

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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Contents

What is a Human Being?	203
“I May Be Dead Tomorrow”	206
Instead of Me	207
Katherine von Bora:	
4. Family Life in the Luthers’ Home	209
Lessons from the Life of Aaron:	
3. The High Priest	212
For Younger Readers:	
Getting Angry	214
In the Flooded Mine	215
For Junior Readers:	
Made Willing to Obey	216
Seek the Lord (1)	217
Looking Around Us	219
A Sick Soul	220

The Young People’s Magazine

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The Young People's Magazine

Volume 88

November 2023

Number 11

What is a Human Being?

This morning I heard a radio discussion programme being introduced. It was about to consider the question, What is a human? I did not listen to any more of the programme; so I do not know what answer was given. Indeed there may have been more than one answer, perhaps different contributors gave varying answers.

But here is a good answer: A human being is a descendant of Adam and Eve. We know this because God has revealed it in the Bible. It is an accurate answer because the whole Bible is perfectly reliable. We can always depend on the truth of what God has revealed; the Bible contains no mistakes.

When God created them, Adam and Eve were both perfect, and they lived in a perfect world, a world in which there was no sin. They were then able to keep God's commandments perfectly. If they had gone on doing so, they would have lived for ever. But Satan, already a sinful being, came to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, with a dreadful purpose: to tempt them into sin, beginning with Eve. He succeeded with Eve, indeed both Adam and Eve ate a fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. By doing so they sinned against God's command; He had warned them not to eat the fruit.

Human beings belong to a race that God created. So He has authority over them; He has a right to tell them how to behave; He has a right to expect obedience from them. But now, since the Fall, human beings have sinful natures, which means that they cannot keep God's commandments as they should; they cannot do perfectly what God commands.

Human beings are able to think about matters like this; they are different from animals. Yet lots of people throughout the world reject the true God and worship imaginary beings as gods. They are called gods although they are not gods at all. These so-called gods do not speak or hear; nor can they see anything or do anything.

But the true God can speak; He can hear our prayers; He can see everything that is happening in the whole universe; so, in particular, He sees whatever *we* do; and He can do everything that He wishes to do. So we should worship Him; He is worthy to be worshipped because He is so great. And we

human beings should think about Him always; we should ask Him to take care of us all the time. He is able to do so, and we very much need that care, especially to keep us from sinning.

Even in countries with a Christian heritage, very many people try to live without thinking about God. Perhaps they only make use of God's name when they take it in vain, using it as a swear word. In one of the Psalms he wrote, David said, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalm 14:1). Perhaps today this fool might have said this openly to anyone who was listening, but then he kept it to himself. Still it was a sinful thought, a thought that showed he was a fool, and the thought no doubt found a welcome in his mind.

Yet, very often, the thought is more a wish than anything else. Those who have the wish cannot really believe that there is no God; yet such people wish that they will not have to face God as their judge when they leave this world, as all human beings must. But they wish that there will be no such Judge to condemn them to a lost eternity because of their unbelief and all their other disobedience. And they wish that there is no God who has the right to tell them what to think and how to behave.

The fact is that God exists and He has spoken, in the Bible. Some human beings have listened to Him speaking; very many have not. Those who have listened believingly to God speaking in the Bible have taken seriously the fact that they are sinners and have welcomed God telling them that "this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim 1:15). As sinners, they have found this saying to be worthy of their wholehearted acceptance; they have believed on Christ Jesus; they have trusted in Him. And they have been saved; they will never perish; eternal life will be theirs. But those who refuse to believe in Christ – who wish that there is no God – will blunder into a lost eternity.

But not only did God create the first human beings; He also keeps human beings in existence. Do you remember reading in the Book of Daniel about King Belshazzar and his great feast? Belshazzar was King in Babylon and decided to use the golden vessels which a previous King, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken from God's temple at Jerusalem. But these vessels, cups and so on, should most certainly not have been used at a heathen feast. Soon everyone saw a man's hand writing, on the wall, words which no one could understand. A great reward was offered to anyone who would interpret these words, but no one could do so.

Then Daniel was called in and he told Belshazzar the meaning of the words on the wall and what God was saying to him through them. Daniel warned the King about his sinful behaviour. One of the things he told the

King was that he had not glorified “the God in whose hand thy breath is”. The King was not glorifying the God who was keeping him breathing – in other words, the God who was keeping him alive. And God did not keep him alive much longer; that very night King Belshazzar was killed, when Babylon was invaded by a foreign army.

It is God who is keeping every human being alive; it is He who is keeping you and me alive. We are dependent on God to keep us alive; that is true for all kinds of creatures, but we are different because we are able to think about these things. We can think about death and what lies beyond death, and we ought to consider these things seriously – not least the fact that the time of our death is so very uncertain.

Again we might ask the question, What is a human being? Another answer is, A sinner who needs to be saved. It is perfectly consistent with the previous answer. But let each of us say to ourselves: I need to be saved. If God’s work of salvation is already going on in our hearts and lives, how thankful we should be! If the work of salvation has not begun, how earnest we should be in pleading with God that He would save us now!

And how we should value the Bible! It is there we are able to find out how we can be saved – through Jesus Christ, who suffered and died in the place of sinners. We, like the jailer in Philippi, are directed: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).

There was once a minister in Poland called Reichardt. He was well educated and worked as a missionary to the Jews but, surprisingly, he was described as one of the greatest enemies to the gospel. He decided to write a book against the gospel and believed that he would be more sure of his own position if he would read the Bible. Another surprise is that he had never read the whole Bible before, though he had preached from various verses in it.

Reichardt began to read the Scriptures, but he had only read a few pages at the beginning when the thought went through his mind that, if the Bible is true, all the ideas that he trusted in were false. He became more and more convinced of this new thought. He then believed what God says in the Bible; he trusted in Christ Jesus; he began to live a godly life; and God used him to turn many sinners from darkness to light and from Satan’s kingdom to the kingdom of Christ.

This is the power of the Bible, when the Holy Spirit uses it for the spiritual good of a human being. So what should each of us wish to be? The answer is: A human being who has been saved by God’s grace, who has profited from the Scriptures – a sinner who has been changed by God’s almighty power and is now on the way to heaven.

“I May Be Dead Tomorrow”

This article is reprinted with editing from *The Young People's Magazine* for November 1972.

An earnest Christian doctor one day called to see an old man that he had often visited before. Many a time Dr S had spoken faithfully to old John and his wife about their soul's salvation, but apparently without result. Old John listened attentively and professed to agree with the truth set before him, but seemed to wish to avoid making any application of it to himself. He would willingly admit that he was a sinner and that he needed to be saved. He would even declare his intention of some day seeking the Saviour. He did wish to be saved, but it was plain that this was merely to escape the punishment of hell. He intended to prepare for heaven, but he was putting off till what seemed to him a “more convenient season”.

At this time, John was suffering from bronchitis. He was in no danger, but felt painfully weak and ill. Dr S examined him and promised to make up some medicine which they could send someone to collect. He was about to say, “Goodbye”, when John's wife asked, “When must John take the medicine?”

“I shall put the directions on the label,” replied the doctor. Then, turning to his patient he said, “Let me see; you are not very ill. Supposing you begin to take the medicine a month from today?”

John, who had begun a little cough to show how much he needed the remedy, almost choked. “A month from today!” he at last spluttered, his wife practically echoing his words.

“Yes, why not? Is that too soon?”

“Too soon! Why, I may be dead then,” groaned old John.

“Quite true,” the doctor agreed, “but you must remember that you are not very bad yet. Still, perhaps you had better begin in a week's time.”

“But,” cried John in great confusion; “begging your pardon, sir, I mightn't live a week.”

“That is very true,” Dr S agreed, “but I think that very likely you will, and the medicine will be in the house. It will keep, and should you find yourself getting worse, you could take some then.”

He eyed the old man calmly as though there were nothing at all strange in the directions he was giving. John groaned; never had the doctor dealt with him in this manner. As if relenting a little, Dr S went on, “If you should feel worse tomorrow even, you might begin then”.

The old man almost shouted in despair: “I may be dead tomorrow!” Then he went on more quietly, for indeed his poor chest did pain him, “I hope you won't be angry with me or think me ungrateful. You've always been good

to me, but you know, sir, I don't want to get worse, and though I'll warrant the medicine is good stuff, it'll do me no good while it's in the bottle. It does seem against reason to put off taking it, doesn't it?"

"When would you propose to begin then, John?"

"Well, sir, I thought you'd tell me to begin today."

"Begin today, by all means," said the doctor, and for the first time he smiled. "I only wanted to show you how false your own reasoning is when you delay taking the medicine which the Great Physician has provided for your sin-sick soul. Just think how long you have neglected His remedy. For years you have turned away from the Lord Jesus. You have said to yourself, 'Next week', or, 'Next year', or 'When I am about to die, I will seek the Lord' – any time rather than the present.

"And yet the present is the only time you are sure of. God's offer is only for *today*. 'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.' I need not tell you how ready the Lord Jesus is to receive you; how His precious blood was shed for people like you. The remedy is at hand but, to use your own words, it will do you no good unless you take it. And it is foolish to put this off, even until tomorrow."

Old John's eyes were full of tears as he pressed the hand of his kind friend. "Plain speaking," he remarked to his wife; "but I reckon he's right, my dear. I never saw it just the same before."

Instead of Me

Horatius Bonar

This article has been edited. Horatius Bonar was a minister who died in 1889.

Many years ago, I was walking with a friend along the pleasant banks of a Scottish river, in early summer. A man in rags came up to us begging. We supplied his needs to some extent and started to talk with him. He could not write nor read. He knew nothing of his Bible and seemed not to care about knowing it.

"You need to be saved, do you not?" I said.

"O yes; I suppose I do," he answered.

"But do you know the way of being saved?" I asked.

"I dare say I do," was the reply.

"How then do you expect this?"

"I have not been a very bad man and am doing as many good works as I can."

"But are your good works good enough to take you to heaven?"

"I think so and I am doing my best."

"Do you not know any good works better than your own?"

"I know about the good works of the saints, but how am I to get them?"

"Do you know of no good works better than those of the saints?"

"I don't think there can be any better."

"Are the works of the Lord Jesus Christ not better than the works of the saints?"

"Of course they are, but of what use are they to me?"

"They may be of great use to us, if we believe what God has told us about them."

"How is that?"

"If God is willing to take these works of Christ instead of yours, would that not do?"

"Yes, that it would. But will He?"

"Yes, He will. For this is just what He has told us: He is willing to take all that Christ has done and suffered instead of what you could do or suffer, and to give you what Christ has deserved instead of what you have deserved."

"Is that really the case? Is God willing to put Christ instead of me?"

"Yes, He certainly is."

"But have I no good works to do myself?"

"Plenty, but not to buy pardon with them. You are to take what Christ did as the price to be paid for your pardon; and then, having thus got a free pardon, you will work for Him who pardons you, out of love for His love to you."

"But how can I get this?"

"By believing the gospel, or the good news, which tell you about the Lord Jesus Christ: how He lived, how He died, how He was buried, how He rose again – all for sinful men. As the Bible says, 'Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things'."

The beggar stood and wondered. The thought that Someone else's works would do instead of his own, and that he might get all that this other Person's works deserved, seemed to impress him.

We never met again. But the Word seemed to tell upon him; he seemed to take it with him as something which he had never heard before – something which seemed almost too good news to be true.

I have more than once spoken of this since then, in illustrating the gospel, and it seemed to have had an effect. The man's wonder that Someone else's works should do instead of his own was an insight into the effects produced by the gospel of Christ. "Christ for us", is the message which we preachers

bring: Christ bearing “our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Pet 2:24), Christ doing what we should have done, bearing what we should have borne, Christ nailed to our cross, dying our death, paying our debt. All this was to bring sinners to God and to make everlasting life theirs. This is the sure word of the gospel; whoever believes it is saved and shall never come into condemnation.

There are few people who do not know what the word *substitute* means when used about common things, but it is well that we should see how the right knowledge of this word is the key to understanding the gospel properly. “Christ for us”, or Christ our Substitute, is the gospel – the good news of great joy – which the apostles preached, and which we can tell to people as their true hope, even in these later days.

The good news which we bring does not speak of what we are commanded to do in order that God may be reconciled to us, but of what the Son of God has done instead of sinners. He took their place here, on earth, that they might obtain a place with Him in heaven.

As the Perfect One, in life and in death, as the Doer and the Sufferer, He is presented to us that we may get the complete benefit of that perfection as soon as we receive His gospel. All our imperfection, however great, is lost in the completeness of His perfection; so that God sees us, not as we are, but as He is. All that we are and have done and have been is lost sight of in what He is and has done and has been. He who knew no sin was made sin for sinners, that they might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

It is this sin-bearing completeness of the Son of God, as the Substitute, that the sinner rests upon. It is on this that we are to take our stand in our dealings with God. We need a sin-bearer; and God has given us One who is altogether perfect and Divine. “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed.” He, “His own self, bare our sins in His own body on the tree”.

Katherine von Bora

4. Family Life in the Luthers’ Home

F R Daubney

Last month’s article told about how, after Katherine’s marriage to Martin Luther, her good sense and hard work made up for some of his weaknesses.

Four months after Martin and Katherine were married, he told a friend “My Katherine is fulfilling Genesis 1:28” (“Be fruitful, and multiply”). On 7 June 1526, Johanne, known as Hans, was born. There was a nonsensical

superstition that if a monk and a nun had a child together, it would be a two-headed monster. Instead, they received a healthy boy, a source of great happiness. Some time later Luther wrote, "Hans is cutting his teeth and beginning to make a joyous nuisance of himself", and at another time, "These are the joys of marriage of which the pope is not worthy".

The next year, 1527, a daughter Elizabeth was born. Next came Magdalena in 1529, Martin in 1531, Paul in 1533, and Margaretha in 1534. Such a large brood of six children kept both mother and father busy. Luther sometimes had to wash babies' nappies, but he declared defiantly that, even if neighbours should snigger at such unmanly labour, "let them laugh". When one or more of the babies cried endlessly, Martin commented, "This is the sort of thing that has caused the Church fathers [the leaders of the early Church, after the apostles] to speak badly of marriage".

In the following years Hans became a lawyer and later a government official. Paul grew up to be a famous doctor. Martin studied theology but never became a pastor, dying young, at age 33. Margaretha married a nobleman. The Luthers' hearts were broken twice, when they lost Elizabeth at only eight months, and Magdalena at 13 years. Martin asked Magdalena as she lay upon her death bed, "Magdalena, my little girl, you would like to stay with your father here, and you will be glad to go to your Father in heaven?"

"Yes, dear Father," she said, "as God wills". She died very soon afterwards in his arms.

"Beloved little Magdalena," Luther said as she was buried, "you will rise and shine like the stars and the sun".

Besides their own children, there were many others whom the Luthers took in, including four orphaned children who they brought up. The cloister was large and suited for a hospital, so the sick also were taken in. To eke out their income they opened up the cloisters for student boarders. The household could number as many as 25. As one observer noted, the house overflowed with, "a motley crowd of boys, students, girls, widows, old women and youngsters. For this reason, there is much disturbance in the place."

Katherine could not possibly do all the work for such a large establishment so there were male and female servants, but she had the oversight of everything. The student boarders regarded mealtimes as an opportunity to continue their education. They sat at the table with notebooks to scribble down every nugget of wisdom from Luther's conversation. Katie thought that he should have charged them for it but, of course, he did not.

In addition to the care she gave to her family and the student boarders, Katherine became responsible for the Protestants who flocked to Wittenberg from all over Germany, and from as far away as Hungary and England.

Katherine remodelled the old monastery where they lived, establishing a hostel and acting as hostess for the many hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of visitors and religious refugees who passed through, requiring food, rest and sometimes medical care. The building had 40 rooms on the ground floor, with smaller cells above them.

Some who came were rich and prominent, and others were exiles from religious persecution, or refugees from the turmoil of Europe's wars. Most were poor and sick, and some came there to die. People would stay for weeks and even months at a time. If their financially clueless but generous host had had his way, most would have paid nothing for their room and board. It was up to Katherine to be the hard-nosed hostess, requesting payment and evicting those who were freeloaders.

In the year 1527 the plague struck Wittenberg and the Elector commanded that all the university teachers and students were to leave and seek safety in Jena, 100 miles away. Luther, however, said, "I shall remain; I dare not go". Again, the Elector instructed him to go but he got the same reply, "I shall remain; I dare not go". Luther remembered the words of the Saviour; "The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth". He and the local doctor visited the plague-stricken houses helping wherever they could. Although many of those they visited died, Luther seemed immune to the plague, trusting in God. He thought little of his own danger.

All his life he had left his affairs with God and, with the same calm trustfulness, he placed his life in God's hands. Beside him throughout all of this stood Katherine. She assisted him in his labours among the sick and readily opened her doors to all who came to her for help. The wife of the doctor whose family had taken refuge in Luther's house fell ill with the plague, but with careful nursing she recovered. Another member of Luther's household fell sick. Unmindful of herself, Katherine nursed the sufferers and received strength for the work.

On December 10, while the plague was still raging, Katherine gave birth to her second child, Elizabeth, and Luther gave thanks that mother and child had both been spared. It is hard to imagine how Katherine had coped with all she had been doing while heavily pregnant throughout that dreadful time. When winter took a firm grip, the last remnants of the plague disappeared. The survivors breathed freely and gave thanks for their deliverance and, by April, all of the fugitives were back, and the town returned to normal.

Luther wrote to his friend Justus Jonas, "The dear Lord has given me a daughter, my sweet little Elizabeth, and has relieved me of all anxiety about my wife. The plague entered our house, but the Lord spared us. The plague

took our pigs instead, of which five are fallen. I am happy, and thank the Lord, that the angel of death was content with such inferior prey. The plague is now dead and buried.”

In the summer of 1528, baby Elizabeth died, aged 8 months. As the child was dying, Katherine was overcome with grief and cried, “O dear Father, let this cup pass from us. It is so bitter, methinks I cannot drink it.” When Luther saw his wife’s grief he too burst into tears and wept like a child.

In 1529 Magdalene was born and Luther said to his wife, “You dearest wife, how can I thank you for this precious gift! What would Dr Martin be without his Kate! Since I have you, I am no longer poor, but a rich man indeed!” He prayed for his new daughter: “If Thou lovest me, Lord my God, do Thou preserve and bless this dear life”.

Luther was subject to periods of deep depression which seemed to involve great spiritual darkness and filled him with doubts about his work and his faith. These times must have been very difficult for those around the Reformer, especially his wife. During one of these episodes, which had gone on for an extended period, Katherine entered her husband’s study dressed for a funeral. Luther asked who had died. She replied, “God”.

Luther was appalled and said that that was ridiculous. “Well,” said Katherine, “why do you behave as though He has?” This exchange shocked Luther out of his depression.

Lessons from the Life of Aaron

3. The High Priest

Rev John Campbell

Last month’s part of this Youth Conference paper was about Aaron and Moses when they were working together.

Aaron is perhaps best known as being the first high priest that God set apart in Israel. According to God’s purpose, and the instructions He gave to Moses, Aaron and his sons were to fill the office of priest. They were made priests after the tabernacle had been completed and was ready for the services of God’s worship to begin. Aaron and his four sons were solemnly set apart to the holy office of the priesthood by being anointed with oil and clothed in priests’ garments.

When God appointed Aaron to the holy office of high priest, we can have little doubt that God had regard to his habitual godliness. The Holy Spirit Himself described him, speaking through David in Psalm 106:16 as “the saint of the Lord”. His office emphatically required that the individual who

held it must be truly holy. So it can safely be said that Aaron was a holy man in spite of his faults.

Aaron's privilege as High Priest lay most importantly in the fact that it was his duty to draw near to God and minister in the tabernacle in the presence of God, on behalf of both himself and the people (Exodus 28:1, Leviticus 8:1). We also read in Exodus 28:30: "Aaron shall bear the judgement of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually".

The service of the High Priest was doubly representative. First, he stood before the people, representing God, showing them God's will, declaring what was true about God, and pointing them to God's way for forgiving sin.

Second, he stood before God, representing the people in their sinfulness and their need. He was bearing the names of the 12 tribes of the Children of Israel upon his heart. He came because of the offered sacrifices, which typified Christ and His sacrifice. Once a year he represented the people before God in the most holy place. From the solemn duties of the most holy place, he came out to announce with assurance God's acceptance of them and His blessing.

It is impossible to think of the work of Aaron and his successors apart from that of the great High Priest. Aaron's work was typical of Christ's, who was the Great High Priest of His people. Just as Aaron, in his priestly ministry, associated his people with himself, by bearing their names on his breastplate, so in a far greater sense does Christ associate His people with Himself in His priestly office. He remembers each one of them individually before God the Father in His great work of intercession.

God also makes His people "a royal priesthood" who are to offer spiritual sacrifices. This is still part of the Lord's people's service in their spiritual priesthood: to bear the burden of others upon their heart. Yet how often, even those who are the busiest in God's service can, sadly, fail in this.

It is easier and more pleasing to our fallen nature to do those things which give us some outward recognition, before men, than it is to make a habit of entering into the secret place to pray, before God, away from the eyes of all others. Yet it is the time that we spend in secret prayer that will, in the end, prove to be the best-spent time of our lives. We may well ask the great High Priest to "teach us to pray".

In Exodus 29 we read about the sacrifices and ceremonies for setting apart the priests to their office. Among other things, only Aaron and his sons (the priests), were to "eat the things of the sacrifices", for they were holy. This showed that they needed to feed their own souls on the One that those sacrifices pointed to – Christ Himself.

Especially those who are to feed others spiritually must themselves, *by*

faith, eat Christ's flesh and drink His blood. This alone nourishes the inner life of the soul. By feeding on Christ, the whole life is consecrated, or set apart, to God and made holy – fit for heaven.

It also shows us that Aaron and his sons must be separate from all others even in the small details of their lives. It must be the same with all the Lord's people too in every age, particularly ministers of God. The requirements on the priests extended to their dress and even their food.

The office that Aaron and his successors were set apart to was partly ceremonial. But it does show for all time the need for actual holiness, by which those who are redeemed by grace, and so made holy, are properly qualified for the service of God. God's work is most holy, and so the redeemed must be holy. "But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [in your whole way of life]; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15,16).

The priests were to be seen as completely set apart from an ordinary lifestyle. It was an essential qualification for doing the service of God. God demands the undivided attention and loyalty of all His people, of whatever age they are, whether male or female – especially of those who are privileged to be called to God's service in an official or public way.

For Younger Readers

Getting Angry

Do you get angry with your brothers or sisters? Do you quarrel with other children when two of you want to play with the same toy at the same time?

There was once a man called John Clark. People noticed how he did not quarrel with other people. One day, a friend asked him why he kept from quarrelling with others.

John answered that he always let the angry person have the quarrel to himself. He did not speak back in an angry way.

It is very difficult to keep calm when someone else speaks to you in an angry way. Perhaps you find it difficult to keep from speaking angrily when something happens that you do not like.

But God can keep you from getting angry. Even if someone else speaks to you in an angry way, God can keep you from speaking back angrily. You should ask Him to keep you from getting angry.

In the Flooded Mine

This article also is reprinted with editing from *The Young People's Magazine* for November 1972.

“I tell you again, mate, religion may do fine for women and children, but it will not do for men,” said Jonathan Winter, a rough old miner, to one of his fellow workmen, who had recently begun to follow Christ. “And as for you, Roger, I’m sure you could hardly be more of a woman than you are already; you are the softest, most chicken-hearted chap I know, and if you really are going to be pious and Bible-reading into the bargain, you’ll turn so soft that a shadow will fright you. Give it up, mate. Give it up; you’re only half a man as it is, but whatever you will become if you stick to religion, I should like to know?”

“Something better than I have been”, replied Roger in a low voice which was scarcely heard amid the jests and laughter of his fellow workers.

Roger and Jonathan, with about a hundred other men, were employed in a coal mine. Roger Martin had been led to a knowledge of his sins, and to the belief that he was pardoned through the blood of Jesus. He was the only Christian among these rough men. Months went by, and Roger, though jeered at and annoyed, had not given up religion.

One day at noon, Roger was let down, in what they called a bucket, to the bottom of the mine shaft. There he began handing some tools and stores to Ben, a lad who was sometimes employed below. Just as he was stepping out of the bucket, he heard a sound which made him draw his breath. It was the rushing of water, and he knew from experience that it must have forced its way into the mine from a neighbouring stream. In a few minutes his fellow workers might be overwhelmed and lost.

One foot was still in the bucket. A jerk on the rope, and it would be wound up, and he would be saved. It was a great temptation to one so timid. Then he remembered the other workmen, their unfitness to die, their willful rejection of Christ and salvation. The thought of the Saviour nerved his heart; he would not save himself while they were unwarned.

Quickly jumping out, he told Ben to enter the bucket, saying as he jerked the rope, “Tell all the village that the water has come in and that we are probably lost; but we will seek refuge at the far end of the right gallery. Be quick. Goodbye.” At that moment the bucket began to move upwards, and soon it was out of view.

The mine was full of long narrow passages from which the coal had been dug. Hurrying along these, Roger soon reached the miners and told them their danger. It was a terrible moment as each felt the impulse to move away

in a mad rush to reach safety. Roger almost alone among them was calm and purposeful. He told them what he had done and told them to follow him with their picks to the end of the right gallery. It was the highest point of the workings and, with their picks, the men succeeded in hollowing out an even higher chamber which they hoped might be above the level which the fast-rising water would reach. A few items of food had been saved, though little enough to see them through the expected ordeal.

In their hastily hewn chamber the men all huddled to wait a slow rescue, or to perish by hunger or drowning or suffocation. During the long hours that followed, Roger pleaded with the Lord to spare them if that was His will. And when their initial excitement had passed, the others listened as men do when faced with death.

Meanwhile those on the surface were doing their utmost to reach the trapped men. Following the message brought by Ben, they sank a shaft above the right gallery, working by day and night. On the morning of the fifth day the rescuers heard muffled blows beneath their feet. Carefully now, but no less energetically, they continued to dig down and soon reached the spot where their friends were trapped. Several were dead, but more than half of them, Roger among them, were still alive. Tenderly they were carried home and cared for; they soon recovered from their awful experience, though none of them ever forgot it. It was blessed to some of them, so their after-lives showed the true fruits of saving grace.

Among those was Jonathan Winter, who had so often sneered at Roger's profession of Christianity. When he learned how Roger might have saved himself and Ben, leaving the others to their fate, he exclaimed, "I said that religion would make Roger more of a softy than he was before. But it seems to me, mates, that it has made him do what many of us would not have dared. The Bible-reading, that can make a timid chap like he risk life for the sake of telling us about a Saviour, must be good for us all. And I, for one, cast in my lot with Roger and his like."

For Junior Readers

Made Willing to Obey

This story was told in this *Magazine* in the past, as part of a longer article.

Let me tell you about a boy who honoured his father. A circus had come to the town in which he lived. The great tent was pitched and the sound of the lively music brought great crowds, especially of the young people, to the ground.

Among them a little boy was looking about with a great deal of curiosity. "Hello, Johnny," said a man who knew him. "Going to the circus?"

"No, sir," answered Johnny, "my father doesn't like them."

"O well, I will give you money to go," said the man.

"Father doesn't approve of them," said Johnny again.

"Well, go in for once and I will pay you."

"No, sir," said Johnny, "my father would give me money if he thought it best. Besides, I've got a shilling of my own, and that is twice the price of admission."

Nothing could make Johnny go against his father's will, although his father wasn't there to see.

Seek the Lord (1)

John Kennedy

This is the first part of a sermon preached to young people in Dingwall in 1859; it has been edited. The minister's text was "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near" (Isaiah 55:6).

This is a message from the Lord to you this day. I am only like someone sent with a message to another person. He gets his message written by his master, and he must read it when he reaches those to whom it is sent. And he must explain the message, in order that those to whom his master sent the message may understand what he meant.

Now the message today is: "Seek the Lord while He may be found". Notice it is not at any time that the Lord is to be sought, but only "while He may be found". It will be vain to seek Him except then. There are some who seek Him while He may be found, and they get Him. They get life and the favour of the Lord. There are others who seek Him when He cannot be found, as the foolish virgins did, but they will not get Him. "Many . . . will seek to enter in and shall not be able."

Now, pay attention to the next part of the verse: "Call ye upon Him while He is near". If you feel that you cannot find the Lord, just call upon Him to come and find you. You are just like a little child out at night, with a friend. It is a dark night. The child has wandered and lost the way and lost sight of his friend. The child may wander and wander till he falls over a cliff into the water and is lost.

There is nothing wiser he can do than try to find his friend again. But when he tries to reach his friend, he cannot find him. What then is he to do? What but to cry to his friend to come to him and to lose no time, for he and

the friend are going farther away from each other. When the friend is near and will hear his cry, then is the time to call. That friend can reach and find the child, though the child cannot reach and find him.

Now this is just the way here. You will perish if you do not seek Christ and find Him, but if you cannot find Him, call on Him while He is near – to come to seek and to save that which is lost. He is able and willing to do so, and He is near you so that you may call on Him to do this. “The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.”

“Seek the Lord.” Seek Christ; that is the first thing to which we must attend. It is the Lord that says this. To whom does He say this? To each boy, to each girl, to each man and woman in this church. And why should you seek Christ?

(1) You should seek Him because *you do not have Him*. You do not have Him for yourself. You will not seek for anything that you have. It is what you do not have that you will seek. Now this is the greatest lack you can have. The greatest lack a sinner can have is the lack of Christ.

(2) You should seek Him because *you need Him*. I want many things which I do not need. I do not have them, but I can do without them. But I need Christ above everything else. If you get Him, all your needs will be made up. You need some things for your comfort; you need some things for your life. Now you need Christ both for the comfort and life of your soul; you cannot have true comfort or life without Him.

Why does the drowning man seek help? It is for his life; he will die if he does not get it. Now, you are in a state of sin just like one in danger of drowning. You are in danger any moment of sinking into hell. Sin is a drowning sea, and if you are not rescued out of it you will sink down, down into hell. You are in that sea, but you are in it like the child that was going into the river step by step. He did not know where he was going till he put his foot in a deep hole under the water, and the water went over his head and he was lost.

Or like the child that was swimming merrily on the surface of the water, laughing to his companions, when suddenly he was seized with cramp. Down he went and never came up alive again.

Or like the sailor that was bathing in mid-ocean on a hot day. When he was swimming merrily around the ship, a shark swam along and in a moment seized him, dragged him deep down beneath the water and devoured him.

Or like the young man that was swimming across the river just above a great waterfall. Then the stream caught him and carried him quietly but surely down, till in a moment he went over the waterfall and was dashed to pieces on the rocks.

Looking Around Us

How Did Saturn Get its Rings?

The newspaper article is headlined: “How Saturn got its rings: a ‘recent’ smash between icy moons”. Saturn is the second-largest planet in the solar system. The Cassini spacecraft has spent 13 years orbiting the planet and has confirmed that the rings are made up of almost pure ice.

In fact, the article is less definite than the headline, though the headline is all that some people may have read. Astronomers have considered the information transmitted to earth from the spacecraft and have concluded, from their evolutionary perspective, that Saturn *may have had* no rings for the first four billion years of its existence. They have also concluded that the rings *may have been* the result of two moons, both orbiting Saturn and made up of ice, crashing into each other and being broken up into a huge number of smaller bits of ice – some of them as small as grains of sand; others as large as mountains. The rings are made up of these pieces of ice – moving round the planet all the time, giving the appearance of being continuous rings.

But how did Saturn get its rings? The Bible tells us that “God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also” (Genesis 1:16). The “two great lights” are, of course, the sun and the moon. The “stars” include all the other objects, including planets, in the sky. There is no need for astronomers and others to put theories together to describe how the universe and different parts of it came into their present form. They should rely on what the Bible tells us; it is dependable. But there can be no doubt that many of those who are pushing evolutionary explanations of how various parts of the universe and various creatures on earth came into existence do not believe in God and wish not to do so. If they were to believe that God exists, they realise that they would have to change their lifestyle, and they do not want to do that.

One important point noted in the article is that there is very little dust on these rings. This is why the astronomers, though still thinking in terms of the billions of years that are part of evolutionary thinking, assume that the rings of Saturn were formed relatively recently – just a few hundred millions of years ago. The same is true about the moon (the one that revolves round the earth): the amount of dust on its surface is far, far less than would be expected if it really was as old as the theory of evolution demands.

Let us keep to the teaching of the Bible. God does exist. He made the whole universe. He made human beings, and so we are responsible to Him. Creation is wonderful, but even more so is God’s work of salvation. Above everything else, let us seek salvation from Him, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

A Sick Soul

This poem by John Newton is based on the words of Jesus in Matthew 9:12: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick". [*Distemper* means disease; *palsy* means the lack of power to move; *impotent* means powerless.]

Physician of my sin-sick soul,
To Thee I bring my case;
My raging malady control,
And heal me by Thy grace.

Pity the anguish I endure,
See how I mourn and pine;
For never can I hope a cure
From any hand but Thine.

I would disclose my whole complaint,
But where shall I begin?
No words of mine can fully paint
That worst distemper, sin.

It lies not in a single part,
But through my frame is spread;
A burning fever in my heart,
A palsy in my head.

It makes me deaf and dumb and blind,
And impotent and lame;
And overclouds and fills my mind
With folly, fear and shame.

A thousand evil thoughts intrude
Tumultuous in my breast;
Which indispose me for my food,
And rob me of my rest.

Lord, I am sick, regard my cry,
And set my spirit free.
Say, canst Thou let a sinner die,
Who longs to live to Thee?

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