to go home so that he could die among his family. He was very thankful to get home and said, "Now the Lord has given me all I desired on the earth; I can die in peace".

He told his wife: "Nancy, you are not to mourn for me. I am quite happy and will soon be happier. I will be with Jesus in glory. The Lord will provide for you and the children. Trust in Him. Make the children always obedient. Keep them at school and set a godly example before them."

That evening someone he knew came to ask if, now that he was dying, John would let a priest come to visit him. John told Nancy: "Tell him I've got a Priest already; that is Jesus Christ. I need no other". He had Christ to

make intercession for him in heaven; he needed no Romish ceremonies.

The next morning, Hay, the missionary, visited John, as he had often done during his illness. He found that John was quickly getting weaker and was not able to speak at that point. Later on, Hay came again and asked him if he still enjoyed peace. John made a great effort to speak and said, "Perfect peace, perfect peace". That evening, while Hay was again in the house, John passed away to eternal glory.

It would be good for us to consider the question that Hay put to John: "Do you ever think of death?" But how necessary, in the light of that question, to obey the call that drew John to the Saviour: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved".

For Younger Readers

What Will Fill the Space?

A man was busy packing his case. He was going away on a trip, like you might do when you go away on holiday. But he seems to have been going away because of his work.

A friend was with him as he packed his case. He told his friend, "I've still a little corner left. I'm saving it for a guidebook, a lamp, a mirror, some letters and a sword".

"Ridiculous!" his friend answered. "You can't possibly get all these things in."

"Yes, I can," the man told his friend.

What could he possibly mean?

The man answered this question by placing his Bible in the space in his case. But how could his Bible be all these things?

It is a *guidebook* because it shows people the way to heaven and guides them as they take every step on their journey.

The Bible is a *lamp* because it lights up the darkness of this world and shows people how they should take every step through life.

As you look into a *mirror* you see your own reflection. So, as people read the Bible, they should see themselves, whether they are as God wants them to live, or not.

The Bible has *letters* in it, written by men like Paul and Peter.

The Bible is like a *sword* because it helps people to fight against Satan and the bad things he tempts them to do.

Calm After the Storm

Rev K M Watkins

It was forecast to be a very wet and stormy February day, with wind speeds greater than 70 miles an hour. And so it turned out to be. The ferries were cancelled due to the weather. But there was to be a funeral in Uig, on the west coast of the Isle of Lewis. During the worship with the bereaved family, the wind and rain were beating on the windows. The beginning of the drive to the cemetery was difficult as the heavy rain, mixed with a little hail, lashed the windscreen. But after several minutes, the rain lessened, the wind changed direction and reduced in speed. Although there was still some rain, the stormy wind had gone and we could proceed with the burial without too much difficulty.

The sudden decrease in wind strength had been forecast, but no one could know exactly when it would take place. “The wind bloweth where it listeth [wishes], and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth” (John 3:8). To us, it looks as if the wind has a mind all of its own. It is certain that we cannot control it. Agur asked the question, “Who hath gathered the wind in his fists?” (Proverbs 30:4). We can pick up some things in our hands and control them – but we cannot do that with the wind.

It is God alone who “raiseth the stormy wind”, and it is God alone who “maketh the storm a calm” (Psalm 107:25,29). Both the gale and the sudden calm happened exactly as they did because of God’s sovereign will and almighty power. God makes the wind to blow as it pleases Him. And He makes it calm again according to His own will. “For *He* commands, and forth in haste the stormy tempest flies . . . The storm is chang’d into a calm at *His* command and will” (Psalm 107:25,29, metrical version).

It is like this when God converts sinners and effectually calls them to faith in Christ for salvation. Left to themselves, sinners think that nothing is wrong. They think that they can do good works. They think that they can be good neighbours to others, and good relatives to their family. Some think that they have a good knowledge of the Bible, and can say good prayers, and pride themselves in a good attendance record at church.

This might go on for many years. When sinners think of God – if they think of God at all – they sense no trouble or danger. They tell themselves “Peace, peace” (Jeremiah 6:14), thinking that their souls are safe and that there is nothing to worry about. They think that they have never done anything to make God angry with them. They look to the future and do not

see a single cloud in the sky. For time and eternity, they hold out great hope, sure that their latter end will be peace. They see no storm clouds of trouble gathering. They do not feel the wind of God's wrath being prepared against them. Instead, they feel like people enjoying warm and gentle breezes on a bright summer's day.

None of this is real peace. It is sinners' own deceitful hearts cheating them. They are saying, "Peace, peace," to themselves, and there are many false preachers ready to say the same. But in reality "there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14). The peace these sinners feel is false, lulling their souls to sleep. If they are not awakened from it by the Holy Spirit, then when they die they will find themselves in hell, where God's stormy anger will lash them without mercy for ever.

But when God saves His people, He does not leave them in this foolish state. Instead He works by His Spirit to awaken them, to convince them of their sin and misery (see *Shorter Catechism*, Answer 31). This raises a storm in their consciences. They may have been all at peace and quiet before, but now the sharp winds of conviction blow into their souls. These winds tear away the false hopes they had, ripping to pieces the robe of their righteousness and tearing it into shredded rags. Now they are left with no hope for their souls by anything they can do for themselves. Now the gale force winds of God's stormy wrath come lashing into their souls, giving them no rest.

This is what Psalm 107:29 is pointing to spiritually. God "commands, and forth in haste the stormy tempest flies", resulting in this (verses 26 and 27):

"They mount to heav'n, then to the depths they do go down again;

Their soul doth faint and melt away with trouble and with pain.

They reel and stagger like one drunk, at their wits' end they be."

This is what happens to sinners when God convinces them of sin and shows them the miseries that will come in a lost eternity because of it.

Think of the Philippian jailor in Acts 16. He went to sleep that night without a care in the world (as people say), and without any concern for the world to come either – even though he had cruelly thrown Paul and Silas, the Lord's servants, into the worst part of the prison. He was like a "strong man armed [that] keepeth his palace" and "his goods are in peace" (Luke 11:21). That is like many sinners before they are convicted of their sin.

But what a change came with the earthquake at midnight! Now he was afraid for his life, thinking that all the prisoners had escaped and that his Roman employers would punish him most severely. First he was going to kill himself, but when Paul told him not to harm himself, he was even more afraid. For now the storm of conviction blew into his conscience, bringing him to realise that he had been just about to break the Sixth Commandment

and thrust himself unsaved and unforgiven into the presence of God. For the first time he truly saw it – he was a sinner, and he was in trouble with God. Trembling from the battering he was feeling in his conscience, he asked, “What must I do to be saved?”

When sinners have been awakened like this, and are afraid of God's stormy anger, then the Holy Spirit sends a calm. He does this by directing sinners to the Lord Jesus Christ. In *The Shorter Catechism* (Answer 31), this is described as enlightening the mind in the knowledge of Christ. At the cross, God unleashed all His stormy wrath for sin upon His own sinless Son. God did not spare Christ, but punished Him instead of sinners. When sinners see this and believe in Christ for salvation, they are forgiven and accepted. That is what turns the storm into a calm! Now they have true peace with God, through Christ. Have you found that true peace? When you do, Christ becomes your “hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest” (Isaiah 32:2).

The funeral at Uig that stormy day was for a 92-year-old woman who had professed Christ for many decades. Whatever troubles the children of God may have in this life, they go straight to be with their Saviour when they die. There they are out of reach of all the storms they met with in this world. They are like sailors who may have passed through some terrible storms, but still reach the safety of the harbour at the end of the voyage. Eventually all the Lord's people reach the safety of heaven's harbour, as Psalm 107:30 makes clear:

“Then are they glad, because at rest and quiet now they be:
So to the haven He them brings, which they desired to see.”

For Junior Readers

Helps to Godliness

Have you heard of Thomas Watson? He was a well-known, godly, English minister. His church was called St Stephen's, in London, and was burnt down by the Great Fire of London in 1666. He died in 1686 while on his knees praying. He wrote several books; they are very readable and people can still buy them today.

One of these books is called, *The Godly Man's Picture*. It explains what godliness is and it describes how you can know if someone is godly – or, most importantly, if you yourself are godly. Perhaps you will read it when you are older. Towards the end of the book, there is a chapter called “Helps to Godliness”, which gives advice on becoming godly. Surely this is something that you should like to know about! This life is very short

and there are many things to take up your time and distract you from preparing for eternity – but the Bible says that “godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (1 Timothy 4:8).

He gives these eight pieces of advice. You can read them now:

1. “Be diligent in the use of all means” – all the ways, like listening to sermons or praying – that may promote godliness. “First of all you must “strive to enter in at the strait gate” (Luke 13:24). You must come to know the Lord Jesus as the Saviour before you can become godly.

2. “Take heed of the world.” There are people who are godly; the others are *the world*, who love sin. The Bible tells us: “Love not the world”. If your head and heart are full of the world there will be no room for Christ.

3. “Give yourselves to holy thoughts.” The Psalmist said to God: “I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies”. So you need to take some time out of the noise and busyness of life and spend some time every day thinking about your soul and eternity.

4. “Watch your hearts.” Jesus told His disciples, “Watch, therefore” – watch your thoughts, watch who and what you become fond of, watch against temptation.

5. “Redeem the time.” Do not waste time in company, pastimes or pleasures which take your mind off better things. To obtain heaven at last depends on using your time well here; so it should surely be of great concern to you to make good use of your time.

6. “Think of how short your stay in this world is.” The Psalmist said, “Remember how short my time is”; and to God, “Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth”, such a very short distance! Life is short. Once your time is spent, it never returns. You can never have it back again. How important to use it well!

7. “Remember that godliness is the purpose of your creation.” God did not put you in this world just to eat, drink and wear fine clothes. He created us so that we would “serve Him . . . in holiness and righteousness . . . all the days of our life”.

8. “Be often among the godly.” They are the salt of the earth and their company should do you good. On the other hand, “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners”. So the company of the ungodly and their sinful talk is likely to be bad for your soul.

Will you not take heed to what Peter said at the end of his second letter: “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness”? How holy we ought to be in our whole way of life!

J van Kralingen

Man's Chief End

In the 1700s there was a godly, Christian woman called Lady Glenorchy. In her diary, she wrote about how God delivered her from going on in the ways of sin and brought her into His kingdom.

She tells of becoming very seriously ill and having a high temperature. She was so ill that some of those around her, and possibly herself, were afraid that she would die. While she was ill, she writes, “the first question of *The Shorter Catechism* was brought to my mind”. It asks, “What is the chief end of man?” It was as if someone had asked her the question.

The question means, What is our chief purpose in life? We could put it like this: Why did God create us and give us a place in the world that He made for all His creatures?

She considered the *Catechism*'s answer: “Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever”. The answer gives the teaching of the Bible. Man's chief purpose in life is to give glory to God, especially by keeping His commandments. We are to turn from our sinful, ungodly way of life and to enjoy His presence, even in this life. If we become godly, we will be ready to go to heaven when death takes us away from this world, and we will enjoy His presence there for ever.

Lady Glenorchy noted in her diary: “I was struck with shame and confusion. I found I had never sought to glorify God in my life, nor had I any idea of what was meant by enjoying Him for ever. Death and judgement were set before me; my past sins came to my remembrance; I saw no way to escape the punishment due unto them, nor had I the least glimmering hope of another [way].”

She realised that she needed to be taught; she needed God to teach her what it means to glorify Him and to enjoy Him for ever. God taught her that she was a sinner, because she was not seeking to glorify Him. She realised too that she must die and must suffer punishment for her sins in hell for ever. How could she escape that punishment? She could see no way that made this possible. She needed God to teach her further.

And He did. He showed her that there is salvation through Jesus Christ and what He has done. He suffered in the place of sinners; He died for them, so that they might live for ever in heaven. God made her able and willing to believe on the Lord Jesus as the only Saviour of guilty sinners.

We all need that salvation – to have our sins forgiven and to be made godly, seeking to glorify God in all that we do. Then we will be fit to go to heaven and glorify Him perfectly for ever. God is telling each of us: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”.

Looking Around Us

A Tiny Copy of the Lord's Prayer

An artist in Birmingham goes to great lengths to produce tiny works. Recently he etched the Lord's Prayer onto a speck of gold, which he placed into the eye of a needle. The height of the letters in the engraving is just half the thickness of a human hair.

He uses beta blockers – medical drugs – to slow down his heartbeat while working with a microscope at night. He works at night to avoid vibrations coming from traffic. “If a lorry went past outside,” he explained, “it would feel like an earthquake through the microscope.”

It is all very clever and carried out in a painstaking way. But we should remember the purpose of the Lord's Prayer. It is to teach what our desires should be as we pray to God. And these desires should come from our hearts. What we say to God in prayer should be what we really want.

When Christ delivered the Sermon on the Mount, He taught the people the Lord's Prayer. The Holy Spirit directed Matthew to write it down in the Gospel he wrote. So this prayer is preserved in the Bible to direct people, in every generation since Christ was on earth, so that they would know what to ask for when they pray. How thankful we should be that God has not left us in ignorance about prayer and what we should specially ask Him for. He “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”.

Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2022-23

Overseas Names for Exercise 1

Senior Section: *Auckland:* John Campbell, Amelia Smith. *Calgary:* Kharis Chang. *Carterton:* Aaron Verheij. *Chesley:* Kara Zekveld. *Connecticut:* Nathanael Mack. *Fountain Inn:* Ehud Kerr. *Grafton:* William Marshall. *Singapore:* Naomi Chai Shi.

Intermediate Section: *Auckland:* Peter Campbell, Aaron Smith. *Calgary:* Khloe Chang. *Carterton:* Blake Verheij. *Gisborne:* Shona Hembd, Timothy Newton. *Grafton:* Levi Kidd. *Münster:* Clara Rösner. *Santa Fe:* Cameron Smith.

Junior Section: *Auckland:* Joseph Campbell, Owen Smith. *Calgary:* Karsten Chang. *Carterton:* Chelsea Verheij. *Chesley:* Angela Tuinier. *Fountain Inn:* Isabel Kerr. *Gisborne:* Brooklyn Hembd, James Newton. *Santa Fe:* Alexander Smith. *Sydney:* Ethan Macdonald.

Upper Primary Section: *Auckland:* Keith Smith. *Carterton:* Ruby Verheij. *Chesley:* Daniel Kuiper. *Gisborne:* Preston Hembd. *Grafton:* Harrison Kidd. *Santa Fe:* Adele Smith. *Sydney:* Abigail Macdonald, David and Sarah Steel.

Lower Primary Section: *Auckland:* David and Marion Campbell, Daniel Smith. *Calafell:* Valentina Nayach van Essen. *Carterton:* Lana and Mila de Boer. *Chesley:* James and Matthew Kuiper, Meleah Tuinier. *Fountain Inn:* Katherine Kerr. *Gisborne:* Andrew and Ashley Hembd. *Münster:* Conrad Rösner. *Santa Fe:* Scout Smith. *Sydney:* Jackson Campbell, Oliver Campbell, Hugh, James and Lachlan Macdonald, Emily Steel. *Woodstock:* Jo-Anne Heikoop

UK Youth Conference 2023

Arrangements (God willing)

Venue: Strathallan School, Forgandenny, Perth, PH2 9EG.

Dates: Tuesday, April 11, to Thursday, April 13.

Chairman: Rev Kenneth Macleod.

Lower Age Limit: 16 years old.

Applications: to Free Presbyterian Church, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE, or nm.fpchurch@btconnect.com. (Please make contact by March 14, if possible). If necessary, you can contact Rev J B Jardine by phoning 01859 502253. The fee is £50 for those in full-time employment and £25 for others. Cheques should be payable to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland; to pay by bank transfer contact the e-mail address above.

Programme

Tuesday, April 11

2.30 pm **The Sabbath**

A day for our spiritual good
by *Rev D A Ross*

7.00 pm **Katherine Luther**

From nun to the godly wife of Dr Martin
by *Mr F R Daubney*

Wednesday, April 12

9.30 am **The Seventh Commandment**

The issues raised in the present day
by *Dr R J Dickie*

2.30 pm **Historical Tour to Perth**

Conducted by *Rev J B Jardine*

7.00 pm **Christian Character**

Especially humility
by *Rev J B Jardine*

Thursday, April 13

9.30 am **Lessons from the Life of Aaron**

His relevance for today
by *Rev John Campbell*

Price £1.10