

The Young People's Magazine

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

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



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Cover Picture: An African fish eagle.

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Volume 88

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Number 7

Words of Knowledge

Among the proverbs of Solomon, some are particularly addressed to young people. One is: “Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge” (Proverbs 19:27). He is warning his son about people whose teaching is likely to turn others away from the truth.

No words will add to our knowledge unless they are true. If they are false, they will mislead us; what we will then learn should not be described as knowledge. It is important that, whatever the subject may be – whether science or history or how to repair a car – we should be taught what is true, not what is misleading. Indeed wrong information about repairing a car is likely to be very dangerous.

Solomon is speaking about the knowledge of religion. And wrong information on religion is be very dangerous indeed. In this article, we will try to consider some of “the words of knowledge” that Solomon would have had in mind. We will look at some statements that we should take seriously, statements that should very much influence the way we live:

1. God really does exist. God is a Spirit; He has no body. He is infinite, eternal and unchangeable. These three words describe Him in His being, His wisdom, His power, His holiness, His justice, His goodness and His truth (these statements are based on Question 4 in *The Shorter Catechism*). God is without any limit, and this is so in everything that can be said about Him; He never began to exist and He will never have an end; He has never changed, and He never will.

2. God created all things. We are told that “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). He is the God of unlimited power and wisdom. He, not evolution, made everything that exists in this whole universe. Evolution has no wisdom. Life especially could never come about through evolution.

3. God has given a revelation. He has told us, in the Bible, all that we need to know about religion. And it is all true. What He reveals in the Bible is faithful to reality, whatever the particular subject – whether it is about

Himself or creation or anything else. This revelation tells us that “all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). It is God who has given us the whole of Scripture, no matter who was the human writer. It is absolutely reliable; it is all true and it is profitable. So we should read it; we should listen to it being preached; we should value it. It is a safe guide for us to follow as we make our way through this world.

4. *God has told us how we should live.* This is all summed up in the Ten Commandments. The first of these is: “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me”. Of course, there are no other gods, but human beings find it very easy to invent gods for ourselves – not only the gods of false religions but also the things and the people that attract us most. These include the people who are our heroes and the things that get too much of our attention. It may be a boyfriend or a girlfriend, if they get a place in our lives that only God should have. It may be a pastime such as sport, or an ambition, such as climbing up the ladder of promotion at work. Now these things are not necessarily wrong, if they are kept in their own place. But they are wrong when they get a place in our hearts which only God should have.

The last of the Commandments is: “Thou shalt not covet”. It is an example of a command that takes to do with what is inward, in our hearts; it is not what other people can see – though God sees it perfectly. We must not desire anything that we do not have a right to – what belongs to someone else and they do not want to part with it.

5. *God is to be worshipped.* Because He is so great and so glorious, and because He is our Creator, we must worship Him. Outward worship includes going to church and reading the Bible at home. But if these are only outward acts, we are not really worshipping; we are not really thinking of God's greatness and glory, seeking to praise Him and obey Him. We must seek to give Him the glory that is due to Him (Psalm 29:2) as the infinitely glorious Being that He is.

6. *All human beings have sinned.* Adam was created perfect, but he fell into sin; he became guilty before God; he deserved to be punished. Adam was our representative in the Garden of Eden; in other words, he was standing in our place before God. If he had kept doing what was right, God would have accepted all his descendants as righteous. But he sinned and we have inherited his fallen nature and are guilty. Also there is the obvious fact that we are continually committing sin, not least in our hearts. So the Bible tells us: “All have sinned [in Adam], and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:21). We ought to be giving glory to God by always keeping His commandments perfectly; by coming short of doing so, we are sinning.

7. God has provided salvation for sinners. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to deliver sinners from the punishment they deserve because of their sin. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Jesus died in the place of sinners. When He suffered and died instead of them, He was bearing *their* punishment Himself. God is calling on us to trust in Jesus so that we may be delivered from experiencing the punishment we deserve in hell. And all who do so trust will enjoy all the blessings of heaven for ever instead of suffering endless punishment.

These seven words of knowledge are just some of the truths of the Bible that we must hold on to. We should take them seriously; they should very much influence how we live. We must not be turned away from them, however loud the voices that call on us to believe what is false.

But how can we keep safe when so many listen to false teaching and are liable to put us wrong? The fact is that we cannot keep ourselves; we need God to keep us, and we should pray earnestly to Him, for Jesus’ sake, to keep us. And if you have gone astray, Solomon tells us – if you are influenced by false teaching – you are to *stop* listening to it. You are to do so at once.

A man called Wilson went as a missionary to Raiatea, an island in the Pacific Ocean. It is one of the Society Islands, part of French Polynesia. Soon after he began to preach the gospel there, an old man told him: “My ancestors worshipped Oro, the god of war, and so have I; and nothing that you can say will persuade me to forsake this way. What do you want more than you have already?” The old man was referring to some chiefs who were now Christians; he was asking why Wilson should want more converts.

Wilson told him: “I want everyone – all the people of Raiatea and you yourself”. He wanted them all to be sincere followers of the true God.

“No, no,” the old man cried very confidently; “me, you will never have me! I will do as my fathers have done. I will worship Oro. You will never have me, I assure you.”

But the old man was wrong. He did not then understand the power of God to save sinners, to make them able and willing to believe the good news about Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners. In less than six months, this determined worshipper of Oro gave up his idol and began to worship the true God. He stopped listening to the teaching that was leading him astray; he gave it up. Instead he began to learn “the words of knowledge” and began to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Next month, God willing, I hope to say more about the instruction that causes people to err and God’s call to stop listening to it.

God Does Answer Prayer

In a cottage in a Yorkshire village, a godly woman was sitting, waiting for her husband to come home. It was almost midnight and her children were all in bed. They used to get up early, to earn a little money, as their father spent his evenings in a pub and wasted the money he earned. His wife worked hard and, even although it was very late, she was still busy with family chores. She put away one of the children's clothes she had been mending. She was still waiting anxiously to hear her husband's footsteps approaching the door. Time was passing and there was no sign of him coming home.

Her thoughts wandered back to the time after they married; neither of them then had any serious thoughts about their souls. She thought of how she and her husband had loved each other dearly but, after some time had gradually drifted apart. She remembered the birth of their first child; and how, when watching over it, she began to think of the prayers of her mother, who was then in heaven. She recalled too how she had gone down on her knees to pray for the forgiveness of her sins. She had obtained mercy and had believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. And God had given her grace to hold on her way, making her able to rejoice even in times of trial.

She had prayed long for her husband to be converted, but thus far God had not answered her prayers. But her confidence in God remained unshaken. That evening, she placed the Bible – where she had found so much comfort since she had been given a new heart – on the seat of her armchair. She knelt down and read some of God's precious promises. Then she poured out her soul in simple, child-like prayer, which only someone strong in faith could have offered. She rose from her knees, refreshed, strengthened and calm.

She threw a shawl over her head and made her way to the pub where she knew her husband Martin could be found. As she opened the door, the clock struck one; the Sabbath had already begun. Martin was sitting in the bar with some of his fellow workmen and the landlady when his wife entered.

In an angry tone of voice, he told her to go home. The landlady told her: "Wait a little; your husband will go home with you".

She went over to the table where they were sitting and said calmly to the landlady: "Seven years is a long time to wait for anything, is it not?"

"Yes," she answered.

"But 14 years is longer, is it not?"

"Yes."

"But 21 years is longer still. I have waited and prayed 21 years for the

conversion of my husband; and, as sure as he is sitting in your bar, I shall live to see him pass this house and have no inclination to enter; for God will answer my prayer.” She spoke like this because she was so sure that God would answer her prayer. She turned to leave the room, and her husband followed her, but no angry word passed his lips.

About this time, a minister called Rattenbury had come to Leeds, near where they lived. On the Sabbath after the night just mentioned, Martin was persuaded to go with his wife to hear the new minister. The text announced was Ruth’s godly resolution, “Thy people shall be my people, and Thy God my God.” These words came home to him with power; the arrow of conviction sank deep into his soul and he was made able and willing to believe in Christ.

On the Sabbath after his conversion, when Martin returned from the chapel to his now happy home, the midday meal was spread on the table; the children were already seated, but his heart was full. “Children,” he said, “your mother’s prayers are answered. I have passed that public house – where I spent so much time and money – without the least desire to enter. Let us praise the Lord together.”

They went down on their knees and, with joyful hearts, he and his wife raised their hearts and voices in gratitude and praise to God, who had plucked him as a brand from the burning. He acknowledged his weakness and asked for strength to resist temptation. His children speak of that time as one never to be forgotten.

Martin had been valiant in the cause of Satan, and he felt it was his duty to become a valiant soldier of Jesus Christ. He now felt the Word of God precious and he wished others also to enjoy it. He tried to bring other people among the children of God. He was no stranger to sorrow and trouble, but his trials prepared him to be useful when visiting sick people, and when giving advice to poor families nearby.

Martin experienced severe trials: his daughter died in, perhaps, her late teens, and his wife passed away too. But both of them were clearly trusting firmly on Christ. From that time, it might be said, his conversation was in heaven – he was living as a citizen of heaven. Each evening, when he returned from work, he used to go for a wash and ask God: “Wash me, but not my feet alone – my hands, my head, my heart”.

The last week in January 1855, extra services were held in the village, and the Lord blessed them to the awakening of sinners to spiritual life. On the Saturday evening he told his friends he was so happy he should like to slip away to heaven. If he did, he said, he should enter port like a ship in full sail. The next day he took part in the prayer meeting in connection with the

Sabbath school; many of the older boys and girls there had been awakened by the Spirit.

On the Monday he returned from his work very unwell and went to bed early, but no one was afraid of anything serious until the Friday. That evening some of those in his Sabbath-school class visited him. He asked about the progress of the revival and, in much pain and weakness, he rejoiced in the extension of Christ's kingdom. When he said goodnight to them, he exhorted them to be "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord". A little after midnight, he passed away to a better world, where no sorrow or trial or sin can ever enter.

A Day for Our Spiritual Good

2. Why the First Day?

Rev D A Ross

This is a further section of a Youth Conference paper about the Sabbath Day. The first section dealt with the point, "The Sabbath Day was given by God and we need it"

2. Why should we remember the first day of the week as the Sabbath rest in New Testament times instead of the seventh? "God did rest on the seventh day from all His works" (Hebrews 4:4).

What does the name *Sabbath* mean? It is the Hebrew word for *rest*. In the Old Testament, the day of rest was the seventh – the last – day of the week. This is evident from the Creation account, but also stated in the Fourth Commandment, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work . . ." (Exodus 20:8-11).

It is often asked: Since the Fourth Commandment specifically states that the seventh day is the day of rest, why do we keep the first day of the week as our rest day? *The Westminster Confession of Faith* states, "It is the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in His Word by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages, He hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto Him: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week; and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which in Scripture is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath" (21:7).

I suppose a number of us, who rightly regard the first day of the week as

the Christian Sabbath, as indicated in the New Testament, have been confronted with the claim that we are in error by keeping the first day rather than the seventh. We perhaps had difficulty in finding scriptural proofs that the first day of the week is the Christian Sabbath. A few months ago I received the following note: "If you keep the Lord's day as the sabbath then surely that would be a Saturday (last day) and not the Sunday (first day). So, rather than obey the word of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, you have taken and obeyed the word of the Pope."

This person, who quotes at length from the Word of God, was attempting to persuade me to return to the Old Testament Sabbath. But he conveniently ignores the New Testament evidence, or tries to make it mean something other than what it actually says. We need to receive what is revealed to the Church in the New Testament and remind ourselves that the New Testament is the inspired Word of God, just as the Old Testament is.

In the New Testament age, after the resurrection of Christ – which was on the first day of the week – it is evident from the example of the early Christians that the day for rest and worship had been changed from the last day of the week to the first day. This could only be by the leading of Jesus Christ, who reminds us that He "is Lord also of the Sabbath" (Luke 6:5).

There are two passages, in particular, of Scripture which indicate a change from the seventh to the first day as the Sabbath rest. First, whenever the Apostle Paul directs the Church in Corinth about the worship of God, he never does so by his own authority but by Christ's – from whom he derived all his authority. Paul says, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (1 Corinthians 16:1,2). This was to be done on the first day of the week, the day of the resurrection of Christ. This command from the Apostle about collections for poor saints surely proves that this is in line with a change from the seventh day to the first day, for worshipping God. Ever since, at services on this first day, multitudes of Christians have made collections as God has required.

Acts 20:7 also indicates clearly the change of the day of rest and worship, from the seventh to the first day: "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight". Thus the Christian Church, to this day, rightly follows the example of early New Testament practice. Whose example do we wish to follow? The Seventh Day Adventists or the Apostle Paul and the New Testament Church? The answer should be obvious.

It should be pointed out that, while the Fourth Commandment refers to the seventh day, the force of the commandment is to direct us to give a seventh part of our time to rest and worship. Whether it is the last day of the week or the first, it is the seventh part of our time. So the command continues in New Testament times with all the God-given authority it ever had.

Further, Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week and in this way He made a visible statement of resting from an infinitely greater work than that of creation – the work of redemption. This follows the pattern of God's six days of creation and then resting on the seventh day. So, after the more marvellous and glorious work of redemption, Christ entered into His rest. How appropriate then to have a change in the day of rest from the last day to the first day!

So also after the ascension of Christ, the Apostles and the New Testament Church kept the first day of the week as the day of rest and worship, according to the mind of Christ. This was absolutely in keeping with the Sabbath command to give the seventh part of their time to rest and worship, and we follow their example.

It was not according to the choice of Paul or of the early New Testament Church to rest and worship on the first day of the week. Nor is it for us to choose whatever day we wish for rest and worship. Rather it is according to the day of the week that God has ordained. In Old Testament times He ordained the last day, and the first in the New. So believers have complied with the mind of God in whatever period of time they lived.

We are not to suppose that the apostles, in observing the first day of the week as the day of rest and worship, were following a different command from the prophets in Old Testament times, who kept the seventh day in obedience to the Fourth Commandment, "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy". No, it is the same commandment, which requires people everywhere to give a seventh part of their time to rest and worship. It is obvious from these statements of Christ in the New Testament, and there are others, that the day was changed by Him from the last to the first.

I ought to mention one other piece of evidence, and it is most important. It is the other name given to the New Testament Sabbath: "The Lord's Day". The Apostle John says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Revelation 1:10). He is showing that the only authority for the change of day is the Son of God. He was there when the Sabbath was first announced in Genesis 2, then again in Exodus 20 – and now in the New Testament, directing the Apostles about the change. This day was appointed for the good of mankind. May we happily rest on that day and worship our God! "This is the day God made, in it we'll joy triumphantly" (Metrical Psalm 118:24).

A Reformation Tour

13. St Andrews Market Cross: Paul Crow to Samuel Rutherford

Rev David Campbell

The last article considered the famous sermon preached by John Knox in June 1559 in the Parish Church of St Andrews, which led to the reformation of worship in the town. This final article reviews the Reformation at the Market Cross, a few yards from the parish church.

The market cross of St Andrews no longer survives but the streets around it identify the spot where public proclamations and notable events took place through its long history. A small plaque on the corner of one of the buildings on Market Street was unveiled as recently as 2016 by the Ambassador of the Czech Republic, Libor Secka. It is in memory of one of the earliest known martyrs in Scotland – Paul Crow – who was a follower of John Hus. His Bohemian name was Pavel Kravar, and he was burnt at the stake at the St Andrews market cross on 23 July 1433.

The memorial is a reminder to present-day visitors that the Protestant Reformation really dawned long before Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg. Luther's famous protest and his witness and ministry were greatly blessed and afterwards brought about the lasting changes we now associate with the Reformation. But there were faithful men and women testifying against the corruptions and errors of Romanism for centuries before this. Paul Crow was charged by the then Bishop of St Andrews, Henry Wardlaw, with spreading heretical opinions and was sentenced to death. When he was brought to the stake, a brass ball was placed in his mouth to prevent him speaking. This cruel and tyrannical measure seems to indicate that the authorities saw reason to fear the influence of his words, even when he was being put to death.

The Roman Catholic religion has always shown this intolerant and persecuting fear of the truth in all its measures against the Word of God and it is one of many signs that it is a false religion. "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (John 3:20). The faithfulness of those who love the truth, and are willing to suffer for it, has the opposite effect – "He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:21). It is a very bad sign on any person who takes up a religious practice and is unwilling to have it examined fully by the light of the Word of God.

Much that took place during the entire period of the Reformation was a conflict between tyranny and liberty, as well as between error and truth. This

was true from the early dawning of Protestantism under the leadership of men like John Hus of Bohemia, Jerome of Prague and John Wycliffe in England, down to the seventeenth century, when the Second Reformation established the doctrine, worship and government of the Church in Scotland for future generations to hold fast. Those who held to the truth had a duty to spread it and bring those in error under its influence in ways consistent with the teaching of God's Word. Those in error, fearing the truth like the Pharisees did, made it their business to suppress it by tyrannically removing liberty to speak and teach, even from those sent by God to the work of the ministry. The martyrs fearlessly withstood this oppression and were willing to proclaim the truth even when called to suffer for doing so.

We have already considered the life and ministry of Samuel Rutherford and we will close this tour by referring again to him. It was here at the market cross in St Andrews that one of his most famous books was publicly burnt by order of Charles II at the time of his restoration as king in 1660. This happened just a few yards from the entrance to St Mary's College, where Rutherford had served the Lord so faithfully as Professor of Divinity. That event, and the message it was intended to send, sum up the entire policy of the repressive and erroneous system of Episcopacy, which was imposed on the Scottish Church for a second time during the Covenanter struggle.

The famous book of Rutherford that was burnt was entitled *Lex Rex*, which is the Latin for "The Law [and] the King" or "The Law [is] King". It was published in 1644, during the time of the Westminster Assembly and, like other writings of Rutherford at that period, responded to issues that arose in the long discussions around doctrine, worship and government by famous Puritan divines. The basic principle of the book is that the people of any nation have not only a right, but a duty to disobey and indeed to remove rulers who act tyrannically and contrary to the constitutional laws of the nation they rule over. This principle had been taught by others in Scotland before Rutherford, including George Buchanan and John Knox, and also by John Calvin, but Rutherford's book made out the argument for it in thoroughly scriptural terms and in great detail.

The book is divided into no fewer than 44 questions around the subject of the power and authority of rulers and people. It was hated by the Stuarts and those who tried to suppress the Presbyterian system of Church government, which they saw as a threat to their control of the people. The deeply dangerous idea of the divine right of kings, as taught by James VI and embraced by his son Charles I, and grandsons Charles II and James VII, made the king to be the law.

Rutherford showed that in fact the law was the king and that rulers were

subject to law. This principle, and Rutherford’s masterly exposition of it became the basis for all modern democratic systems of government we are now so familiar with. The entire world therefore owes a great debt to the wisdom and faithfulness of the Scottish Covenanters and to men like Samuel Rutherford who were led by the Word of God to teach the true nature of liberty and freedom. But, unlike modern leaders in professed democracies, they showed plainly that our subjection in all things is to the law of God first of all, and not to the authority of any man.

We should read Samuel Rutherford’s book carefully, which was considered so dangerous by the authorities that they had it publicly burnt at the stake. By careful study of such biblical teaching, we would be equipped to oppose tyranny in its many modern forms also. Thus our precious heritage of gospel liberty and civil freedoms will not be lost entirely. Only when the Word of God again becomes the guide for all of life – religious and civil life alike – our national well-being will be recovered. Only with God’s blessing on the truths expounded in the whole of Scripture will nations truly be reformed.

May each one of us be stirred up to seek, under God’s blessing, to value what our martyrs, Reformers and Covenanters were prepared to live and die to defend. Only by a personal union with the Lord Jesus Christ by faith were they able to endure great hardship in asserting the precious truths of the gospel and the principles of God’s law. Similarly, only by true and sincere faith in Christ will faithful witnesses today stand for the truth when it is suppressed, opposed or persecuted.

For Junior Readers

“Unsearchable Riches”

Have you ever thought of how precious the Word of God is? The Psalmist did! He compared it to owning “thousands of gold and silver”, to being really rich – and what was his conclusion? “*The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.*”

To have what God has spoken – in the Bible – is better than owning any amount of the riches of this world! Perhaps you can think of some ways in which God’s Word is precious:

1. It is a guide book for the eternal world, to which we are all heading. It directs us how to get to heaven and how to escape hell.
2. It reveals Christ to us, as the strait gate and narrow way to eternal life.
3. It tells us of the work of Christ, that “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not

perish, but have everlasting life". It tells us about all the suffering that was involved in Christ's work – and that "none perish that Him trust".

4. It shows us that the way of salvation is complete. Is that not a great blessing?

5. It tells us the goodness of God's law as seen in the Ten Commandments – and they are all for our good!

6. It contains precious promises; for example, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee". Is that not more valuable than any amount of money! It is a promise for this life, for death and for eternity.

So should you not obey the words of the wise man in Proverbs: "Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge *rather than choice gold*. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it"?

Perhaps you could learn two verses from Psalm 19 which also compare God's Word (what the Psalmist calls His "judgements") with worldly riches:

"Unspotted is the fear of God, and doth endure for ever:
The judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.
They *more than gold, yea, much fine gold*, to be desired are:
Than honey, honey from the comb that droppeth, sweeter far."

(This article is based on notes of a sermon.)

J van Kralingen

Chief End: What Does It Mean?

John Hall

John Hall was a minister in America 150 years ago. This is a chapter from a book he wrote to explain the answer to the first question in *The Shorter Catechism*. As I hope most readers know, it is: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever". This article has been edited. A previous chapter, "An End: What Does It Mean?" was printed in the September 2022 issue of this Magazine. (Note that it is the making of *old-fashioned* watches that Hall describes.)

When a house is to be built, a number of people, of different trades, must be employed. The architect makes the plan; the surveyor marks out and measures the ground; the diggers make a place for the foundation, which is then laid by the masons, and upon it the bricklayers build the walls; after that the carpenters, plasterers, painters, plumbers, glaziers and others each have something to do before the house is fit to be occupied.

The owner of the house may be said to have two ends in view in using all these workmen. One is that each man shall do his proper part and no more: that is, that the bricklayer shall do the brickwork, the carpenter the wood-

work, and so on with the rest. His end in using them is that each may do his part, and just as each does this, his own end is gained. These may be called his lesser ends.

But his great object is to have the house built, and this end is not gained until each workman has finished his share, and the building is complete and fit to live in. This end is his chief end. He hired a man to dig the cellar, but it was not his chief end to have a cellar, but to have a house. It was important to have the cellar made, but it was only a lesser end to a chief end.

If you go into a watch factory, you will find one man making wheels, another making small screws, another little pins, another chains, another springs, and many other men at different kinds of work. In this case too they all have two ends in view. Each man has his mind fixed on his own particular work – the wheel, the spring, or whatever it may be, and the finishing of that work is the end he has in mind.

But this is only his lesser end; the chief end of his work is a watch. Though all the workers complete their tasks, the chief end is not reached until the various parts are finished and put together, found to fit, and to move the hands properly so as to keep time.

These lesser ends which I have spoken of are all directly connected with the chief end and are necessary to it. The house cannot be built, or the watch finished, unless each workman performs his share of the work. But there is another class of ends which are not chief ends, and have nothing to do in producing the chief end, and yet have some connection with it.

For instance, a trader owns a number of ships sailing from America to China, India, Britain and other parts of the world, taking cotton, flour and other articles to those countries, and bringing back silk, tea, cloth and other goods. To carry on this trade, the merchant must employ shipbuilders, sailors, office workers, agents and many other people. Every time his ship is loaded or unloaded, a large number of workers are needed. He has to pay all these men for their services: and in this way he gives support to many families.

The chief end of the merchant in this business is to earn the money he needs to support his own family and to become rich. It is not his chief end to provide for the expenses of those whom he employs. This he must do and he is glad to do it. So it is one of the ends of his business; but it has no direct connection with his chief end, as the making of a spring is connected with the making of a watch.

If he is a kind man, it will give him great pleasure to think that, by employing and paying so many men, he is providing the means of feeding, clothing and educating their families. But though they should starve in

poverty, and live in miserable ignorance, yet if his business is well carried on he will gain his chief end.

The Old Testament law required Jewish farmers to leave some of the grain standing in the corners of their fields, when they reaped their harvests. It also forbade them to glean up the stalks that fell when they gathered in the sheaves. This law was made for the sake of the poor, who were by the same law entitled to the gleanings of the fields and vineyards. Now it was one of the ends of the farmer's work in those days to provide in this way for the poor. But it was not his chief end, and it did not promote his chief end. If he was a kind man he rejoiced in this opportunity of doing good; but this was not the end he had in view in sowing his seed and planting his vines.

From these examples we may conclude that while many smaller ends may be answered in the course of any work, there is always one main purpose, which may be called *the chief end*. Remember that, whatever else he does, "man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever". That should be our chief aim in life, whatever other lesser aims we may have.

For Younger Readers

When God Helps

A woman decided to make some clothes, perhaps a skirt and a dress for herself. She went ahead and ordered the cloth that she would use.

Then she realised how big a problem she had. She could not afford to pay for the cloth. She was very worried; she knew she had done wrong. She should have been sure she could pay for the cloth before she ordered it. But she did not know what to do about it.

It would have been much better if she had not ordered the cloth. But she did the best thing that could now be done: she went to pray to God. She prayed to Him and confessed that she had done wrong – that she had sinned. And she asked God to help her out of her difficulty. She knew He was able to do so.

He did help her. The woman was expecting the person selling the cloth to come with her order. Some days later, the person did come and explained that there was something wrong with the cloth and so the woman could not have her cloth.

How thankful the woman was that God heard her prayer and

helped her out of her difficulty! Remember that you too are to pray to God. And you are to thank Him when He helps you.

A Blessing at a Deathbed

The woman's only brother was dying. He was now 50. He had gathered a large amount of money. He could not bring it with him when his soul would be taken into the next world. He could only use it in this life, and that life was near its end.

Especially when we die, we need treasure in heaven. But the dying man had none. Money was his idol; he gave all his energy to making more and more money. He even neglected his relations; he spent no time with them and, not surprisingly, he had no contact with them any more. He had never married, and he now had no friends.

The man lived with a family, who looked after him as a lodger. They contacted his sister to tell her about her brother's illness. She set off sadly, taking her 20-year-old son with her. He was her only son and her husband had already died. She wanted to do what she could to make her brother's last days as comfortable as possible. There was something else in her mind: the hope of persuading him, even at this late stage of his life, to seek the salvation of his soul, from the Lord.

Often and earnestly, she prayed to God for her brother. When they were young, she had loved him a lot, and had always been concerned for his welfare. Now she prayed particularly that he might repent and believe the gospel, that he might turn, even now, to the Saviour of sinners. She hoped too that, after his conversion, God might use him to tell those about him that he had obtained forgiveness. And she prayed too that, whatever might be the outcome of his illness, God would be glorified.

When she arrived, she found her brother quite aware of his condition. He had no hope of getting better, but he had no concern about the future. All that worried him was an iron safe in which he kept his money and valuable documents. For many years it had sat under his bed, but now he wanted it moved where he could see it easily. This was done, but if anyone stood in the way, he became impatient; he seemed afraid that it would be taken away. When he fell asleep, he would talk about money, interest, stocks, mortgages and other financial matters, but he was talking nonsense because he was ill. When he wakened, he would ask, "Is the safe there? Where is the key?"

His sister found it impossible to touch his conscience. She went to ask a minister to speak with him, but he was no more successful in bringing the

ill man to think about his soul. His heart seemed totally hard, completely resistant to spiritual thoughts. All that anyone could do now was to make his bodily sufferings easier and to commit his soul to God, who alone was able to do it any good.

The man died. That was sad, but it was even more sad that he showed no signs of repentance. There was nothing to suggest that he had turned from his worldliness and had looked to Christ for salvation. His sister could have no hope whatever that he had been saved from his sins and that his soul had gone to heaven.

Were her prayers wasted? No, by no means. God was glorified when she expressed her desires before Him for her brother's salvation. But that was not all.

The woman's son had no serious thoughts about his soul when he left home, but he began to consider the needs of his soul as he spent time with his uncle. He learned that no amount of wealth is sufficient to make one happy in life, or to give one peace at the time of death. He learned also how dangerous it is to put off preparing for eternity till death draws near. Some people may be impressed about the needs of their soul when death carries away a close friend or a near relation, yet they soon forget about their spiritual needs. But not this young man. He sought the Lord earnestly until, by God's grace, he turned from his sin and looked to Christ by faith.

He went on to lead a consistent Christian life. He too was well off; perhaps he inherited his uncle's wealth. But he used it, we are told, for "the good of his fellow creatures, and the glory God".

We should always try to learn lessons for ourselves from what happens around us and what we hear about or what we read. Let us note a few lessons from this incident.

1. We must not set our hearts on the things of this world. These things may not last; or if, like the man's money, they do last longer than the owner, death will separate the person from his or her possessions. David warned, "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them" (Psalm 62:10).

2. We need to store up treasure in heaven, what is really permanent. We need a place in heaven and all the blessings we will require throughout eternity. We cannot provide them ourselves, but Jesus Christ has provided all that sinners will ever need. So we must ask for these things in prayer, and we must pray for the sake of Christ. It is only because of what Christ has done in this world, and especially on the cross, that anyone can get to heaven. Let us remember the call, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

3. We must seek this salvation now. We must not delay.

Looking Around Us

Can We Live for Ever?

A study in an American university has shown that taurine may slow down ageing in mice and monkeys. Taurine is a substance produced in the human body and is found in foods that contain protein, such as meat and fish.

In the study, half of the mice had some taurine added to their diet; the other half received no extra taurine. Researchers found that the lifespan of the mice which received taurine increased, on average, by 10% in males and 12% in females. The scientists who did the research believe that it is now time to study the effect on human beings of taking extra taurine in their diet. It is already known that lower levels of taurine in the body are associated with ageing but scientists do not understand why.

Does this mean that, if we were to consume suitable amounts of taurine, we could prevent the effects of old age? The real answer is that no one really knows, and it could also have unknown dangers.

What we do know is that we must die, sooner or later, as “the wages of sin is death”. We must, in God’s justice, receive what we deserve because of our sins – and that is not only the death that removes us from this world by separating our soul from our body, but eternal death. Eternal death is the endless separation of sinners from God and from every possibility of blessing; it means experiencing punishment for ever because of our sins.

How earnest we should then be to escape that punishment; only those who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ will escape it. Many people would be glad to take some taurine, perhaps every day, in order to postpone death, especially if they could have these extra years without ill health and the other negative effects of old age.

It is sad how many who realise, to some extent, that they need to be converted put off seeking salvation now, before it is too late. Such people would very likely think that taurine, if it was proved useful, would allow them to spend further years in sin, still refusing to turn to God at once.

The fact is that taurine, or anything else of that nature that might yet be discovered, would not *assure* us of a long life. Besides, a life of godliness is far better than a life of sin – no matter how many years we might be assured of. How much better to have God as our friend – One to whom we can go in all the difficulties of life – than to have Him as our enemy!

The Bible assures us that “happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God” (Psalm 146:5). If we are wise, we will seek Him earnestly, and do so *now*.

Belshazzar

This poem by *John Newton* is about the King of Babylon whom we read about in Daniel 5. In the last verse, there is a reference to Colossians 2:14.

Poor sinners, little do they think
with whom they have to do!
But stand securely on the brink
of everlasting woe.

Belshazzar thus, profanely bold,
the Lord of hosts defied;
But vengeance soon his boasts controlled
and humbled all his pride.

He saw a hand upon the wall
(and trembled on his throne)
Which wrote his sudden dreadful fall
in characters unknown.

Why should he tremble at the view
of what he could not read?
Foreboding conscience quickly knew
his ruin was decreed.

See him o'erwhelmed with deep distress;
his eyes with anguish roll;
His looks and loosened joints express
the terrors of his soul.

His pomp and music, guests and wine,
no more delight afford.
O sinner, ere this case be thine,
begin to seek the Lord.

The law, like this handwriting, stands
and speaks the wrath of God;
But Jesus answers its demands
and cancels it with blood.

Price £1.10