

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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Resurrection

The Apostle Paul was one day speaking to a crowd of Jews in Jerusalem. He told them about himself and about his meeting with the Lord Jesus. He spoke about being brought to Damascus, where a man called Ananias gave him back his eyesight, through God's power. Paul mentioned that he had been present at the martyrdom of godly Stephen and consented to his death. He spoke too about the Lord telling him that he would be sent to the Gentiles – people who were not Jews. Paul was sent to preach to the Gentiles the good news about the Lord Jesus, who “came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15).

The people listened quietly to what Paul had to say until he mentioned the Gentiles. Then they cried out: “Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live” (Acts 22:22). Paul might have been the next Christian martyr if the chief captain of the occupying Roman army did not send some of his men to rescue Paul and arrest him. Because he was still in some danger in Jerusalem, Paul was sent away to Caesarea, the Roman headquarters in Palestine.

Felix was then the Roman governor in Caesarea, and Paul appeared before him. At a later stage, Felix trembled as he listened to what Paul had to say about matters like righteousness and God's judgement. But he sent Paul away, promising to listen to him at some other time. He never did listen again. It is dangerous to ignore what God has revealed; people should consider carefully *at once* whatever someone might say to them from the Bible.

Two years later, Felix was replaced by Festus as the Governor, and he did not know what to do with Paul. Then King Agrippa came to Caesarea and Festus spoke to him about Paul. Festus said that he was surprised at what the Jews were accusing Paul of – about some religious questions “and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive” (Acts 25:19).

It was obvious to Festus that people must die, but he seems to have found it difficult to understand Paul's claim that Jesus was again alive. Of course, Paul was right. On his way to Damascus, Paul had met the risen Jesus. That was highly significant in Paul's life; it was through this meeting with Jesus

that Paul was convinced of his sins and made able and willing to believe in Jesus as the Saviour of sinners. That was something he would never forget.

Yes, Jesus did rise from the dead. There was a resurrection. That was something He told the disciples about before it happened. He said about Himself: "The Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him: and the third day He shall rise again" (Matthew 20:18,19).

On the third day after the crucifixion, Jesus did rise again. He came alive once more and, over the next 40 days, He taught the disciples what they needed to know, so that they could carry out their work as apostles. They were to take the gospel into various parts of the world.

Festus was not at all convinced that Jesus had risen again. And many people today reject the idea of a resurrection. But there is a great amount of evidence to support that fact. Paul tells us that "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve [disciples]: after that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once . . . after that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles" (1 Corinthians 15:5-8). That is well over 500 people who saw Jesus after the resurrection – most of them still alive when Paul wrote.

Why is the resurrection so important? It shows us that Christ's death was not the end. Death could not hold Him (see Acts 2:24). He had died because He was bearing the sins of others, those who would be saved from their sins. And "the wages of sin is death". Eternal death is the payment that must be made to those who have sinned.

But God, through the Bible, encourages us sinners to look for a substitute – and there is a substitute. He is the Son of God, who took human nature into union with His divine Person, so that He might become the substitute for sinners, who cannot save themselves. He took the wages of these sinners and He bore these wages away in His death. So, when a sinner believes in Jesus, he or she is forgiven all their sins.

When His sufferings on the cross were at an end, He said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). He lay in the grave till the third day. It could then be seen with certainty that He had really died. And because death could not hold Him, He rose again. This is a sign that God the Father accepted all that Jesus Christ had done for sinners. It was a perfect work; there was no flaw in it. We should look at the resurrection of Christ as the Father's assurance that His work in suffering unto death for sinners is suitable for their salvation.

So we should say: It is suitable for *me*. Let us then take heed to Christ, as He calls us to believe, to trust in Him for salvation: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, He went up to heaven. We speak of that going up to heaven as His Ascension. He sat down at the right hand of God the Father – in the place of power. He is active there on behalf of those for whom He died, as their Prophet and Priest and King. As their Prophet, He teaches them, through the Holy Spirit, about their need of salvation and about what He has done for such sinners as they are, in His sufferings and death. As their Priest, He makes intercession for them before the Father, expressing His will for their salvation and for the supply of their ongoing needs. And as their King, He rules over them and protects them.

Each of us must die. Our soul will pass into the eternal world, going either to heaven, if we have believed in Christ; or to hell, if we have never believed in Him. And our body will be left behind on earth to be buried in a grave – at least, that is what ought to happen.

That separation between body and soul will last until the resurrection, when we will all rise again. Jesus said, “The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear [Jesus’] voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation”.

We have seen that there is to be a division at the time of death: the souls of those who believe in Jesus will go to heaven, and the souls of those who did not believe in Him will go to hell. The thought of that division should make us really earnest to seek Christ, before it is too late!

There will be the same division on the day of the resurrection, but the division is expressed in another way: it is between those who “have done good” and those who “have done evil”. When someone believes in Jesus, it is because the Holy Spirit has begun to work in their soul, and they will go on doing good as they seek, by God’s grace, to keep His commandments and ask to be made willing to keep from sinning. Those who do not believe in Jesus Christ do not turn from their sins; they go on doing evil.

The day of the resurrection is also the day of judgement, when “we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10). He will judge righteously. Evidence will be brought out that will show clearly whether or not we have believed in Jesus, and whether we have done good or done evil.

Let us then take heed to our lives. Let us ask God to keep us from going on in sin. Let us seek grace from God, for the sake of Christ, to live godly lives in this world, which we cannot do by our own power. Let us seek grace to believe in Christ, to trust in Him as the One who came into the world to save sinners. Then ours will indeed be a blessed resurrection.

James Renwick

1. The Covenanter Background (1)

F R Daubney

The first section of a paper given at this year's Youth Conference.

James Renwick was born in 1662 and was hanged in the Grassmarket in Edinburgh on 17 February 1688, three days after his twenty-sixth birthday. He was the last of the Covenanters to be publicly executed.

Before proceeding, we need to know who the Covenanters were. Put simply, the Covenanters were Scottish Presbyterians who signed covenants promising to maintain Protestant and Presbyterian worship. The movement emerged in the seventeenth century in opposition to attempts by the Stuart kings to impose Episcopal forms of worship on Scotland.

The Scottish Reformation of 1560, led by John Knox, rejected church government by bishops and introduced church government by *teaching elders* – that is, ministers – and *ruling elders*, who are laymen. The Greek word for elder is *presbyteros*; so this system of church government is called Presbyterian. Ministers and elders rule the Church, subject to the authority of its Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, but not to any pope, parliament, or earthly king. This is in distinct contrast to the system in England, which after the Reformation, retained the Roman Catholic model of rule by bishops, but under the authority of the king or queen, instead of the pope. This is called Episcopal government, from the Greek word for *overseer*.

James VI became king of Scotland in 1567, when he was 13 months old, after his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, gave up the throne. He took full control of government in 1583 when he was 17. He believed in the Divine right of kings to rule over all aspects of their kingdom, *including the Church*, and he saw the independence of the Church of Scotland as a threat to his authority.

When he became James I of England in 1603, he felt even more empowered to integrate the Church of Scotland with the episcopal Church of England. He claimed it was in his power to call General Assemblies and, through them, he introduced measures designed to undermine the Presbyterian government of the Church. Bishops were imposed on the Church and given great influence.

In 1618 he prevailed on the General Assembly to introduce the Five Articles of Perth which required kneeling during communion, and the observance of “holy days” such as Christmas and Easter and allowed private baptisms and communion. Ministers who resisted these changes were

persecuted, and some, including John Knox's son-in-law, John Welsh of Ayr, were banished from the country. At his death in 1625, James had only accomplished a little of what he intended, but he had succeeded in undermining the purity of the Church of Scotland, once called the fairest daughter of the Reformation.

James was succeeded by his son, Charles I, who proved to be more ruthless and determined than his father. He intensified efforts to enforce religious uniformity throughout his kingdom by imposing the Book of Common Prayer on Scotland in 1637.

This provoked outrage among Presbyterians. Scottish leaders drafted the *National Covenant*, which was signed by multitudes (over 60 000) in Greyfriars Churchyard in Edinburgh. The Covenant affirmed commitment to Presbyterianism and the rejection of Episcopacy and all recent innovations in worship and government. Copies were circulated throughout the country for signing.

At the General Assembly held in Glasgow in 1638 the bishops were deposed, episcopal innovations were removed, and church government and discipline were restored to the Reformation model. The new Covenanter government raised an army to prevent the King using force to restore his authority. The skirmishes which followed were called the Bishops' Wars. These ended with Charles accepting the abolition of bishops in the Church of Scotland and the Covenanting forces withdrawing from the north of England.

The years following the signing of the National Covenant were called the Second Reformation and they produced such men as Samuel Rutherford, James Durham, George Gillespie and David Dickson. It was a time of great spiritual revival, when those in power – the magistrates, army leaders and others, encouraged the country in the Reformed faith.

The Scottish Church and people supported the English Parliament in their struggle against King Charles during the English Civil War and in 1643 the *Solemn League and Covenant* was signed, in which the Scots and English pledged to establish the reformed religion across Britain.

After the execution of Charles I in 1649 and the rise of Oliver Cromwell, the Scottish Church and people turned again to the Stuart monarchy. They brought back the King's son from exile and crowned him as Charles II at Scone, near Perth, on 1 January 1651. The new King had previously signed both the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant. And, some months after his coronation, he also signed a declaration at Dunfermline affirming that he would have no enemies but the enemies of the Covenant, and no friends but the friends of the Covenant.

Cromwell invaded Scotland and succeeded in bringing the country under his control, with the new King fleeing to the continent. Cromwell forbade General Assemblies to meet but otherwise Presbyterianism functioned as before, and the Church continued to flourish.

Children Walking in Truth (4)

J C Ryle

This is the last section of a sermon preached to children. It has been edited. Ryle's first point was, "When can it be said that children walk in truth?" The second point was, "Some of the reasons why John rejoiced to find this lady's children walking in truth". We looked at three of these reasons last month. We now come to the last reason in that second point.

2 John 4. *I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth.*

(4) The last reason is, *John rejoiced because he knew that walking in truth, in the life that now is, would lead to glory and honour in the life to come.*

The life to come is the life we should all think about most. Many people seem only to care for what happens to them in this life. But they are sadly mistaken. This life is very short – it will soon be over. The oldest man will tell you that it seems only a few years since he was a child. The life to come is the life of real importance; it will have no end; it will be never-ending happiness or never-ending pain. What a serious thought that is!

Children, I do not doubt that John was thinking of the life to come when he rejoiced. Our Lord Jesus Christ had often told him of the glorious rewards prepared for those who walk in truth. John thought of the rewards laid up in heaven for these children and was glad.

I do not doubt that John looked forward in his heart to the day when Jesus shall come again. I dare say he saw in his mind's eye these dear children clothed in robes white as snow, having golden crowns on their heads, standing at Jesus Christ's right hand, enjoying pleasures for ever. He saw them and their beloved mother meeting again in heaven – meeting in that blessed place where parting and sorrow shall be known no more.

Dear children, these must have been pleasant thoughts. I do not wonder that John rejoiced.

I have now finished what I have to say about our text. I have done what I promised. I have told you what it is to walk in truth. That is one thing. I have told you why John rejoiced so much to find this lady's children walking in truth. That is another thing.

Let me now wind it all up by saying something which, by God's help, may fasten this address in your minds. Yet how many addresses are forgotten! I want this one to stick in your hearts and do good.

Ask yourselves then, every one of you: If John knew me at this time, would he rejoice over me? Would John be pleased if he saw my ways and my behaviour, or would he look sad and serious?

Children, do not neglect this question. This is no light matter. No wise man will ever rejoice over bad children. They may be clean and pretty, have fine clothes and look well outwardly, but a wise man will only feel sad when he sees them; he will feel they are wrong inside. They do not have new hearts; they are not going to heaven.

Believe me, it is far better to be good than to be pretty. It is far better to have grace in your hearts than to have a lot of money in your pockets, or fine clothes on your backs. Only children who love Christ are the children who rejoice a wise man's heart.

Dear children, hear the last words I have to say to you. I give you all an invitation from Christ, my Master: I say to you in His name, Come and walk in truth.

This is the way to make glad the hearts of your parents and relations. This is the one thing above all others that will please your ministers and Sabbath school teachers. You little know how happy you make us when you try to walk in truth.

Then we would feel that all is well, even if we die and leave you behind us in this evil world. Then we would feel that your souls are safe, even if we are called away from this world and can help you and teach you no more. Then we would feel that you are in the right way to be happy, and that you are prepared for troubles, however many may come upon you. For we know that walking in truth gives peace now, and we are sure that it leads to glory after death.

Come then this night, and begin to walk in truth. The devil will try to make you think it is too hard, that you cannot do it. Do not believe him; he is a liar. He wants to do you harm.

If only you trust in Christ and follow Him, you will soon say, His way is a way of pleasantness, and a path of peace. If only you pray for the Holy Spirit to come into your heart, you will soon feel strong. He can guide you into all truth. If only you read the Bible regularly, you can soon be made wise unto salvation. The Bible is the word of truth.

Read and pray. Pray and read. Begin these habits, and keep them up. Do these things, and before long you will not say it is impossible to walk in truth. But come, come at once.

Children, I find Jesus Christ saying, in the third chapter of Revelation, "Behold I stand at the door and knock". Who knows but this may have been going on tonight? Who knows but Jesus may have been knocking at some of your hearts all through this sermon?

If He was, do not keep Him waiting any longer. If He was, go to Him this night on your knees in prayer. Go to Him and ask Him at once to come in. Ask Jesus to come and dwell in your heart and take care of it as His own. Ask Him to put your name in His book of life. Ask Him to make you able to walk in truth.

Think how many children in the world have never been invited as you are! How many boys and girls have never had the chance of being saved that you enjoy! How many, perhaps, would leap for joy and walk in truth at once, if they were invited.

Dear children, take care. You, at least, cannot say you were not invited. Jesus invites you; the Bible invites you; I, the servant of Christ, invite you all tonight. Come to Christ! Come and be happy. Come and *walk in truth*.

On the Right Course for Heaven?

An article taken with editing from *The Christian Treasury* for 1863. It was originally written for sailors.

A gale had been blowing for many days. The wind was veering round, now coming from one direction, then from another. Thick clouds had for a long time darkened the sky. The sun had not shined even for a moment, nor had the moon or the stars been seen. Sometimes the ship had been driving before the wind. It had often been driven on by strong currents, which were running in various directions. Even though the captain had kept trying to calculate the ship's position and been constantly on the look out, no one would have been surprised if the ship was a long way from where he expected it to be.

Far worse is the case of a ship which has been exposed to similar bad weather and currents, but on which there has been no care or watchfulness for its safety. Half the time, the captain has been asleep, and the mates and crew were rioting; it was always a careless watch that was kept, and any attempt to work out the position of the ship was neglected; observations of the sun and stars, even in fine weather, were little attended to.

It will be no wonder if such a ship goes a long way off its proper course; indeed it will be surprising if it ever gets back on the right course. In all probability it will be lost. Who will pity the captain and crew then?

Most people will say that they richly deserved what has happened to them.

Suppose these two ships meet a third, not far from the port it sailed from; it has had a fair wind behind it, and the officers have been carefully working out their position. The first ship hails her. What is our position? asks the captain, and men from the other ship give the answer. Then other questions are asked and replied to, and the ships separate.

It is not so with the second ship. Her crew ask no questions about their position; they do not seem to care whether they are on the right or the wrong course. They only mock as the third ship passes them; they do not listen to a word of advice or of warning which the captain offers them in pity. So the ship runs on before the breeze to certain destruction.

I draw no exaggerated picture. I ask you, on board which of the two craft would you wish to sail? Think the matter over.

On board which of them have *you* sailed? That is the question.

We are all like ships exposed to powerful gales and to strong, unseen currents, as we sail over the sea of life. The fierce temptations of the world, the trials that flow from good or bad events and the suggestions of the evil devils – these are the gales; our own evil desires are the undercurrents – which together lead us out of our true and proper course.

Those who bring us the Bible, God's holy Word, the pure fountain of truth, are like the third ship. That Book can alone show us our true spiritual position. It never errs. If we earnestly desire to learn the proper course to steer, that Book alone can tell us; and it never will fail to tell us if we earnestly and prayerfully seek to find the truth.

If we do not seek to learn it, we are more foolish than those who mocked the crew of the third vessel, who would have told them their true position. Yet remember we are always exposed to those gales and currents I spoke of – temptations and impure desires. There is no fine weather for us while we live on earth. We are always being led out of our right course – not just one day in the week, but every day.

We must always go to the Bible for instruction in righteousness and pray for the teaching of the Holy Spirit. By ourselves what can we do? We have no strength in ourselves to help ourselves. We must pray, I say, and pray constantly for guidance. You are not ashamed of asking the latitude and longitude of your position from other seamen like yourselves; then how can you be ashamed of humbly asking for guidance from Almighty God, so that you may follow His laws and precepts?

Just think what Jesus Christ did for sinners. He came to this world; He took our nature upon Him; He became a man, but not a man of wealth, of titles, of honour or power. He was not a man looked up to for His learning

and knowledge, like King Solomon, but a humble Man, a Man full of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He toiled with His hands as a carpenter during His youth.

Then, when He began His ministry, He often did not have where to lay His head. He was despised and rejected of many; He was hated and jeered at by wicked Jews; He was delivered into the hands of His enemies, unjustly condemned to death, spat on and scourged, crucified with evildoers; and even while hanging on the cross, pierced and mocked, all the time feeling as a human being, and still knowing that, in spite of all His sufferings, many would reject Him, and many would refuse to benefit by His sacrifice.

Do you not think that He must have loved sinners, to have gone through all these sufferings for them? It is a love so great and wonderful that neither you nor I can understand it perfectly. You see, God hates wickedness; and as He is a just God; so He must have punished all wicked people – that is, everyone, for everyone is wicked by nature.

But Jesus Christ, by His sufferings and death, took the sins of His people on Himself, and claimed their pardon from God. Thus God could be merciful as well as just, and able to pardon those who put their faith in Jesus Christ, His Son, their Lord.

John, in his Gospel, says, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:16,17). Think over these two verses, and ask yourself if you are not the most ungrateful of wretches if you refuse to trust in this most loving Saviour. Remember also: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36).

Seek Him then, while you can find Him. Ask Him what is the right course for you to take. He will never refuse to tell you. As one ship rapidly passes another on an opposite course, so may the opportunity of learning your own spiritual position – and of gaining a knowledge of God, of seeking pardon from Him through the merits of Christ – pass by you if you neglect it now. Do not pay attention to what the drunken crew of any other ship may say. Do not be afraid of the laughter of your friends or of anyone else. Do not run the risk of your soul being shipwrecked.

Go to the Bible. Pray to God. Seek grace from Him. Look to Christ. He has said, “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). He will show you your present spiritual position; He will show you the right course for heaven.

Prayer: a Duty and a Privilege (3)

Rev W A Weale

This is the third section of a paper given at the Youth Conference in 2024. Last month's article answered the question, Why is it necessary to pray?

How are we to pray? Reference has already been made to the answer to the question in *The Shorter Catechism*, "What is Prayer?" Prayer, we learn from that answer, consists of petition, confession and thanksgiving. The evidence of this is clearly brought out in Scripture, and many Scripture proofs are given. Evidence is also given in the answer to the next question: "What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer?" This answer states: "The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught His disciples, commonly called 'The Lord's Prayer'", and it is to this prayer that we now turn.

In his introduction to a series of sermons on the several petitions of the Lord's Prayer, Thomas Boston speaks of "the whole Word of God, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, in which God's will is revealed, as to all things to be believed and done by us (1 John 5:14). By our Bible we may learn how to pray; for there we are furnished with all sorts of helps and directions for this duty, as to matter, manner and words; and therefore it is a complete directory for prayer."

Boston goes on to say that "there is a special rule given by Jesus Christ for that end: namely that form of words which Christ taught His disciples, commonly called 'the Lord's Prayer'; that excellent pattern and example of prayer, composed by Jesus Christ Himself for our direction . . . which every Christian is obliged to receive with the utmost reverence, as the Lord's own word".

Boston then goes on to caution against a "superstitious use of the prayer by giving a bare recital of the words". He then gives a sermon, first on the preface to the Prayer and then a sermon on each of the petitions. Those sermons are highly recommended.

The first words, "Our Father which art in heaven", are referred to as the preface of the Lord's Prayer, and *The Shorter Catechism* says of this that it teaches us "to draw near to God, with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a Father, able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others". These words remind us that *only* those who are in God's family, by faith in Jesus Christ, can address Him as Father.

We are reminded that we generally pray to God the Father. We can also pray to the Son or the Holy Spirit, if so led, for all three Persons are one God. But the general order is that we come to the Father through the Son and

by the help of the Holy Spirit. Also the use of the plural, “our” in the preface reminds us that, while private prayer is a duty and a privilege, we should still pray “with and for others” as reminded in *The Shorter Catechism*.

The second clause, “which art in heaven”, also has several things to teach us. (1) That being in heaven, our Father has all the resources we can need, unlike an earthly father, whose resources are limited. (2) That if He is our heavenly Father, He has the wisdom to know what is best for us, which an earthly father may not have. (3) We are reminded that God is in heaven, to caution us against a careless approach to Him. God is in heaven and He is holy, and this is always to be remembered when we approach Him. (4) This clause also reminds us of God’s great condescension when He gives heed to such sinners as we are, and especially the condescension of His Son, the Lord Jesus, in coming into this world and dying in the place of sinners.

We now come to the **first** of several petitions: “Hallowed be Thy Name”. It is to be noted that these petitions, just as the Ten Commandments, begin with our relationship to God and, only after the first three, proceed with petitions concerning ourselves. This serves as a reminder that our chief end, or great purpose in life, is to glorify God by seeking His interests before coming to our own. This ought to be reflected in our prayers.

The first petition is that God’s name would be hallowed. God’s name is everything “whereby He maketh Himself known”. We have names that mean very little, they merely identify us, but it is different with God. The name *God* suggests power and, of course, God is Almighty. *Lord* means self-existing and *Jesus* means Saviour. *God’s* name is Himself. To *hallow* God’s name is then to make it holy in the sense that “we declare it to be holy”.

Perhaps the answer to the question in the *Shorter Catechism*: “What do we pray for in the first petition?” sums all this up especially well: “In the first petition . . . we pray that God would enable us and others to glorify Him in all that whereby He maketh Himself known; and that He would dispose all things to His own glory”.

The **second** petition is, “Thy kingdom come”. In answer to the question, “What do we pray for in the second petition?” the reply is: “In the second petition (which is, ‘Thy kingdom come’) we pray that Satan’s kingdom may be destroyed; and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it; and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened”.

Thomas Boston spoke of a fourfold kingdom: (1) The kingdom of *God’s power*. The petition here is that He would demonstrate His absolute power and authority over all things.

(2) The kingdom of *the gospel*. This involves praying for the spread of the

gospel, that He would open doors that are closed in Communist and Muslim countries and wherever false religions have power, and also that the Church would be purged from scandals and divisions and all that hinders the spread of the gospel in the world. We are also to pray that ministers would be provided, and that the Holy Spirit would be poured forth so that there would be a right response to the preaching of the Word.

(3) The kingdom of *grace*. This involves praying that it may be advanced, that many be brought into it and kept in it, and that Satan's kingdom would be destroyed.

(4) The Kingdom of *glory*. "That it may be hastened". The kingdom of glory has not yet come. Many are still in Satan's kingdom, and many are on their way to glory as they go through the wilderness of this life. Some are already home in glory and yet we can pray that this Kingdom can and will be hastened.

The Lord Jesus prayed: "Father, I will that those whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am". And of course, when we desire this, we pray for this and for the coming of the Lord Jesus at the end of the world, as does the Church, saying, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20). So there is ample material here to use in prayer.

For Junior Readers

An Empty Beach

Do you ever think about eternity? Have you ever wondered just how long eternity really is? Eternity is vast, far beyond what your mind can understand. It stretches on endlessly, and goes beyond the limits of time itself. Compared to eternity, even the longest human lifespan is just a short moment compared to the endless, everlasting ages of eternity.

Moses tells you in Psalm 90:9 that our lives are like a story that is told. You sit down for a few minutes and listen to a story, and then it is finished. So our lives will soon be over, and we will be in eternity.

Time passes quickly. Think of a single day, a week, a month, a year, a century. A hundred years may seem like an eternity, yet it is nothing more than a short moment compared to the endless infinity that eternity is.

Now, imagine a thousand years, ten thousand, a hundred thousand, a million years. Even after ten million or a billion years, you would not really be any closer to the end of eternity than when you first began. You need to make sure that you will have a happy eternity. I am sure you want a happy life, but it is far more important to have a happy eternity.

Let us look at eternity another way: imagine yourself on a vast beach. You pick up a single grain of sand and carry it away. Then you return for another, and another, and another. Over time, a small pile begins to grow, while a tiny hole appears where the grains once lay.

Years pass, and you faithfully continue your task, patiently and tirelessly moving one grain at a time. The pile of sand and the hole on the beach grow bigger. Eventually, perhaps after centuries, every grain of sand has been removed and the beach is empty. But eternity will still stretch on, untouched, unending.

Where will you spend eternity? Paul tells you in Romans 6:23 that “the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”. When people go to work they earn wages. They are paid money in return for the work that they do, they earn a right to money by working.

Sin has wages too. God will give you wages for your rebellion against Him and for breaking His law. These are terrible wages. Death is not just the separation of body and soul, but eternal death – everlasting suffering in the endless burnings of hell. What a frightening and terrible thing!

Have you ever thought that the wages of your sin is eternal death? Have you ever considered that your anger should be punished with eternal death? Have you ever realised that the just reward for disobeying your Mum or Dad is everlasting punishment in hell? Have you realised that it is right for God to punish you for ever and ever, for one unnecessary thought about everyday things on His holy Sabbath Day? Think about it seriously and carefully, and ask God to save you from the wages of sin.

Did you notice that Paul did not just speak about wages? He spoke about a gift, a present. I am sure you enjoy getting gifts on your birthday. Do you deserve them? No, they are given freely by someone that loves you.

Paul tells you that eternal death is deserved, while eternal life is a gift. We cannot earn eternal life by doing good things. Indeed we cannot do anything good enough for God. That is because of our bad, sinful hearts that spoil whatever we do.

So, if we are to get eternal life, it must be given to us as a gift. What a wonderful gift is eternal life with God in heaven! It is free from all sin and trouble, where you will have holiness and happiness, the full enjoying of God to all eternity. How amazing it is that God freely gives eternal life to sinners like you, who have earned eternal death. If it was not for God's gift of eternal life, you could have no hope of having it; you would only have the miserable prospect of eternal death.

I hope you are asking, How can I get this gift? How can I receive eternal life? Paul has already told you how; it is “through Jesus Christ our Lord”.

God has given another gift, His Son Jesus Christ. Do you remember Christ's words in 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"? You must trust in God's Son, Jesus Christ, to receive everlasting life.

God gave His people's sins to Christ, and He received their wages instead of them. He suffered and died instead of them and so they can receive the gift of eternal life. You need to escape the wages of sin and receive the free gift of eternal life. You need to believe; you must trust in Christ and look to Him and what He did for sinners in dying on the cross at Calvary.

Pray to God and ask Him to be merciful to you a sinner, to give you a new heart and faith, so that you would believe on His Son Jesus Christ. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). *J Macleod*

For Younger Readers

God Is Kind and Faithful

Simon was a good man; he loved God. For some time, he had a very sore **S**head; so he could not work. He had no money and no money was coming into his house. He was very upset. One day he spent his last coin on bread. And with seven children in his family, the bread was all eaten that day.

The next morning was very difficult. The children were all crying for food, but there was none. Simon tried to trust in the promises of his kind and faithful God which he had read in the Bible. But his wife was crying. She said, "I know it is sinful to doubt the goodness of God; but to hear the children cry for bread, and to have none to give them, is more than I can bear."

Just then, there was a knock at the door. They must have asked, Who is it? Someone who lived nearby was having breakfast when he said to his wife, "I had many uneasy thoughts last night about poor Simon". He was afraid Simon needed food. The man then told one of his workmen to take some money to Simon at once. The man's wife gave the workman some more money. With the money in his hand, he knocked at Simon's door.

No doubt, Simon was praying. God heard his prayer. It was God who made the man think about Simon and made the man and his wife send the money. Simon used the money to buy food for his family.

Several years later Simon was again unwell. He sent one of his children to the seaside to gather pieces of wood that had been washed ashore. He would have needed the wood to keep the fire going, so that the house would be warm. The girl noticed a bit of paper floating on the sea. In a short time it was blown to her feet: it was a one-pound note. It was a time when £1 was

a lot of money. When ordinary supplies fail, the Lord can command the winds and waves to answer the cries of His trusting children.

Is Sincerity Enough?

This article, now edited, was written by "A friend" for a *Y P Magazine* in the past. In school the clever pupils may get prizes, but very often there is an award for someone who has tried really hard. But when it comes to the saving of our souls, it is not enough that we should do our best. God's law is perfect, and it demands perfect obedience. But our best is described in the words of Isaiah: "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags".

I remember trying to be very helpful and yet spoiling something in my attempt. I noticed that the white tablecloth was not perfectly laundered, although it was fairly clean. So I prepared to wash and iron it, so that it would be snowy white, without a crease. It was the best cloth we had.

While getting ready to wash it, I placed it on a stand – just for a minute. But I had placed it on the paraffin fridge! This fridge had a small outlet at the top which gives out heat. When I lifted up the tablecloth, I found there was a large black burnt spot on it.

I rushed to dip it into water; I rubbed it with soap; I scrubbed hard to try to remove the black spot. I remembered someone had told me that if you rub a burn mark with a silver coin, this will remove it. I tried, but it did no good. I had spoilt the best tablecloth – when I was trying to be helpful.

And so it is with those who think, if they do their best, and are kind, helpful and respectable in their lives, this will be enough to gain them eternal salvation. It is written in Ecclesiastes: "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (7:20). The Preacher goes on to add: "All this have I proved by wisdom: I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me" (verse 23). What we must realise is that the heart, which is the fountain of action, is sinful. It "is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked". "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one."

The Pharisee considered that he was doing very well when he thanked God he was not like other men; but it was the publican who went down to his house justified. His prayer was: "God be merciful to me a sinner".

The Lord Jesus commended the woman who broke the alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on His head. He said, "She hath done what she could". Through Christ alone, God accepts the good works of His people. The Psalmist said, "And let the beauty of the Lord Our God be us upon: / Our handy-works establish Thou, establish them each one".

Looking Around Us

The Covenanter Trail

For an overview of the Covenanters, you should read the article by Mr Daubney, in this issue, one of a series on James Renwick, the last of the Covenanting ministers to be martyred. A page in *The Herald Magazine* for July 12 has an article which announces the opening, a week later, of the Covenanter Trail in East Ayrshire. The writer states that the trail “charts the history of the Covenanters, a Presbyterian movement in seventeenth-century Scotland who opposed English interference in their religion”. It would be much better to say that the interference came from the Stuart Kings, James VI and I, Charles I and Charles II, James II and their Episcopalian supporters; their nationality was not a significant factor.

Again the writer of the article says, “In 1638 thousands of Scots signed the National Covenant . . . They fiercely fought to keep Scotland’s spiritual independence, and many faced persecution and execution until the Church of Scotland was restored as Presbyterian in 1688.” In fact, James II fled the country in late 1688, when William and Mary landed in England, and the persecution and execution ceased at that point. They became the joint monarchs of England, Scotland and Ireland, and the Revolution Settlement restored the position of the Church of Scotland in 1689.

The trail begins at the Lochgoin Covenanter’s Museum. Lochgoin was where John Howie lived. He was the author of *The Scots Worthies*, which gives an account of worthy Reformers such as Patrick Hamilton and George Wishart, who were burnt because of their faith; they are followed by men such as John Knox and Andrew Melville. These men belonged to the 1500s.

The Covenants are more a feature of the 1600s; Howie’s book includes Covenanting worthies such as Samuel Rutherford, Richard Cameron and James Renwick; the last two were among the many who suffered death for their efforts to preserve Reformed Christianity. Another of Howie’s worthies is William Guthrie of Fenwick, at whose church the Trail ends. The church was built in 1643 and the churchyard, the article states, “contains various graves and memorials to key figures in the Covenanting cause, and it’s a fascinating place to . . . learn more about the lives of those who gave their all for their religion”. Guthrie is best known now for his *Christian’s Great Interest*. Many have found it of help in showing them their spiritual state.

The Trail is about 7.7 miles long, a significant challenge to most walkers. But those who attempt it should remember that they must also walk 7.7 miles in the opposite direction or arrange to be picked up at the other end.

The Flood.

A poem by John Newton on Noah's flood. The last verse refers to Matthew 7:24 and 1 Peter 2:6.

Though small the drops of falling rain,
If one be singly viewed;
Collected, they o'erspread the plain,
And form a mighty flood.

The house it meets with in its course
Should not be built on clay,
Lest, with a wild, resistless force,
It sweep the whole away.

Though for a while it seemed secure,
It will not bear the shock,
Unless it has foundations sure,
And stands upon a rock.

Thus sinners think their evil deeds,
Like drops of rain, are small;
But it the power of thought exceeds,
To count the sum of all.

One sin can raise, though small it seems,
A flood to drown the soul;
What then, when countless million streams
Shall join to swell the whole?

Yet, while they think the weather fair,
If warned, they smile or frown;
But they will tremble and despair,
When the fierce flood comes down.

O then on Jesus ground your hope,
That stone in Zion laid;
Lest your poor building quickly drop,
With ruin on your head.

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