

# The Young People's Magazine

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

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*“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 2024***

***Vol 89 • No 3***

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**Cover picture:** Near Fort William. See page 50.

## The Young People's Magazine

**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; tel: 0141 332 9283; e-mail: william.campbell@fpcoffice.org. The subscription year ends in December, and subscriptions should be sent in January each year for the following 12 months. Subscription rates for 2024, including postage, are: *Free Presbyterian Magazine* £35.60 (£2.75 per copy); *Young People's Magazine* £20.60 (£1.40 per copy); both magazines £54.00. 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.

# The Young People's Magazine

Volume 89

March 2024

Number 3

## The Cities of Refuge

**S**uppose you lived in Israel long ago, in Old Testament times. Suppose too that you had picked up an axe and went away into a forest and that you began to chop down a tree. Then something terrible happened: as you swung the axe once more, the head came off the axe and hit someone on his head that was standing nearby. The other person died.

You would no doubt feel terrible about it. But what would you do? You could now be in very great danger. There would be an “avenger of blood” – probably the nearest relative of the man who died, perhaps a brother. He might well consider it his duty to treat the death as murder and to kill the person who was responsible for the death. So you could be in serious danger of being killed yourself.

After all, the Bible tells us: “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man” (Genesis 9:6). In other words, if one man spills the blood of another – if he murders someone, if he kills him deliberately – then he too is to be put to death. The death penalty ought to be the punishment for murder, even today. How many lives might be saved if parliaments would listen to the Bible and bring back the death penalty.

If you live in Britain, or in some other country that has a reasonably fair system of justice, you might well hope that your evidence would be accepted. First of all, you would tell the police that the head of the axe came away from the handle and that you really had no intention of killing anyone. You would hope that the police would believe you and take no further action. If the matter did go to court, you would tell the court the same thing and you would hope that the jury would believe you. But there were no police officers in ancient Israel. What could you do?

Your only option would be to go to the nearest city of refuge as soon as possible. God had provided these cities of refuge for people in your position, in danger of death from the avenger of blood. When you would get to the nearest of these cities, you might find the elders of the city – the most respected men in the place – at the gate that brought you into the city. You

would explain to them what had happened, and they would in due course decide what should happen to you.

Meantime, they would take you into the city, and you would be safe there from the avenger of blood. At some stage, the elders would try to find out the facts. If they decided you were innocent, they would let you stay in the city of refuge; if they decided you were guilty they could hand you over to the avenger of blood.

Now I hope that you will never cause anyone's death, even if it is not deliberate. It is a very solemn matter to be in any way responsible for sending someone into eternity, especially if they are not prepared to leave this world and meet their Maker. Pray to the Lord to keep you from doing any harm to others – in any way.

But God's provision of cities of refuge has a spiritual application. We should think of ourselves as sinners, and we should remember that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Especially, sin results in *eternal* death, eternal separation from God in hell, if we do not turn from our ungodly ways. But God has made a provision for sinners, who are in serious danger of eternal death.

What is that provision? We may answer this question by quoting John 3:16: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life". So Christ is a city of refuge for us. And, just as the person who killed in Israel, but not deliberately, had to flee to the city of refuge, so we sinners must flee to Christ for safety. Then we will not perish, but instead we will have everlasting life in heaven above after we die.

But what does it mean to flee to Christ? As John 3:16 tells us, it means to believe – it is *the one who believes* that will not perish. To flee to Christ means to believe in Him, to trust in Him for the salvation of our soul. Then our soul will be delivered from perishing for ever in hell. Fleeing to Christ means trusting in Christ as the One who can take away all our guilt – the punishment due to us for all our sins.

The person who killed must stay inside the city of refuge. If he was to go outside and the avenger of blood were to find him, he could be killed. But there was one thing that could happen which would make it safe for the killer to go outside the city, and even to go back home and live there for the rest of his life. That was when the high priest in Israel would die. That seems to point to the reason for the safety of sinners who have fled to Christ as their city of refuge. The reason is that Christ is the great High Priest, who represents sinners before God; and when He died, He was bearing all the sins of all the people who will ever believe on Him.

Remember that if you needed to get away to the city of refuge to escape the avenger of blood, you had to go there as quickly as possible. To linger would be highly dangerous; it would be madness. So it is with fleeing to Christ: we must go at once; to be careless about the salvation of our souls is the most unwise course of action we can take in this world.

Who knows how soon we may die? We cannot promise ourselves that we will live for much longer; indeed we cannot promise ourselves that we will live for another moment. How unbelievably foolish to stay away from Christ, the City of refuge for souls, for even one more moment!

The Bible tells us: “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2). The words have a real urgency about them. That urgency is strengthened by the repetition of the words *behold* and *now*. And “the accepted time” is the same as “the day of salvation” – the time when we may obtain salvation and be accepted as righteous for the sake of Christ. To flee to Christ is so very urgent.

The cities of refuge were a provision for those who were not guilty of murder, for those who had not killed someone deliberately. But Christ is a refuge for those who *are* guilty – who have sinned against God and who are still sinning against Him. He is even a refuge for those who cannot stop sinning. Indeed none of us can stop sinning. No one anywhere can stop sinning. All the more need to come to Christ at once, just as we are, without waiting to make ourselves better!

There is no other Saviour but Christ. He must do it all – from beginning to end. We cannot even make ourselves a little better in the hope that He will then be willing to accept us. The fact is that no one has ever come to Christ as a city of refuge and been turned away because they were too guilty. He still says, “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37).

Christ is calling to *us*: “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Again, to “come” means to *believe* in Christ, to *trust* in Him as the Saviour of sinners – a place of refuge where we may be safe if we flee to Him. Christ’s call is to believe in Him without delay. Delay is dangerous.

Many people think they can put off seeking Christ till near the end of their life. But that is extremely foolish. We dare not delay for one moment. And how dare we defy the authority of the Son of God when He calls us to do something, and to do it now? He has authority over everyone. He has authority over each of us. May we cry out earnestly to the Lord to make us able and willing to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ at once! He is ready to hear the cry of poor, needy, guilty sinners and bring them out of the darkness of Satan’s kingdom and into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

## To Travel on Sabbath?

This article is taken, with editing, from *The Christian Treasury* for 1852. It was written by a minister who did missionary work among white people in America.

**W**e have favourable accounts from those that have gone to California. From what I can learn, I judge that they were trying to honour God by letting their light shine before others. I have been greatly interested to learn about two of the members who went from the church here. They were placed in such circumstances that their faith was put to the severest test and have endured the trial and have come out of it unharmed.

They met a company of very wicked men; and it seemed to be necessary for them to travel with these men, though this was against their own wishes. They went on without any difficulty till the Sabbath; then came the trial. The question was raised, "Shall we travel today?"

The company said, "Yes".

The Christians said, "No".

The matter was debated, and the Christians put forward reasons for resting on that day, but the voice of the multitude was along these lines: We will do evil.

The spirit of godliness in these brethren said, We cannot go with this multitude to do evil, though it may expose us to reproach, danger and death.

The Christians' decision was made: they must stop. The others went on and left them to enjoy the Sabbath alone. They rested and worshipped God as best they could in their loneliness. They started on the Monday morning refreshed and, before the Saturday, they overtook the other company. The question was again raised on the next Sabbath morning, "Shall we proceed?"

"Yes", was the decision, except for the Christians. They honoured God and rested. He in whom they trusted kept them and, before another Sabbath arrived, they overtook the other company again.

By this time, the enemies of the Sabbath began to see that they had gained nothing but had actually lost. Their teams of horses were tired, while those that had rested on the Sabbath were vigorous. The battle was fought, and victory was on the side of truth and right. The company all agreed to keep the Sabbath. They had not stood alone in defence of the Lord's day; God was with them.

What made the position of these brethren more interesting is the fact that they are young Christians, converted in the winter of 1848-9. Such has not been the firmness and consistency of all the professed Christians who have gone from this region. Many have left the Sabbath behind them and, it is to be feared, many other good influences also.

# John Bunyan

## 1. Early Life

*Rev George B Macdonald*

This is the first part of a paper given to last year's Youth Conference in New Zealand. Its full title was "John Bunyan – Preacher, Prisoner and Pilgrim".

**I***ntroduction.* John Bunyan was a preacher of the gospel. He was a prisoner for conscience. He was a pilgrim who walked the path to glory. We begin with a quote from Bunyan's most famous book, *The Pilgrim's Progress*:

"As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place, where was a den; and I laid me down in that place to sleep: and as I slept, I dreamed a dream. I dreamed and, behold, I saw a man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back. I looked, and saw him open the book, and read therein; and as he read, he wept and trembled; and not being able longer to contain, he broke out with a lamentable cry, saying, 'What shall I do?'"

In this way, John Bunyan begins his famous book, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. It is a highly regarded work of literature, even by academics who do not share Bunyan's Christian convictions. Remarkably, it has never been out of print, and it has left its mark on the development of the English language. More remarkably, it was the work of a man who had been a poor tinker, repairing metal articles like pans, and who never attended university.

This bears witness to Bunyan as a man well-grounded in Scripture, having a clear understanding of conviction of sin and conversion to Christ. It reminds us that Bunyan was a preacher as well as a pilgrim and that his main goals in life were to enter the Celestial city of heaven himself and to proclaim the gospel to others. Before Bunyan ever ventured to preach the gospel, he was first saved by it. He was a pilgrim himself.

*Early Life.* The exact date of the birth of John Bunyan is not now known. It was probably around 1628 as there is a record of his baptism in November 1628. It is interesting that, even in regard to his birth, this great man should be defined by an ordinance of the Church of Christ.

In covering the life of Bunyan, one is greatly helped by the fact that he wrote an autobiography, which received a wide readership, like *The Pilgrim's Progress* and other books by this notable man. It is aptly titled, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. One gets the impression that, unlike too many, Bunyan never lost his sense of wonder that the Lord had mercy on him. Truly, it appeared to him, it was grace abounding to the chief of sinners.

*Family background.* John Bunyan was not of royal birth. He was a poor

man from a poor family background. He worked as a tinker. In prison he got a little income from making shoelaces. Let this remind us that influential people have come from poor backgrounds. God is sovereign. He puts down one and raises another up. Looking at the early life of Bunyan, in and around Bedford, one would have had no inkling, had we been one of its inhabitants in his days of folly, that he, of all men, would be such a useful Christian.

*The times in which he lived.* John Bunyan lived from around 1628 to 1688. These were tumultuous years in England. It was a time of great national upheaval. The English Civil War raged during Bunyan's lifetime, and he was for a time a soldier in the forces that were fighting for Parliament. During his time as a soldier, he narrowly escaped death.

In *Grace Abounding*, he tells us: "When I was a soldier, I with others was selected to go to such a place to besiege it. But when I was just ready to go, one of the company desired to go in my stead. When I had consented, he took my place. Coming to the siege, as he stood sentinel, he was shot in the head by a musket ball and died."

Yet this astonishing providential deliverance did not cause Bunyan to leave off the ways of sin, as he admitted: "Here, as I said, were judgements and mercy, but neither of them did awaken my soul to righteousness. Therefore I sinned still, growing more and more rebellious against God and careless of my own salvation."

Surely we can see in these providences, how the Lord mercifully spared this man and preserved him, even when he was unconverted. What of our lives? Can we think back on merciful deliverances that we have had? May the goodness of God lead us to repentance! May we not, as some do, harden in sin after providential deliverances!

*Marriage.* Bunyan's first marriage proved a blessing to him. Strangely, we are not told the name of his wife. But he does mention that they came together as poor as poor could be, "having", as he comments, "not so much household stuff as a dish or spoon between us both". Yet, his wife did bring to the marriage two books that proved to have some influence on the ungodly Bunyan. These books were *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven* and *The Practice of Piety*. Her father had left these books to her, when he died. It seems he was a good man. Bunyan's wife told him what a godly man her late father had been and how carefully he lived his life. Let this remind us that we may have an influence on others by the way we live. "The memory of the just is blessed" (Proverbs 10:7).

Though the books did not bring Bunyan to conviction of sin, they did have the effect of awakening in him a desire to reform his life and attend public worship. Sadly, he became very superstitious and self-righteous.



*Sabbath Breaking.* It appears the first sin he was really convicted of was Sabbath breaking. The only sermon he mentions that had an effect on him at that time had, as its subject, the Sabbath Day and the evil of breaking it, “either with labour, sports, or otherwise”. It seems this was a sin of which Bunyan was especially guilty. He had a great love for sports on the Sabbath Day and this was a day on which, in spite of his church attendance, he indulged himself in games and sports. In our day and our cultures in New Zealand and Australia, there is much love of professional sport, even on the Sabbath Day. Little do many realise what a great sin this is.

Amazingly, on the very same day he had been convicted in church by the sermon against Sabbath breaking, in the afternoon he went to the village green and played a game with others. Suddenly he seemed to hear a voice in his “soul, which said, ‘Will you leave your sins and go to heaven, or have your sins and go to hell?’” This was a shock to him and yet the thought came to his mind that, as he was so great a sinner, it was now too late for him to look toward heaven; for Christ – he concluded – could not forgive him or pardon his sins. At once he sank in despair and wickedly reasoned that, if he must be damned, he might as well be damned for many sins, as for a few.

Clearly, this seems to have been a temptation of the devil. How we should be warned by Bunyan’s example against hasty conclusions that have no scriptural basis. He was convicted, but shook off the convictions by unsound reasoning and the spirit of despair. The Lord would have been just to leave him in his sin, but the Lord had great patience and mercy on John Bunyan. He would yet be a trophy of grace.

As Bunyan reflected on his own case when writing *Grace Abounding*, he makes the solemn comment: “I am very confident that this temptation of the devil is more usual among poor creatures than many are aware of, even to overrunning their spirits with a seared [that is, dried up] frame of heart and a numbing of conscience, the frame of which [the devil] quietly and slyly supplies with such despair that, though no peculiar guilt rests upon them, yet they continually have a secret conclusion within them that there is no hope for them because they have loved sins, and so after them they will go.”

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## A Good Wife Is from the Lord

Solomon says that “a prudent wife [one who has understanding] is from the Lord” (Proverbs 19:14). Many men have experienced the truth of his statement, and many wives too have found that a prudent husband is from the Lord. One reason why so many fail to get good wives is that they

do not ask the Lord for them. They follow their own ideas and do not ask counsel from God. They do not commit their ways to Him. In this most important of all earthly matters, they follow their feelings and lean to their own understandings.

Thomas Shepard (1605-49) was the first pastor of Cambridge, in the USA. He was one of the most godly and useful of the early American ministers. He followed Solomon's proverb. He said, "Now, about this time, I had a great desire to change my state by marriage; and I had been praying, three years before, that the Lord would bring me to a place where I might find a suitable wife".

Shepard was at last invited to move into the home of Sir Richard Dailey, probably to act as his chaplain. There his work was blessed to the conversion of most of the Dailey family, one of whom in due time became his wife. "And when [the Lord] had prepared a wife for me," says Shepherd, "He then gave me her, who was a most sweet, humble woman, full of Christ, who loved me very much." Shepard described her further as a good Christian, a most wonderfully loving wife to him, every way friendly and holy, and who had "a very sweet spirit of prayer". And he concluded, "Thus the Lord answered my desires".

Men may smile at the innocent way in which he tells his story, but they would do well to follow his example.

Adapted from *The Christian Treasury* for 1852

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For Junior Readers

## A Sabbath-Keeping Captain

Captain Duncan Macintyre was born near Fort William many years ago. He grew up to be a respectable young man but he had no interest in the salvation of his soul. He had a beautiful singing voice and a great love of music, which often led him into worldly company. But he was not left to follow worldly things.

He was first convicted of being a sinner at a meeting where his minister was asking questions from *The Shorter Catechism*. He was deeply troubled for some time; he spent a lot of time in prayer asking God to have mercy on him. It was while he was on his knees praying that the Lord delivered him. He used to speak of the happiness and comfort he felt at that time and of how much help he got at church services.

He was employed as a sailor on boats run by a company called David MacBrayne. Because he could do his duties well and worked hard, he rose

to be captain. Twice his faithfulness to his God and the Fourth Commandment was very much tested.

The first time was while he was acting as assistant captain on the mail boat to the Outer Isles. He was told that the ship was going to leave port on the Sabbath evening to sail to Oban. He was convinced that this was not a work of necessity and he appealed to the Captain in charge to wait until the Sabbath was over. The Captain refused.

This put Duncan into a very difficult position. He decided that he would have to leave the boat, rather than sin by breaking the Lord's Day – which meant he would lose his job. But in the Lord's providence, he then received a message giving him his holidays (which he must have asked for before then). So he did not have to return to the boat, to sail to Oban.

Another time, when he was sailing between Oban and Fort William, he was asked to take tourists aboard on a Saturday morning and bring them back late, after the arrival of the evening train. This would mean he would still be sailing in the early hours of Sabbath morning.

This obviously was of great concern to him, but there was not enough time left to get in touch with the Company. We can be sure he prayed earnestly about this difficulty. But when Saturday morning came, there was such a gale blowing that none of the boats could go out to sea. And the trip had to be delayed.

Were these not wonderful answers to prayer? The Lord has promised, "Them that honour Me, I will honour". This was clearly seen in Duncan's difficulties. If you are ever placed in a similar situation, I hope you will pray to God for strength, and that you will be able to stand up for your principles as Duncan did.

*J van Kralingen*

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## Dependable

*Rev Alexander McPherson*

This article is reprinted with editing from *The Young People's Magazine* for June 1970, when Mr McPherson was editor. The quotation in the last paragraph is from John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

From time to time we hear that the nation needs particular types of people. At one point there will be a drive to obtain more scientists, and at other times doctors or teachers or some sorts of tradesmen will be much sought after. Yet there is one class of people which the nation always needs but which we hear very little about today; nor in fact do politicians, or even churchmen, even mention it.

Perhaps you think I am going to say that it is people with grace, true Christians, that we need. Yes, that is true, but what I have in mind at the moment is people you can depend on. The nation could do with thousands, yes millions, of dependable persons, old and young.

You know what I mean by a dependable person – say, a reliable boy or girl! It means the boy, for instance, who has assured his mother that he will not go near the dangerous old quarry or unused canal, and who does give these places a wide berth, however strongly his friends tempt him. Or the girl who has been given charge of her baby brother and who honours the trust placed in her, no matter how much she feels inclined to join other girls in their fun.

Often the trustworthy child becomes a trustworthy youth who wins the confidence and approval of an employer. In turn he becomes a reliable man or woman, the sort that everyone knows one can thoroughly depend on. It is a great matter to be known as dependable; that is the sort of person we instinctively desire for a friend or helper.

Now what qualities go to make someone dependable? There are a number, but we can first mention *truthfulness*. One can depend upon the word of such a person. He speaks the truth and, if he gives his promise, he will keep it. What he promises to do, he will carry it out; he will not go looking for reasons to back out of it when he decides that he would rather do something more to his liking. The Saviour is the supreme example of this. Knowing full well what was to be the end of His engagement to redeem His people, He “steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51).

The second quality is to be *conscientious*. The dependable person has a strong sense of duty and can be trusted to carry through whatever it is his duty to do. He will do so even though it might be unpleasant or difficult. Jacob earned that character in Laban’s service, for he could say that he had stuck at his difficult tasks for 20 years; “In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes” (Genesis 31:40).

A third ingredient is *courage*. The reliable person is not frightened out of the path of duty just because someone is annoyed with him for being there. When Micaiah was being summoned to prophesy before Ahab, the messenger advised him to humour the king and thus protect himself: “Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good”. And what did brave Micaiah reply to that? “As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak” (1 Kings 22:13,14).

Another element of dependability is *perseverance*. No matter how long, monotonous, or laborious the task is, it does not stop him completing it. Noah

persevered long in preparing the ark that was to save his household.

In many ways the dependable person is the ideal companion, friend or helper. This quality sets him above the individual who may be far cleverer, or able to work very hard for brief periods when it suits him, or the glib talker creating hope by his many promises, or the good companion whose entertaining talk tends to blind one to the fact that he is useless or lazy.

If then dependability is so good a quality, how do you get it? Certainly some people seem that way by nature. But do you know that there is nothing which produces reliability as surely as grace? So even if you are already quite dependable, grace can make you more so. And if you have to admit that, on your past showing, no one would be wise to place much trust in you, grace is the sure cure for this and every other defect in your character.

Not that I am suggesting that the main use of grace is character building, something you adopt to achieve this, just as some people use muscle-developing apparatus to build up their bodies. The grace of God brings salvation, prepares for eternity, makes the sinner holy and overcomes death itself eventually. We have been thinking how desirable it is to possess a certain moral quality, dependability; so it is absolutely true to say that God's saving grace does produce this quality.

Grace makes people *truthful*; they "buy the truth and sell it not". One of the results of becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus is that lying is put away and only truth is used in conversation with other people (Ephesians 4:25).

Grace also makes for a *conscientious* life. That is what it did to Paul; he said, "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16). God is always before the person's mind so that they act, "not with eye-service as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God" (Colossians 3:22).

Grace gives *moral courage*, which appears again and again in the worthies of Scripture. Again we can cite Paul as an example of Christian courage. For example, his stoning at Lystra did not keep him from continuing his mission, and even from returning to Lystra shortly afterwards in order to encourage and strengthen the new converts.

*Perseverance* also comes through grace. Believers persevere in the way of life, and a persevering spirit is given them, so that they do not weary in well-doing, but they persist at their tasks, believing that in due season they shall reap if they faint not (Galatians 6:9).

As I said at the beginning, the nation badly needs dependable people, young and old. The whole world needs them, and Christ needs them for the work of His kingdom in the world. That is a great work requiring the very best qualities of mind and heart, including dependability. It is demanding work,

seeking to commend Christ, His Word, law and everything that is His, to an unbelieving, sinful world. It needs dependable people, such as grace puts substance into, who will not shirk the labour, opposition or dangers, but strive to do what the Lord bids them.

Young friends, seek grace to say, like the man of very stout countenance whom Christian saw at the Interpreter's house, "Set my name down, Sir," and in the strength of that grace press on to heaven. On the way you will acquire the character of a dependable servant of Jesus Christ, and in the end you will hear the Saviour say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matthew 25:21).

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## How a Student Dealt with an Unbeliever

In 1827 a young man, studying for the ministry, was asked to lead an evening prayer meeting in a house. He knew that two or three Deists were present. Deists were people who believed that God had created the world, but afterwards He left everything to itself. Not surprisingly, they rejected the Bible, for the Word of God makes very clear that God has not abandoned the world.

The young student made some remarks on the Word of God, showing that it was genuine. At that point, the president of an infidel club stood up and interrupted the speaker; infidels reject the authority of the Bible. The young student gently said to him, "Sit down, and after the meeting I will talk with you".

When the service was over, there was scarcely time to talk. So they arranged to meet at a friend's house the next morning. At the appointed time, the president of the society, with several unbelieving books under his arm, and a large collection of booklets and papers, arrived along with two other members of his club. No sooner had the men sat down, and the large table was covered with the president's books and booklets, than the infidel began to pour out his contempt for the Bible with great earnestness.

"Stop, stop," said the student. "Let us commence right, and then we shall end well. Do you believe there is a God who made all things, a God who has a mind?"

"I do."

"Do you believe He created you, feeds, clothes and watches over you and yours without any reward?"

"Certainly, I do."

“Well, so that we commence right, please lead in prayer. Ask the God in whom you believe to direct us to the rejection of that Bible if it is false; and if it is true, to receive it. We do not want to be deceived.”

The man hesitated and said, “I never pray. I do not believe in prayer.”

“Never pray, sir? Do not believe in prayer when your God has done so much for you? Never thank Him for His goodness? Have you had a father?”

“Yes.”

“Did you never thank him? If you had a child whom you had always blessed, would he not thank you when you gave him some little thing?”

“I suppose he would.”

“Well, sir, commence right. Just pray. Pray and thank God.”

“I can’t pray.”

The student then turned to the two other infidels, asked them to pray, and they both declined. The student knelt and, with great freedom, poured out his whole heart to God. As he finished, all three infidels stood up from their seats. The president passed his fingers into his hair and, as he gathered up his books, he said, “I think we will not talk any more; it will do no good”. His confidence had drained away as the true God was addressed in prayer.

The student showed the men to the door. The meeting was over. And a short time later, the student heard that the club had disbanded.

One would like to have heard that the infidels had been converted. Of course, we do not know, but it was now so much less likely that the infidels would have continued to spread their false ideas, after the meeting with the student. And it is likely that other young people would have been protected from these ideas. That itself was a real blessing. And let us learn the great importance of prayer in everything we do.

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*For Younger Readers*

## **Jesus and the Blind Man**

**B**artimaeus was blind. He could not see. He was sitting beside the road begging for money. But, more than anything else, he wanted to be able to see.

One day Jesus came along. Someone told Bartimaeus that it was Jesus. He believed that Jesus could heal his eyes and that he would be able to see.

So Bartimaeus cried out to Jesus, wanting help. Lots of people told Bartimaeus to be quiet. But Bartimaeus really wanted to be able

to see; so he could not be quiet. Now he cried out to Jesus more than ever. He so much wanted to see.

Did Jesus pay any attention? Yes, of course He did. He stopped and asked people to bring Bartimaeus to Him. They told Bartimaeus that Jesus wanted him to come.

Did Bartimaeus delay? No, he got up at once and came to Jesus. He even threw away a piece of clothing. Nothing could get in the way of him coming to Jesus.

When Bartimaeus came where Jesus was, Jesus asked him what he wanted Jesus to do to him.

Bartimaeus told Jesus that he wanted to be able to see. He trusted Jesus was able to do this.

So Jesus at once made the blind man able to see.

We too should ask Jesus to help us in every way we need help. Especially we should ask Him to take away all our sins and to make us holy. He still helps those who trust in Him.

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## About Idolaters

### 1. Idols of Wood and of Money

*Brownlow North*

This is the first section of an address taken, with editing, from a book about the Prodigal Son. North was, in his youth, thoroughly ungodly but, after being converted, he became a well-known preacher.

Luke 15:14. *And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.*

“Amongst the gods there is none like unto Thee, O God,” says David. And he gives us this reason, amongst many: while “their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god” (Ps 16:4); “they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing” (Ps 34:10). There is this difference between the Lord God and other gods: those who worship the Lord God, no matter what they may think, are always in the very best position in which He can place them; they lack nothing that is really good.

All other gods may seem to give at the moment what those who worship them desire, but they are brought, in the long run, to feel their need – some sooner, some later. Yet there never was a worshipper of any but the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who did not, at some time



or other, like the Prodigal, come into need. “He that hath ears to hear let him hear.”

There are lords many and gods many, and every man worships some god. It is true that all gods except the Lord are the work of men’s hands – man-made gods. But because men have made them what they are, they are gods of this world. And the man who does not have the Lord for his God, does not have a real god.

Some have a notion that, because now we do not make an image of wood or stone, bow down to it and worship it, idolatry at least has ceased out of the land. But I believe firmly that no heathen nation, in the darkest ages of superstition, ever made, or bowed down to, or worshipped more false gods than are made, bowed down to and worshipped by professing Christians in this enlightened age. I know of no lust of the flesh, no lust of the eye, no pride of life, which has not been made an idol by man, bowed down to and worshipped.

In proof of what I have written let us compare God’s account of the idolater, as given in Isaiah, with the conduct of multitudes today. “He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto.

“He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god” (Is 44:14-17).

Now if we substitute for this god of wood an image of gold, where is the difference between this idolater and hosts of so-called Christians in the present day. He sought the cedar tree, the cypress and the oak, as multitudes seek wealth, and for the same object. He sought, so that with part he might attend to the immediate comforts of the body – roast flesh and say, “Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire” – and with the rest make a god.

So multitudes today seek, with part, to attend to the comforts of the body. Where is the difference? Yet how many, having made a fortune, bought an estate, built a house and filled it with what their souls lusted after, are now saying to their thousands of pounds, or tens of thousands, or hundreds of thousands, what this man said to his idol of wood: Thou art my god; in the day of my trouble thou shalt deliver me!

Do not the words of the Lord, addressed by Isaiah to the man worshipping

the idol of wood, apply to the one worshipping the idol of gold: "He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" (Is 44:20). Thus saith the Lord: "He that trusteth in his riches shall fall" (Prov 11:28). Sooner or later his god must fail him; like the Prodigal, he shall surely come into need.

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## The Blessedness of Being Kind.

**H**enry Martyn was once well-known as a missionary to India and Iran. When he was sailing to India, he always watched out for opportunities to do good to those on board the ship.

He paid special attention to sick people. One day a gale was blowing, and the hatches on deck were shut down to prevent the waves getting inside the ship and soaking everything. Martyn went below deck to visit a sick sailor. Everything there was in pitch darkness, so he had to feel his way around to get anywhere. With difficulty he found the man, who was swinging in his hammock, suffering from a burning fever and with no one to speak to him. Not only was it dark in the hull of the ship; it was also hot and damp.

Martyn gave the sick man some grapes to help take away his thirst. He was glad to be able to do good, even to people's bodies. He found lots of opportunities to good to others, but especially he wanted to help their souls. Martyn had a lot of experience of finding pleasure in doing good, but it involved much self-sacrifice.

We may learn something from the way in which Martyn came to have the grapes which he gave to the sick man. After coming in to the harbour at the Cape of Good Hope – very likely to get some supplies – the ship sailed again on the Sabbath. On that day a boat came alongside with fruit, but Martyn knew it was not right to buy any – because it was Sabbath – though he wished he could have some with him on the next leg of his voyage.

On the day he visited the sick sailor, a passenger came on board at the Cape – presumably outside the harbour. Martyn had scarcely ever spoken to this passenger, but he sent the missionary a plate of fruit. Martyn very much enjoyed the grapes, and he had some to give to the sick man.

On the same day that he received this welcome present, Martyn wrote in a notebook this statement, which he took from a book that he was reading at the time: "If from regard to God's Sabbath, I deny myself, He will more than make it up to me". Someone commented further: "In keeping God's statutes there is great reward" (see Psalm 19:11). These things were true then; they are still true today. Let us seek grace to act in the light of them.

# Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2023-24

## Overseas Names for Exercise 1

**Senior Section:** *Auckland:* John and Peter Campbell, Aaron and Amelia Smith. *Carterton:* Aaron Verheij. *Chesley:* Isabel Bouman, Kara Zekveld. *Gisborne:* Timothy Newton. *Grafton:* Levi Kidd. *Hendrik-Ido-Ambacht:* Elize Poolman.

**Intermediate Section:** *Auckland:* Joseph Campbell. *Gisborne:* Brooklyn and Shona Hembd. *Münster:* Clara Rösner.

**Junior Section:** *Auckland:* Keith Smith. *Chesley:* Daniel Kuiper. *Gisborne:* Preston Hembd, James Newton. *Grafton:* Harrison Kidd. *Moncton:* Kayla Crum. *Sydney:* Ethan Macdonald. *Wentworthville:* Sarah Steel.

**Upper Primary Section:** *Auckland:* Marion Campbell. *Carterton:* Lana de Boer, Ruby Verheij. *Chesley:* Matthew Kuiper. *Edmonton:* John Munn. *Gisborne:* Ashley Hembd. *Moncton:* Leah Crum. *Münster:* Conrad Rösner. *Sydney:* Abigail and Lachlan Macdonald. *Wentworthville:* David Steel.

**Lower Primary Section:** *Auckland:* David Campbell, Daniel Smith. *Calafell:* Valentina Nayach van Essen. *Carterton:* Mila de Boer, Hudson Verheij. *Chesley:* James and Nathan Kuiper. *Edmonton:* Anna and Isaiah Munn. *Rockhampton:* Leo and Naomi Marshall. *Santa Fe:* Scout and Winslow Smith. *Sydney:* Jackson Campbell, Oliver Campbell, James Macdonald. *Wentworthville:* Emily and Lachlan Steel.

## Looking Around Us

### Recovered Five Times from Cancer

Doctors have pronounced a 57-year-old woman, who lives in Oldham in Greater Manchester, to be free from cancer after suffering from various forms of the disease five different times. It began when she was just 22, with Hodgkin's lymphoma, in which some white blood cells grow out of control. Recently another from of cancer was cured by a very modern drug.

How thankful each of us should be for the various forms of treatment which may have preserved us alive or kept us in a much better state of health than if they did not exist! It is to God especially our thanks should go out, for it is He who has ordered everything in His providence to bring about the discovery of these drugs and other treatments.

If you have enjoyed good health without the need for such treatments, you should indeed be very thankful for God's goodness to you in giving you that great blessing.

If you are still unconverted, you should recognise God's long-suffering to you in not yet sending you out of this world to endure the punishment that your sins deserve, but giving you further opportunities to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved from your sins. But you must not despise God's long-suffering; you ought to seek Him earnestly without any delay.

If you are converted, how thankful you should be for the blessings you have received in your body and in your soul! And how anxious you should be to live a holy life and do everything to the glory of God!

# UK Youth Conference 2024

## Arrangements (God willing)

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

**Dates:** Tuesday, April 9, to Thursday, April 11.

**Chairman:** Rev Kenneth Macleod.

**Lower Age Limit:** 16 years old.

**Applications:** to Free Presbyterian Church, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE, or [norma.morrison@fpcoffice.org](mailto:norma.morrison@fpcoffice.org). (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 9

2.30 pm **Assurance of Faith**  
"The Lord is my Shepherd"  
by *Rev J R Tallach*

7.00 pm **Prayer**  
A duty and a privilege  
by *Rev W A Weale*

### Wednesday, April 10

9.30 am **The Disruption of 1843**  
An Important Stand for the Truth  
by *Rev A W MacColl*

2.30 pm **Historical Tour to Stirling**  
Conducted by Rev D W B Somerset

7.00 pm **Can the Christian Church Continue?**  
The gates of hell cannot prevail  
by *Rev J B Jardine*

### Thursday, April 11

9.30 am **Jonah**  
Lessons from his life  
by *Rev J B Jardine*

**Price £1.40**