

The Young People's Magazine

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

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



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Cover Picture: A beach in Mozambique, on the Indian Ocean.

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Vol 75

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No 12

The Most Important Question

You have been asking questions since you were able to put a few words together. What is this? you have asked; and, Why is that? And you will go on asking questions all your days.

As a pupil in school, for instance, you might ask your teacher to explain something you do not understand. It is good to do so; otherwise you may not be able to follow large parts of what comes afterwards in your course.

Or you may be working in a factory. You are told to operate a new machine. You have been given some training on it. But you may still have questions. You might ask, What happens if I press this switch? or, Is there something else I should be doing to keep myself safe?

If you are in university, you might ask yourself: Will I get a job when I finish my degree? Or you might ask your adviser: What subjects should I study to give myself the best chance of finding work?

All these are sensible questions, although you cannot expect a definite answer to them all. But none of them is relevant to your soul. None of them says anything directly about your relationship with God. None of them points to the vital matter of sin and its forgiveness. None of them raises the serious matter as to whether, when this life is over, you will be in heaven or in hell.

One evening, nearly 2000 years ago, a jailer in the Greek city of Philippi might have spent some time asking himself questions, such as: What will my family do when they grow up? or, How long will I be able to go on working in this prison? or, Will I always be able to control the men who are brought into the cells? But none of these questions would have occupied his mind when, at midnight, he was wakened by a great earthquake. The foundations of the prison were shaken, all the doors were opened, and the prisoners all had the opportunity to flee. One thought filled his mind; he imagined that all the prisoners had escaped. Then he would be in danger from his superiors and he would very likely lose his life. So disturbed was he at the thought, that he pulled out his sword and was ready to kill himself.

Among the prisoners that night were Paul and Silas, both preachers of the gospel. Paul's first thought was to stop the jailer committing suicide. "Do

thyself no harm”, Paul told him. Trembling, the jailer fell down in front of Paul and Silas. He had a question to ask, the most important he had ever asked in his life. It was: “What must I do to be saved?”

Clearly he now had a more focused sense of need; he must have realised that he was a sinner – that he needed to be forgiven and to be put right. He was presumably a heathen, with no knowledge of the true religion. So where had he discovered the basic information that lay behind his question? One can only assume that it was through listening to Paul and Silas as they prayed and sang praises to God in their prison cell, with their feet held firmly in the stocks. Had he heard them acknowledge the authority of God and His right to direct them as to how they should live? Had he heard them confess their sins and ask for forgiveness? Very possibly. And now he came to them as men who, he hoped, would tell him how to be delivered from the terrible situation in which he found himself.

Yet there is a great danger that people who are concerned about their soul will pose their questions to those who are not able to provide them with an answer that will have God's approval. But you can always go to your Bible; there you will get an accurate answer to your questions about salvation. And be sure to pray for God's blessing on what you read; apart from the work of the Holy Spirit in your soul you will never benefit from God's Word. For an answer you may also go to hear a minister preaching, provided he takes his ideas from the Bible. But if he mixes human ideas with the teachings of the Bible, he is likely to do more harm than good. Again, it is your duty to pray for God's blessing on the preaching that you hear.

But what did the jailer have to do, so that he could be saved? Indeed what must *you* do to be saved from the terrible condition in which you are, if you are still in your sins – if therefore you are still condemned by God to eternal punishment? Listen to the answer which Paul and Silas gave: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).

Notice that this answer did not stress what the jailer could *do*; in fact he could do nothing to deserve salvation. That is why Paul once wrote: “By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in [God's] sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20). No one can be accepted by God because of even his best deeds, his most sincere attempts to keep God's law. So the answer that Paul and Silas gave stressed, not what the jailer could do, but *faith* – faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who did everything necessary for the salvation of sinners.

But what is faith? What is it to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Let us take the answer from the *Shorter Catechism*: “Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is

offered to us in the gospel". Faith is a *grace*; in other words, it is God who gives it. By faith we *receive* salvation from God as the giver; He *offers* it to us in the gospel. The *gospel* is the proclamation of good news about the Lord Jesus Christ: He, the Son of God, became man; He came into the world to save sinners by dying in their place. To *rest* on Him is to trust in Him. And we are to rest upon Him *alone*; He is the only Saviour; there can be no other.

We sinners, who deserve eternal punishment because of our sins against the holy God, are to believe the truth about Jesus and to trust in Him to save us. We are to think of Him as exalted at the right hand of God, the place of power. There He, as the exalted Saviour, freely gives saving blessings to needy sinners like us (see Acts 5:31). We too are to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the answer to life's most important question. If we, like the jailer in Philippi, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, we will have God's blessing in this world, and eternal life in heaven will be ours also.

A Promise of Good Things to Come

2. The Burnt Sacrifice

Rev J R Tallach

This series deals with the system of sacrifices in the Bible. The first part introduced the subject and pointed out that God revealed sacrifice after the Fall, so that Christ was the hope of a dying world from the beginning.

The burnt sacrifice was the fundamental offering. It was offered on the brazen altar where the fire, provided by God at the beginning, was always kept burning. This reminds us that Christ "is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only but for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). We may note some general directions which God gave to the people and then the steps that the offerer had to take.

The blood of the sacrifice was not to be eaten but was to be poured out around the altar. This indicated how sinners are brought near by the blood of Christ. "Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13).

The fat of the animal was to be sacrificed but not eaten; the Children of Israel were being directed to give the best to the Lord (Numbers 18:29).

No leaven was to be mixed with the sacrifice. This indicated that the sacrifice was to be offered sincerely and according to the truth which had been revealed. The Children of Israel were to remove all leaven from their houses before keeping the feast of the Passover. "Therefore", says Paul, "let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of

malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Corinthians 5:8).

Honey was not to be offered with the sacrifice (Leviticus 2:11). Honey represented worldly pleasure and mirth – features which accompanied heathen sacrifices and particularly the worship of the golden calf by Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai. On the other hand, salt was required with all sacrifices. Salt was always on the table at ancient feasts to give flavour to the food and so was a symbol of fellowship and friendship. In its preserving nature it also spoke of faithfulness. Thus it was termed "the salt of the covenant" (Leviticus 2:13) as it represented the fellowship of Israel with Israel's God and the prospect of covenant faithfulness in Christ.

Lastly the animal offered was to be without spot or blemish (Leviticus 1:3). This represented the strength and the perfection of Christ, "who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" (Hebrews 9:14).

We will now follow through the different actions required in offering the burnt sacrifice.

(1.) The worshipper came to the door of the tabernacle with the animal for sacrifice. He came "of his own voluntary will" – that is, without constraint. Andrew Bonar, a Scottish writer, comments, "The gospel warrant is, Whosoever will, let him come. There must be a willing soul; none but a soul made willing in the day of [God's] power pays any attention to the atonement. The Lord allows all that are willing to come to the sacrifice." Others see here the Lord Jesus presenting Himself for sacrifice before the Father. "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me" (Psalm 40:7).

(2.) The offerer laid his hand on the head of the animal, leaning his weight on the sacrifice. This represents faith in the worshipper trusting in Christ as the Lamb of God to take away his sin. It also represents faith accepting the revelation of God concerning Jesus as the lamb who will take away sin.

(3.) The lamb was immediately killed. This declares that the sins confessed on the head of the animal were worthy of death. It also declares that judgement was not to be delayed, as the God of Israel is a just and holy God. "The soul that sinneth it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). It is a very clear statement of the fact that Jesus laid down His life to take away the sins of His people. "Who loved the Church and gave Himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).

(4.) The sacrifice was then prepared by dividing it in pieces and laying the pieces on the wood on the altar. This speaks of the mystery of Christ being examined before God. No fault was found in Jesus. The attempt of the Jewish leaders to slander Him failed, as no two witnesses could agree in their evidence. Pilate could find no fault in Him, Herod could find no cause for death in Him. And, in the end, Pilate was only pressurised into delivering

Him up to crucifixion by the people; they were stirred up by their religious leaders, who were moved by envy. The devil himself could find no fault in Jesus. The Father found no sin in Him – only holiness to the Lord. The more He was bruised, the more the savour of peace arose from this sacrifice to the gates of heaven. Yet the Father found sin – the sin of others – laid on Him and spared nothing of justice and judgement in dealing with His Son. The sword was awakened, the sentence was put into execution, and so the sacrifice was laid on the altar.

(5.) The blood was sprinkled. The priest, as the divinely-appointed mediator between God and man, was the only person fit to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice. Thus Christ poured out His soul unto death. “Thou hast brought Me into the dust of death” (Psalm 22:15).

(6.) The sacrifice was burned. The wood was laid in order, for God is a God of order. As fire was evidence of God's anger in the judgement of Nadab and Abihu (see Leviticus 10) and in the case of Korah, Dathan and Abiram (see Numbers 16), so the offering had to be burned. This evidenced God's wrath against sin, even when it was found on His own beloved Son. Fire also indicated that God accepted the sacrifice, as it did when Solomon and Elijah offered sacrifice. The triune God was at Calvary. The Father awakening the sword, the Son willingly offering Himself, and the Spirit given in such large measure that the Son demonstrated grace even in desertion and at the point of death.

Moses: God's Faithful Servant

1. God's Care

Rev D A Ross

This is the first part of a paper given at this year's Youth Conference giving lessons from the life of Moses.

In Hebrews, chapters 11 and 12, Moses is set before us as an example of godliness. In spite of the endless trials he had to suffer, his was a constant life of faith on the Son of God. We are required to follow his example, but we cannot do so, unless we first have a saving interest in Christ. Then Christ will give us all the grace we need. Christ is, of course, our sinless example; He left us an example that we “should follow His steps” (1 Peter 2:21). We cannot say this of Moses or any other of the Lord's people.

Moses is one of a long list of people who, the Word of God tells us, were active in the life of the Church. We can think of many others, such as Abraham and his wife Sarah, Jacob and his son Joseph. Some of these people

were more prominent in the Church and others less so – for example, Ruth and Naomi. As it was then, so it is to the present time: every believer has a place in the life of the Church, Christ Jesus Himself being the principal person. But the main subject of this paper is Moses, and it will be helpful to go back to the time of Adam to obtain a better understanding of the place Moses had in the Church.

Adam was created sinless. But sadly, through Satan's lying craftiness, he rebelled against God and so brought eternal death on himself and on us. Yet God, in His boundless mercy, promised a way of deliverance from eternal death. The seed of the woman – a male child – was to triumph over Satan and deliver a multitude of people from eternal destruction (Genesis 3:15).

This promise of deliverance meant that the Son of God would, as the seed of the woman, take a body like ours in due time. But He was sinless. As to His divine nature, Christ has no beginning or end, but His human nature can be traced from the first promise to His appearing in the world when born of the Virgin Mary. He had a human ancestry (which you will find in Matthew 1 and Luke 3) just as we have. It is unbroken from the time of Adam to His birth, when the angel told the shepherds: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11).

Among all the families through whom the Saviour came, Abraham's is specially mentioned as one of many. Some 400 years before Moses, God promised to give Abraham and his family the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:5-7). The offspring of Abraham increased greatly in number and eventually became known as the Children of Israel. They were the people from whom the Messiah, the Christ, was to come. So Israel was to be kept in existence as a nation awaiting the coming of the Messiah, and we have the wonderful history of their preservation in the Word of God. Thus we are not left in any doubt as to the identity of the Messiah when He eventually appears, a babe in Bethlehem, almost 2000 years after the time of Abraham.

True worship was preserved by God among the Children of Israel and further developed by Him under the leadership of Moses. He was born about 1500 years before the Saviour, at a time when the Church of God was severely persecuted by Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Yet the church enjoyed great deliverances under the leadership of Moses.

Joseph had been greatly favoured by the king of Egypt and became the governor of Egypt. In God's providence, Joseph was the person used to preserve nations from starvation, as well as his own family. Through his high position in Egypt, the Children of Israel came down there and lived in the land, although God had promised that they were yet to dwell permanently in Canaan. After Joseph died, there arose another king in Egypt "who knew

not Joseph”. That is, this new king refused to acknowledge the good that Joseph had done for Egypt under God’s direction. In fact this Pharaoh despised Joseph’s people, as well as the true religion, which they possessed.

When he saw that the Children of Israel had become a mighty people, Pharaoh decided to restrain their power by making them slaves. Yet, as they continued to multiply, Pharaoh made a brutal law to kill all their baby boys, to prevent them growing further in number. The mother of one such baby boy, appointed to be killed, laid him in a watertight ark and hid him in rushes by the river. But Pharaoh’s daughter happened to come down to the river to wash and discovered this little ark. On opening it, she found this baby boy. Although she knew the infant was one of the Hebrew babies and was being hidden from her cruel father, she had pity on the child and decided to adopt him as her son. She called his name Moses, saying, “Because I drew him out of the water”. In God’s remarkable providence this eventually resulted in Moses’ rise to one of the highest positions in Egypt, as a son of Pharaoh’s daughter. This turned out to be a time of training for the exceptional work God was preparing for Moses, when he would have to ask the king of Egypt to set the Children of Israel free.

Lesson 1. We should notice here the detailed providence of God in caring for His Church. The law to kill all baby boys was indeed sad for the Children of Israel; yet out of that providence one little baby boy became a son of Pharaoh’s daughter. This put Moses in a better position when the time eventually came to deliver his people from their persecutors. If we fear the Lord, as some of the Children of Israel did, we too will have providences which seem to work against us. But in the end we will discover that “all things work together for good to them that love God” (Romans 8:28). Let us remember this promise in times of trouble.

Jeanie Wilson

2. The Old Woman Who Loved God

Jeanie Wilson was a girl from the Raploch, in Stirling. She was converted after coming across an open-air service as she wandered about on a Sabbath morning.

Before she was converted, Jeanie was a bad example to others. Now it was different; she had a good influence on those around her. For instance, people did not want to swear when she was around. Some of the women near her used to come to her house each morning and evening when she would be reading her Bible; probably they had never learned to read. She often sent for a young woman, who was known as Blind Jenny, to come to her house.

It was probably so that she could read to Jenny with these other women. Jeanie longed for people to be converted. Many did visit her little home, and most of them wanted to learn some of the truths of Scripture, which now had so much influence on Jeanie, who was herself always trying to learn from the Bible.

For some years Jeanie used to earn her living by sewing, and she had to support her old mother as well as herself. She made tartan cloaks for the soldiers in Stirling Castle. But she did not always have orders for these cloaks; so at times she was pennyless. She did not like telling other people when she had no money, but she always told her heavenly Father. And He heard her prayers. Sometimes she had nothing at all to eat for the whole day, but He provided for her.

Once a neighbour came to her door who did not know that Jeanie had nothing to eat that day. This neighbour owed her money and asked her if she would take some food instead of the money. Another time, Jeanie went away to a quiet spot on a hill to offer up special prayer to God in her time of need. One might have expected her to put most emphasis on praying for food. But she seems to have asked even more earnestly that God would give her a greater sense of His love to make up for her lack of food. She told her closest friends afterwards that this petition was so fully answered that she had to ask God either to enlarge her heart or to restrain His influence on her, as it was more than her frail nature could bear. We need not doubt that God in His great love to her also provided her with food in His providence.

Sometimes people would come to Jeanie offering her a little money, but she would refuse. Why would she not accept it? Because at the time she had enough and she knew that there were others who needed the money more than she did. For instance, one day two ladies from a Visiting Society called on her and offered her three shillings (which might be worth about £15 today). As she did not need the money then, she asked them to give it to a neighbour who was worse off than she was.

As long as she was able to do so, she always went to all the services in her church; she knew they were precious opportunities for obtaining good things for her soul. Sometimes, when she was working hard to earn some money, she was tempted not to go to church for a weekday service. But she was always able to resist the temptation and go to church. She believed that she "had never been a loser but always a gainer by so doing". The truth of God was precious to her and so she valued the Bible highly.

Later in life, the children spoke of her as "the old woman who loves God". She had a way with children and would tell them some Bible truth when she met them. If they were to die young, she wanted them to be ready

for heaven. If they were to live longer, she wanted them to be prepared to live out their lives to the glory of God.

As Jeanie became older, she was much less strong than before. But she was growing in grace; the things of the world became much less important to her, and people could see that God was preparing her for heaven. One day she fainted. One of her friends was with her and thought she was dying. But when Jeanie recovered, she could see that her friend was upset. Jeanie asked her why she was crying, and added, "You should rather have been on your knees praying that I might get home". She obviously wanted to get to heaven and away from this sinful world.

Another woman, who was standing around, asked her: "How are you sure of that, Jeanie?"

She answered, "When all is dark and a candle is brought into the room, it makes all bright. So when Jesus, the Sun of righteousness, has risen upon the dark soul, it makes all light there."

Once, when she was unwell and suffering a lot of pain, Jeanie told another friend: "I would rather suffer than sin any day. I'm so wearied of suffering, but O I'm wearied of sin."

Another day this friend found Jeanie very poorly; she was ill with flu. The friend sympathised with her, but Jeanie's response was: "It will soon be over". She would soon be in heaven, she believed, and there, she told her friend, "they will be so much taken up with the sight of Jesus that, for a whole year at least, they will see nothing but Himself". That is probably not so, but it shows how high a place the Saviour had in Jeanie's heart. And we should ask ourselves, Has He *any* place in ours?

Jeanie knew that death could not be far away. But she was not troubled at the thought. "Death's sting", she said, "is gone, quite gone, because Jesus died." And she thought that, if she had wings, she would wish to be away to heaven. Then she added, "But no, I must wait His time, and it's well worth the waiting for. To think of going before His time! O shame, shame! He knows the time best, and His time is best for me. I'm willing to stay till He's willing to come. 'He . . . will come, and will not tarry.'"

On a Sabbath she was very ill and weak, but in the evening she was a lot stronger. Someone told her the text of that afternoon's sermon: "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope" (Romans 5:3,4). Then she added the next words, with great emphasis: "Hope maketh not ashamed". Yes, she had a good hope, through God's grace, of being brought safely to heaven, and nothing could happen to make her ashamed of it. On the following Tuesday morning, her soul slipped away to heaven, to be with her Saviour, whom she so much loved.

For Younger Readers

God's Power

Yesterday the wind became very strong. There were lots of big white waves on the sea. The sea has great power when the wind is high. It can even blow ships far away from where they want to go.

But God is far more powerful. He has everything under His control, even the wind and the waves and the sea. When He wants the wind to stop and the sea to become quiet, He can make it do so.

Do you remember when Jesus was asleep in a storm on the Sea of Galilee? The disciples were afraid and wakened Him. But Jesus was not afraid. He could control the wind and the waves and the sea. He just told the sea to be quiet and it went quiet at once.

But Jesus can do something even more wonderful. He can take someone who is bad, someone who does not love God and does not want to be good – and He can make them good

What wonderful power Jesus has! Ask Him to make you good. Ask Him to make you want to love God. Ask Him to make you always want to do what is right.

For Junior Readers

Buried Alive!

I am sure you have all heard about the mine disaster in Chile. It happened in a copper mine in the Atacama Desert, one of the driest places on earth. This desert is in the north of the country (which is on the west side of South America). The roof of the mine collapsed on 5 August 2010, and 33 miners were trapped underground. Can you imagine how awful that would be? So far underground and no way out! Just like being buried alive!

At first there was one ray of hope – they thought they might be able to escape through the ventilation shaft, that their own efforts would get them out. But when they went to look, they found that the ladders which should have been in place were not there. So they were totally helpless and dependent on others to try to save them.

A huge rescue effort then sprang into action. A whole community of helpers and anxious families gathered at the entrance to the mine – they called it Camp Hope. Engineers and experts from other countries offered to

help. In the end three different plans were put in place to reach the trapped miners. The rescuers had to drill down through solid rock to create an escape shaft for them. Of course this was very difficult and dangerous and the plans ran into different problems. They thought that the process would take from 3 to 4 months but the aim was to get them out by the end of the year. That was what the miners set their hearts on – that they would be rescued, saved, by the end of the year!

But, amazingly, the drilling broke through to where the miners were on Oct 9! Can you imagine the excitement of all involved as the rescue became a real possibility? And so much sooner than expected! A capsule was then lowered down into the mine. The miners had to enter the capsule, to be winched up to the surface one by one. On 13 October, the last of the 33 men was brought to safety and reunited with his family. They had survived underground for a record 68-69 days and there was much joy at the amazing success of the rescue.

Does this story remind you of any portion of Scripture? A Psalm perhaps? What about the beginning of Psalm 40? It reads:

“I waited for the Lord my God, and patiently did bear;
At length to me He did incline my voice and cry to hear.
He took me from a fearful pit, and from the miry clay,
And on a rock he set my feet, establishing my way.
He put a new song in my mouth, our God to magnify:
Many shall see it, and shall fear, and on the Lord rely.”

Here David describes himself as being stuck in a horrible pit which he could not escape from. So who did he turn to? He cried to the Lord, who saved him from it and set his feet firmly on a rock and put a new song in his mouth.

Is that not a picture of salvation? You are a sinner, fallen in Adam into a state of sin and misery which you cannot possibly save yourself from. Yet God, in infinite kindness, sent Jesus down to this sinful world to suffer and die so that sinners might escape and be saved: “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Where are you as we approach the end of this year? Are you still in the “fearful pit”? Will you not pray like David to the only One who can save you. Do so before the end of this year. Do so now. How much cause for joy would there be if you were saved – joy not only for yourself and those who love you. But also, said the Saviour, “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

J van Kralingen

Who Is a Christian?

W S Plumer

Taken, with editing, from *Short Sermons for the People*. Plumer was a well-known minister in America. The text for this sermon was: "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26).

In Scripture two places are called Antioch. One was a city in what is now Turkey. Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel there. The other Antioch was north of Israel. This is the city mentioned in the text. In our day it is little more than a heap of ruins. It was the first place where a Church was composed both of the Jews and Gentiles. The gospel had great success there (see Acts 11:19-21).

The word *Christian* occurs in two other Bible passages: Acts 26:28, and 1 Peter 4:16. At first Christians were called disciples, believers, or brethren. Their enemies gave them two names in reproach: Galileans and Nazarenes. But in Antioch it was first felt necessary to have a name which should suit both Jewish and Gentile converts and which should briefly set forth their religious belief. Some think the name Christian was given in reproach, but it is not likely that the Church would at once have assumed a name given in mockery. There were inspired men ministering in the Church in Antioch whom God may have directed to give this name. It early became a way of professing love to the Lord Jesus, to say, "I am a Christian".

The name Christian was given about eight years after the death of Christ. Today it is given to many who have no claim to it except that they are not heathen or Muslims, for instance. People who are atheists in practice are often called Christians. But their lives show they have no love to the Son of God.

Let us now ask: *Who is a genuine Christian?* What makes someone a Christian? What sort of person is a real Christian?

The words *Christ* and *Messiah* both mean "anointed". Jesus is called Christ because He was anointed with the Holy Ghost – the oil of gladness – above all the human race. The Spirit of the Lord rested upon Him without measure – without any limit. In forming the Christian character, the very first thing necessary is the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul relies greatly on "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:19). This is a vital matter. No one can be born again but by the Spirit of God. No one can say that Jesus Christ is Lord, except by the Holy Ghost. No one can lead a godly life but by the aid of the Holy Spirit. He is the anointing that abides and that teaches us all things. Jesus was Christ because He had the Spirit without measure. People become Christians by having the Spirit in measure – in a limited way. A Christian has this anointing; no one else is a Christian.

The special work of the Spirit produces genuine conviction of sin, true spiritual discernment of divine things, and a saving change of heart. It plants and strengthens all the Christian graces. Everything really good in man is the fruit of the Spirit.

To be without the Spirit of God is everywhere in Scripture set forth as a mark of wickedness and ruin. When God was about to sweep away the old world He said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man". The Apostle Jude describes a class of very bad men as "having not the Spirit." And Paul says, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Romans 8:9). Again, through Christ we "have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:18,19). Thus Paul asserts that all who are without the Spirit are strangers and foreigners to God's kingdom. As a body without a soul is dead, so the soul of man without the Holy Spirit is dead also, dead in trespasses and sins. It is the Spirit that quickens; He brings sinners to life.

In Scripture, God's people are often said to differ from others by having the Spirit. Paul says, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" "By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body" (1 Corinthians 3:16; 12:13). "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts" (Galatians 4:6). "And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us" (1 John 3:24). On this point the Scriptures lay the greatest stress. They speak with much plainness, in strong terms, and consistently.

To the Romans Paul says, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you". The great difference between the two houses Solomon built was: God dwelt in one, and the king of Israel in the other. And the great difference between a saint and a sinner is: God's Spirit dwells in one, and an unclean spirit in the other. He is the author of all saving grace in the human soul. Christ promised that He should guide His people into all truth. The gospel age is the "ministration of the Spirit".

The Spirit shows us the true nature of sin, reveals to us the hatefulfulness of pride and unbelief, and the brood of evils in the human soul. By Him sinners are brought out of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. As many as love God are born of the Spirit. Thus they are made new creatures in Christ Jesus. He calls with a tender, holy, effectual calling. Then the soul hears and obeys and runs to Christ.

Nor is this all. God's people are changed into the image of Christ, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. He first kindles the flame of love in the heart, and then feeds it and preserves it from sin and temptation. No

one has any Christian grace except by the Holy Ghost. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22,23).

By the Spirit, people are turned from sin to holiness. God says, "I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27). All false religions come short in the matter of holiness. None of them puts honour on the Holy Ghost, "the Spirit of holiness". "The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (1 Timothy 1:5).

By His Spirit, God sustains His people in their trials, and makes them more than conquerors. A frowning world and a frowning providence sometimes seem to give Satan a fair opportunity to ply his temptations. The child of God sits down in sadness. Some think he is about to give up in despair. But he is strengthened with all might by the Spirit in the inward man. Out of weakness he is made strong. He triumphs mightily and says, as Job did, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him".

In nothing is the aid of the Spirit more necessary than in the matter of prayer. He stirs up right desires; He shows us our spiritual needs; He warms our cold hearts. "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26). The Holy Ghost "spiritualises our natural affections, and fixes them on proper objects, and enlarges and enlightens their natural activity. When sin is recalled, He awakens shame, and sorrow." Thus He carries on the blessed work in man's soul. Prayer prompted by the Spirit will never be denied by the Father.

Thus, *by the Holy Spirit, sinners are made Christians*. He does it all. By Him the vital union with Christ is formed. He gives sinners their new nature. It was more wonderful that Lazarus rose from the dead than that, having risen, he walked about. "Believe and you shall love; believe much and you shall love much." Inquire rather whether you are a Christian than when you became so. Never be ashamed of Christ's name. "He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God" (2 Corinthians 1:21). "Christ made Himself like us so that he might make us like Himself."

Our great error is trying to do without the aid of the Holy Spirit. He is our guide; without Him we err always. He is our light; without Him we are in darkness. He is our strength; without Him we are as weak as water. He is our sanctifier; without Him we are wholly polluted. He applies to us the Word of God for comfort, for warning, for cleansing and for complete salvation. He beautifies the soul with the richest graces. To all who receive Him, He is a fountain of joy and life and peace and purity.

The Young People's Magazine

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Editor: Rev Kenneth D Macleod

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)

Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland

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Looking Around Us

The Earth and the Stars

The lady being interviewed on the radio was keen to promote astronomy – the study of the stars. She wanted us to realise how vast a number they are. As we look up at the sky on a dark night, it is obvious that there are far more stars than we can readily count. And these are only the ones which we can see with the naked eye. In fact, there are hundreds of billions of stars in our galaxy alone, which means that the total number must be absolutely enormous. Probably no one will ever know how many they are, though more and more of them are being picked out, all the time, on powerful telescopes. But God knows, and it was He who created them all. What reason there is then to worship Him!

David begins Psalm 19 by singing, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament [the expanse of the sky] showeth His handywork”. David would have looked up many times at the wonders of the sky as he watched over his father’s sheep outside Bethlehem. He would have recognised its beauty and gone on to think of the great power of God, who put them all in their places. David’s was a practical religion, so, later in Psalm 19, he asked his powerful and gracious God to keep him from sin. He prayed: “Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me”. This is a prayer that we need too.

Yet what the lady wanted listeners to consider was the *insignificance* of our sun among all the myriads of other stars in the sky – and therefore the insignificance of the earth, the planet on which we live. But that is not the best way of thinking about this world; it has real significance. It is the place that God created for mankind to live on. What is more, when man had sinned and when God would provide a way of salvation for them, He sent His own Son into the world. Surely the fact that the Son of God came to this world means that it has huge significance!

If we are afraid sometimes that we are insignificant little creatures and that no one cares about us, let us remember what Jesus Christ did for the salvation of sinners. He came into this world bearing the guilt of human beings like us. So He died and then, on the third day, He rose again. And from heaven He has control over everything that happens in the world. If we believe on Him, God will treat us as His children. So every believer has real significance, and God will never forget them. He will take them safely through this world and afterwards He will bring them to an even better world, to heaven. But how dangerous to stay away from God, to refuse to believe on the Lord Jesus! Look to Him before it is too late.

The Burdened Sinner

Ah, what can I do,
or where be secure?
If justice pursue,
what heart can endure?
The heart breaks asunder,
though hard as a stone,
When God speaks in thunder,
and makes Himself known.

With terror I read
my sins' heavy score;
The number exceeds
the sands on the shore
Guilt makes me unable
to stand or to flee;
So Cain murdered Abel,
and trembled like me.

Each sin, like his blood,
with a terrible cry,
Calls loudly on God
to strike from on high.
Nor can my repentance,
extorted by fear,
Reverse the just sentence;
'tis just, though severe.

The case is too plain,
I have my own choice;
Again, and again,
I slighted His voice;
His warnings neglected,
His patience abused,
His gospel rejected,
His mercy refused.

And must I then go,
for ever to dwell
In torments and woe
with devils in hell.
O where is the Saviour
I scorned in times past?
His word in my favour
would save me at last.

Lord Jesus, on Thee
I venture to call,
O look upon me,
the vilest of all.
For whom didst Thou languish
and bleed on the tree?
O pity my anguish,
and say, "'Twas for thee".

A case such as mine
will honour Thy power;
All hell will repine;
all heaven will adore.
If, in condemnation,
strict justice takes place,
It shines in salvation
more glorious through grace.

John Newton

Price 70p