

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



September 2011

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Cover Picture: The Youth Conference on tour, beside John Knox’s house.
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Vol 76

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No 9

“Five Things I Have Learned”

Wellington College is a school where the courses on offer include lessons on happiness. The headteacher of this successful independent school, just outside London, is Anthony Seldon. Some time ago he was interviewed by the BBC to provide “five things I have learned”. How helpful are they?

First in his list is: “Stop worrying”. We should not worry, he claims, because “nothing in life ultimately matters”. No one could speak like this if he believed in God. But there *is* a God, and we are all responsible to Him for everything we do – even for our thoughts. Because God exists, there is a purpose in life for each of us, which is to live to the glory of this God. Life really matters.

Dr Seldon claims that “we have bravely to face up to whatever life throws us, over which we have no control”. Yes, there is much that we experience in life which we cannot control. All the more reason to trust in God, the Creator of the universe, who is in control of *everything* that happens. But if we are to trust in Him, we must know what He has revealed about Himself – in the Bible. We must accept the fact that we are sinners and we must seek to be reconciled to Him through Jesus Christ, His own Son, who died in the place of sinners.

Worry is a response to fear about the future. Dr Seldon calls it “a denial of trust”. What or who we are to trust in, he does not tell us. But God promises all who trust *in Him*: “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5). So they have no need to worry; they may bring all their concerns before God in prayer and trust Him to order everything for them in the best way possible. Yet the fact is that no one, in this sinful and imperfect world, is completely free from worry – not even, one suspects, Dr Seldon. And surely anyone who has never worried about a lost eternity needs to seek salvation through Jesus Christ – and to do so urgently.

Dr Seldon’s *second* point is: “Happiness is the opposite of selfishness”. He confesses, “Much of my life has been spent either unhappy or in a kind of neutral state”, but he claims, “I now realise that one can make a conscious decision to be happy”. He is right to say that if you treat your body badly –

by drinking too much alcohol, for instance – you “will feel lousy”, and that, if you respect other people and try to live in harmony with them, you are likely to be happier. If you are selfish, you are not likely to have many friends; but if you are kind to others, you are more likely to keep your friends.

But what about God and our relationship to Him? It is good to treat our bodies well and to act in a selfless way to other human beings, but it is even more important to respect God, to love Him and to keep His commandments. Some people, by maintaining a positive attitude to life, may feel happy for much of the time – at least when things go well. But can they keep up a happy spirit when disasters come? How important then to be able to bring their troubles before God in prayer and to seek His blessing and support!

And what about eternity? How can anybody be happy in eternity unless they are reconciled to God? No wonder Jesus told those who were listening to Him: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33). More important than anything else – more important even than happiness – is, for Christ’s sake, to have a place in the kingdom of God and to have a righteousness that will satisfy Him. If we seek these things, and find them, then we will be perfectly happy in heaven for ever.

The *third* point is the importance of living near water. This is obviously just something Dr Seldon prefers; other people might feel that this is not at all important. But he quotes from Philip Larkin, a poet who died in 1985: “If I were called in to construct a religion I should make use of water”. But no one is called to make up a religion; religion has to do with worshipping a being greater than ourselves. There are many false religions, and there is one *true* religion. The true religion has been revealed, through the Bible, by the one true God, the greatest of all beings. He made everything; He made us; so it is our duty to worship Him as He has revealed Himself.

A *fourth* piece of advice is to “learn from experience – not just university”. He claims: “Most of what I learned at university in my course has not proved of enduring value. I studied politics, philosophy and economics. Little of it explained the world as it really worked.” This may be true, but what is often most helpful about university courses is that they train students to think. Dr Seldon seems to ignore this.

But his most significant complaint about his university course is: “To have ignored Eastern philosophy, which offers a much more profound view of the world, was a huge shame”. The problem about Eastern philosophy is that it is based on false religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism and it is therefore dangerous. Every morning Dr Seldon stands on his head as he practices yoga – an offshoot of Eastern philosophy which has become popular in the West – presumably carrying out some form of meditation.

Now *Christian* meditation would be a good thing, a very good thing – and you do not need to put yourself in a ridiculous posture to practise it. To use our mind to think over some truths from the Bible must be good for us; it should bring us to worship God, or at least to realise what we need from Him. But the meditation associated with yoga may involve blanking out one’s mind and releasing oneself from conscious thinking – something, it has been pointed out, that provides an opening for Satan’s influence. Such meditation is often the repetitive chanting of a mantra; at best this would be the “vain repetition” condemned by the Saviour; it is likely to involve a form of words from one of these Eastern religions. This cannot do anyone good because these religions do not lead to the truth; God is the one source of truth. It is not Eastern philosophy we need but true religion. It is good if universities do not promote Eastern philosophy; the pity is that their teaching usually assumes that there is no God. How good it would be for students if all their teaching was based on the principles of the Bible!

Dr Seldon’s *fifth* and last piece of advice is: “Be yourself . . . not to try to be somebody else”. This is excellent advice, as far as it goes. While we may learn from others – by following their good points and avoiding their mistakes – it is not good to imitate anyone too closely. People seem artificial when they try to act in ways that are not natural to them.

He adds: “It is now an obsession with me as a headmaster that young people are encouraged to make their own choices and learn how to live”. Of course, young people need to learn how to make choices, but what they also need is to learn the principles on which good choices can be made. And these are principles which God has revealed in Scripture. Human wisdom may be valuable in many situations, but if it goes against Scripture principles, it turns out to be complete foolishness. Based on sound, God-given principles, Solomon gave good advice: “Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge” (Proverbs 19:27). The words of true knowledge are to be found in the Bible; we should not pay attention to anything that contradicts such words.

A poor Welsh woman was seriously ill and facing death. She probably had very little, if any, education, but she had true wisdom. Again and again she said to herself: “Jesus and I exactly suit one another; I have nothing and He has everything”. No doubt the thought gave her real comfort as she faced death, probably suffering pain and weakness. She was not far from eternal happiness. A university education may be very useful; a home with a view over the sea or a river may be very pleasant; but the wisdom which comes from God Himself is what most matters. It leads needy sinners to realise that Jesus has everything and can supply all their needs, for time and for eternity.

Robert Morrison

1. To China with the Bible

In the early 1800s missionaries were going out from countries like Britain to various other nations to bring them the gospel and, especially, to give them the Bible in their own language. It was particularly difficult to get into China – though with 300 million people (it now has more than four times as many) it was specially desirable that the good news about Jesus Christ should be brought to them, both by word of mouth and on the pages of the Bible. Perhaps the greatest difficulty was the ban on foreigners entering the country except for business; in fact, any Chinese person teaching their language to someone from overseas was in danger of being sentenced to death.

But in 1807 Robert Morrison set sail from Gravesend, on the Thames, as the first Protestant missionary to China. The youngest of eight children, Robert had been born in 1782 in a village near Morpeth in the North of England. He grew up in Newcastle, where his father, a worker in wood, was an elder in a Scottish church. It is said that Robert was rather slow at school, but he had a marvellous memory. When he was just 12 he could repeat the whole of Psalm 119 in the metrical version; he recited it to his minister without making one mistake. Before long he was working with his father, helping him and learning his trade.

Robert was influenced by his friends to follow sinful ways. He used bad language and became drunk. But God was good to him and brought him back from these dangerous paths. Robert recalled that, when he was 16, “I was much awakened to a sense of sin . . . and I was brought to a serious concern about my soul. I felt the dread of eternal condemnation. The fear of death compassed me about and I was led nightly to cry to God that He would pardon my sin, that He would grant me an interest in the Saviour, and that He would renew me in the spirit of my mind. Sin became a burden. It was then that I experienced a change of life and, I trust, a change of heart too. I broke off from my former careless companions and gave myself to reading, to meditation and to prayer. It pleased God to reveal His Son in me . . . and though the flush of affection wore off, I trust my love to, and knowledge of, the Saviour have increased.”

In spite of working for 12 or 14 hours every weekday, Robert almost always spent another hour or two reading. And, as he worked, he usually had his Bible open in front of him, or some other book such as Matthew Henry's commentary on the Bible. Robert could not lay his hands on many books, but those that came his way he read and re-read. Perhaps it is no surprise to

learn that from this time he suffered from severe headaches. The extent to which he applied himself to work and study may not have been good for his health, but it was an excellent preparation for his work as the first translator of the Bible into Chinese.

When Robert was 17 he read a missionary magazine, published in Edinburgh, which he had borrowed from somebody. The magazine had some effect in influencing his mind towards the possibility of going abroad himself as a missionary. But for some time his family were not in favour of him becoming a minister; they approved even less of the idea of him becoming a missionary. Perhaps there were reasons for this that faded away as Robert matured. In the meantime he used to go to visit some of the poor people in Newcastle who were sick and, when he was about 20, he began to study with a minister in the city. At this point he noted in his diary: "I know not what may be the end; God only knows". He wanted "to serve the gospel of Christ", as God would provide opportunities. "O Lord, my God," he cried, "my whole hope is in Thee, and in Thee alone. Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner, through Jesus Christ my Saviour, and grant Thy blessing with this attempt, if it please Thee."

Later he sailed south to London to continue his studies in a college there, to prepare for the work of the ministry. He spent time in St Bartholomew's Hospital; he hoped that some knowledge of medicine would be helpful on the mission field. And each day he would walk to the Greenwich Observatory to study astronomy. As he walked he had an open book in his hand, possibly a language textbook; he was one of the best students of languages in the College he attended.

Chinese was not a subject of study in the College; it is said that only one Briton really knew the language at the time. But Robert found a Chinese man in London, Yong Sam Tak from Canton – now known as Guangzhou – with whom he began to study the language. Yet, after he reached China, Morrison did not feel that these earlier studies had been very useful; learning a language is obviously more effective if one has to speak it all day, every day. As they worked together, Morrison tried to teach Yong Sam Tak about Christianity but found him very resistant; Yong Sam Tak claimed that in his country it was not usual to talk about "God's business". Yet, in the end, Morrison's Chinese tutor was willing to join him for family worship.

At first Morrison was undecided whether he should go to Africa or to China but, after he was accepted by the London Missionary Society, they decided he should go to China. "I wish", he told a friend, "I could persuade you to accompany me. Take into account the 350 million souls in China who have not the means of knowing Jesus Christ as Saviour." In the hope of doing

some of them good, Morrison set sail for New York at the end of January 1807, after being ordained to the Christian ministry in a Scottish church in London. He made this detour across the Atlantic in the hope of obtaining American protection in China, where foreigners were not welcome.

The voyage to New York proved stormy and difficult; it took almost three months for the ship to cross the Atlantic. But the trip proved successful; the Americans agreed that their Consul at Guangzhou would give him protection. Then Morrison went to a New York shipping office to make arrangements for the long voyage to China. After the booking had been made, the owner turned round from his desk and, with a superior smile, asked the missionary: "And so, Mr Morrison, you really expect that you will make an impression on the idolatry of the great Chinese Empire?"

"No, Sir," Morrison answered firmly; "I expect God will."

It was the best possible answer. Human power will never make any saving impression on one soul; it will never bring even one soul to Christ. But God can. And He uses human instruments to make such impressions – through translating the Scriptures and preaching the truths they contain.

It might easily have been said, 27 years later, when God took Robert Morrison home to heaven, that no great impression had been made on the idolatry of the Chinese Empire. That would have been true, but Morrison made a beginning, and beginnings are highly important. And God was glorified in this missionary's work, the most significant part of which was his translation of the Bible into Chinese. It was no small beginning.

"One More Exact Translation"

3. The Right Translators

Matthew Vogan

Last month's section of this Youth Conference paper showed that there was "the right motive" behind the translation of the Authorised Version. It was published in 1611, exactly 400 years ago. The first article showed that this was "the right time" for the new translation.

The right time called for the right men for the task. The instruction was given that the translation should be "done by the best learned of both the Universities [Oxford and Cambridge], after them to be reviewed by the Bishops, and the chief learned of the Church". The best biblical scholars and linguists were chosen, who were certainly the most learned of their age (perhaps of any age) in the biblical languages. In total 54 men were nominated; most of them took part, but not all. A recent writer has estimated

that these scholars had between them “three hundred and fifty scholar-years”. Of the 54 translators, four were college presidents, 30 held the Doctor of Divinity degree, 39 held Masters degrees, there were 41 university professors, 13 were masters of the Hebrew language, and in an age where schoolboys possessed the basics of Greek, 10 were particularly noted for their Greek scholarship.

The translator Lancelot Andrewes was at home in 15 modern languages, besides being in command of Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldee and Syriac. His mastery of Greek was so complete and natural that he actually wrote books in that language. This is significant because scholars usually find it challenging enough to translate from Greek into English without actually composing freely in that language.

John Bois had read the Bible in Hebrew at the age of only five. By the age of six, he could also write in Hebrew in such a legible and attractive script that would have been remarkable if he had “been as old in the university as he was in nature”. It should be noted that Hebrew is an exceptionally difficult language to write. At university he spent 16 hours a day studying Greek and also regularly wrote letters in that language. Bois had committed the entire Greek New Testament to memory and was so familiar with it that he could, at any time, turn to any word that it contained.

John Rainolds was likewise known as a “living library”. It is stated that “his memory was little less than miraculous. He could readily turn to any significant passage, in every leaf, page, column and paragraph of the numerous and voluminous works he had read”. William Bedwell was the foremost Arabic scholar of his day and a master of the other languages that belong to the same family as Hebrew. He produced translations of the Scriptures into Hebrew, Syriac, Chaldee and Arabic, as well as a Persian dictionary and a three-volume Arabic dictionary. Thomas Harrison and Edward Lively were the leading Hebrew scholars at Cambridge.

Miles Smith, one of the translators and the author of the preface, “The Translators to the Reader”, was an expert in Hebrew. One day he was asked at a service to read the Scriptures. He had with him a little Hebrew Bible and he read the chapter as clearly and fluently in English as if he were actually reading from a translation. One writer comments: “I suspect he thought of Scripture in Hebrew and Greek, and only subsequently in an English translation”. It was said of Miles Smith that “Chaldaic, Syriac and Arabic were as familiar to him as his own native tongue”. Yet in the preface to the AV, Smith writes with humility in the name of all the translators, that they were “poor instruments to make God’s holy truth to be yet more and more known unto the people”, “there were many chosen that were greater

in other men's eyes than in their own, and that sought the truth rather than their own praise".

We could easily mention the attainments in these languages of many other translators. Because of their fluency in Hebrew, Greek and other languages and their close acquaintance with them, almost as spoken languages, the translators were intimate with them as living and flexible. They drank deeply from what Rainolds called the "very well spring" of the original Hebrew and Greek. This degree of familiarity with these languages is crucial, and entirely different from being capable of consulting dictionaries.

Yet people without this degree of knowledge often feel qualified to criticise the work of the AV translators. This is nothing new. A story is told about Dr Kilby, one of the translators. One Lord's Day he heard a young preacher spend most of his sermon criticising the translation of certain words in the AV. The preacher painstakingly gave three reasons why a Greek word should not be translated in the way the AV translators had chosen. Later that evening both the preacher and Dr Kilby were invited to a meal. Dr Kilby first reproved the young preacher that he might have preached more useful doctrine, and not have filled his hearers' ears with needless objections to the recent translation. He then began to explain that the translators were very much aware of the preacher's three reasons and had given them careful consideration, but they had 13 other, far-more-compelling reasons for making the translation they did.

Some still leap to such assumptions. Take for instance the claims of James R White in *The King James Only Controversy*. Speaking of 2 Corinthians 2:17, "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God", he alleges that "if the KJV translators were alive today they would gladly admit that *peddle* is a better translation than *corrupt*, and would adopt it themselves". The word *peddle* is the rendering used in the NIV and New King James Version (NKJV). But the notes recorded by the AV translators show that they were in fact aware that this Greek word could mean *cheating for profit* as well as *corrupting*. They noted that the word originally meant corrupting and adulterating wine; wine merchants often watered down their wine, mixing it with new harsh wine in order to pass the product off as vintage quality which would be more expensive. The most important idea is not the profit made from the adulteration but the corruption itself. The word *peddle* does not necessarily mean *to cheat* and one can peddle the word for profit without necessarily seeking to corrupt it.

The knowledge of Greek and of its wider usage which the translators possessed is certainly illuminating. The notes on 1 Peter 5:5 shows that the word that the Apostle uses to exhort Christians to be "clothed with humility"

relates to a white outer garment which identified slaves. Previous translations had all chosen words relating to the inward exercise of humility, whereas the AV shows that it relates very much to our outward conduct and testimony.

But it is not mere scholarship that makes a translator. We should remember the translators not simply for their great scholarship but also for their piety. “In what sort did these assemble?” asks the preface. “In the trust of their own knowledge, or of their sharpness of it, or deepness of judgement, as it were in an arm of flesh? At no hand. They trusted in Him that hath the key of David, opening and no man shutting; they prayed to the Lord.” Translation is a deeply spiritual work when rightly gone about and requires intense prayer and supplication. The translators were conscious of their indebtedness to the help of God in their studies, acknowledging that it was “through the good hand of the Lord upon us” that they succeeded in their work.

John Rainolds spoke of his own experience, in describing true godliness to his students: “God forbid that you should think that divinity consists of words, as a wood doth of trees. . . . The knowledge of God must be learned of God. . . . We have to use two means, prayers and the reading of the holy Scriptures, prayers for ourselves to talk with God and reading to hear God talk with us. . . . We must diligently give ourselves to reading and meditation of the Holy Scriptures.”

Laurence Chaderton was one of the greatest preachers of his day and was committed to the careful observance of the Sabbath. Later in his life, he was invited to preach to a congregation in Lancashire. Having preached for two full hours, he paused and said, “I will no longer trespass on your patience”. The congregation responded with one voice: “For God’s sake, go on, go on!” So he went on for much longer, to their great delight.

The translators were men well known for godliness. Lancelot Andrews spent the greater part of five hours a day in prayer. The diaries of Samuel Ward reveal a man who walked closely with God and was given to close self-examination of his life. Thomas Harrison was one of the meekest of men. When someone told him that he had been harshly criticised in a lecture, he refused to take offence since he had not been named personally.

John Bois fasted twice in the week and was so generous to the poor that he often left himself with very little; he seldom went to church without giving something to the poor before he returned. Near the end of his life he said solemnly: “There has not been a day for these many years, in which I have not meditated at least once upon my death”. In his last illness he was so concerned that he might express himself unwisely under affliction that he asked his children to tell him if, at any time, he expressed anything which seemed to show impatience with his condition. He desired to spend much

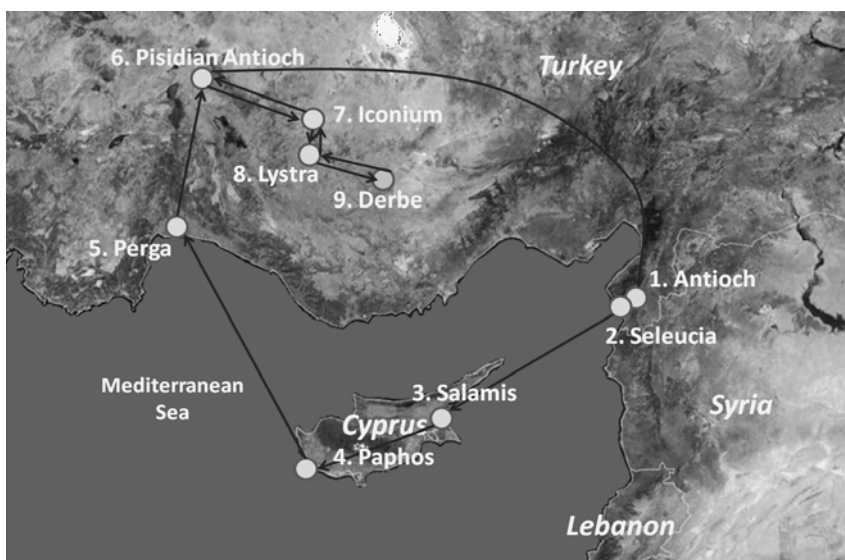
time alone in spiritual things, often painfully conscious of his remaining sin. Another translator, Thomas Holland, exclaimed at his death: "Come, O come, Lord Jesus, Thou bright and morning star! Come, Lord Jesus; I desire to be dissolved and be with Thee."

"The Power of God unto Salvation"

1. Paul's First Missionary Journey (1)

This is the first section of a paper given at this year's Youth Conference. This article is based on Acts 13:1-43. The map below shows the places that Paul visited on this journey.

The beginning of Paul's spiritual life took place on a journey, from Jerusalem to Damascus, when he was on his way to continue his evil work of persecuting the followers of Jesus. The risen Saviour appeared to Paul, convinced him of sin and revealed Himself to him as the true Messiah. Paul's response, now that faith had been created in his heart was: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). He had taken Christ to be his King. Paul was not only called to be a minister of the gospel but to be an apostle. Apostles were witnesses to the resurrection of Christ; they saw Him after He had risen; and they had a particular responsibility in establishing the Christian Church. Paul was to carry out much of that responsibility on his three missionary journeys.



The first missionary journey began in Antioch near the north-east corner of the Mediterranean Sea. It is now just inside Turkey but was then an important trading centre in Syria, only 15 miles away from the seaport of Seleucia. There was a large Jewish community in Antioch and a Christian church. During a time of fasting, the Holy Spirit made known God’s will to the Church: “Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them”. After further fasting and prayer, these two men were ordained to their work.

Soon they were sailing from Seleucia to Cyprus, where Barnabas had spent the first part of his life (see Acts 4:3). They probably landed at Salamis on the east coast of the island. It is said that, after his death, Barnabas was buried nearby. And it is here we first hear of them spreading the gospel, in a Jewish Synagogue. This was the Apostles’ constant practice, according to the principle: To preach “to the Jew first” (Romans 1:16), and afterwards to the Gentile. They were preaching the good news about Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners – which means there is a full and free salvation for all who believe in Him.

From Salamis, Paul and Barnabas went across the island to Paphos. There they encountered Elymas, a sorcerer who had great influence over Sergius Paulus, the local administrator for the Roman government. When Elymas tried to turn Sergius Paulus away from the faith, Paul spoke to him under the influence of the Holy Spirit. He said, “O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind.” Elymas did become blind and he needed someone to take his hand and lead him around everywhere he went. He had been acting dangerously in trying to oppose the work of God, and so he was punished.

We should also recognise Elymas’ efforts as the first of many instances we will see of Satan’s opposition to the work of spreading the gospel. Satan will do everything in his power to keep sinners in his kingdom and prevent them becoming followers of Christ.

From Cyprus, Paul and Barnabas sailed almost due north across the Mediterranean back to Turkey, but to the south-western rather than the south-eastern part of the country. After landing at Perga, they travelled inland to another Antioch; to distinguish it from Antioch in Syria it is known as Antioch *in Pisidia* – the name given to the surrounding region in Roman times. On the Jewish Sabbath – our Saturday – Paul and Barnabas went to the synagogue. After passages from the Old Testament were read, Paul and Barnabas were invited to exhort the people. Paul took up the invitation and began to

speak, and more of this sermon is recorded, in the Acts of the Apostles, than of any other he preached.

What did he tell the people? First of all he gave a quick survey of Old Testament history; he wanted to tie in what he had to say about Jesus with what they already believed about God, about His dealings with Israel during the previous centuries, and about the teachings of the prophets. He laid special emphasis on what the prophets had said about the coming Messiah. This name, just like the name *Christ*, means the *Anointed One*. Christ is the One whom God, in Old Testament times, was promising to send as the Saviour.

Paul spoke first about the exodus from Egypt and the conquest of Canaan, about the judges, and about Kings Saul and David. Then he went on to speak of the Saviour (which is what the name *Jesus* means) as a descendant of David, “according to [God’s] promise”. Paul was probably referring here to 2 Samuel 7:12, which was a promise to David of a never-ending succession of kings among his descendants. But the promise specially applied to *one* King, and the Prophet Isaiah spoke of that King in these terms: “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the *government* shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called . . . The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David . . . for ever” (Isaiah 9:6,7).

Paul went on to refer to John the Baptist and his testimony to Jesus as the Messiah. He then spoke about Jesus – that He was rejected by the Jews in Jerusalem, because they did not recognise Him as the one whom the prophets pointed to, although they had heard the books of these prophets read in the synagogues every Sabbath day. Then Paul spoke about Jesus’ death and resurrection and went on: “We declare unto you glad tidings” – that is, good news, the gospel. He had good news to tell them because God had now fulfilled the promise made to their forefathers of the coming Messiah; He had fulfilled the promise in Jesus. Paul quoted some particular Old Testament prophecies, such as: “Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee” (Psalm 2:7, where God the Father speaks of His Son as the one who will reign over His enemies). Another was: “Thou shalt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption” (Psalm 16:11, a promise that Christ would rise from the dead).

Finally, Paul applied this teaching to his hearers. He began: “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man [that is, Jesus] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins”. Then he pointed to the blessing of being justified – that those who believe are accepted by God as if they had always kept His law. And he made clear the contrast with the law of Moses: the law can never justify anyone. Then Paul quoted again from the prophets to warn the people against despising what they had heard.

All this is relevant to *us* today as sinners. If we are to be saved from our sins, we must trust in the Saviour whom Paul and all the other apostles proclaimed; we dare not despise Him.

For Junior Readers

Profit and Loss

George Burder was an English minister 200 years ago. His mother died when he was only 10 years old. His father impressed on him that he must seek the Lord and that he must believe in Christ. When he was 17 he had a great privilege: he heard the famous minister George Whitefield preach. After he became a minister himself, some of his sermons were written down and they are still available for people to read.

He once used an illustration about a house fire. Many houses were built of wood in those days and fires were more common than they are now. As the fire took hold of the building, the lady of the house went into a panic. She was trying to rescue as many of her goods as she could. You can imagine her running in and out with her arms full of all the things she held dear – perhaps clothes, books, even kitchen items.

She was so busy doing this that she forgot her baby was asleep in the cradle. How quickly she ran back to the house, desperate to save her darling child – but it was now too late! The flames made it impossible for her to get back into the house. Just think of her utter agony and distress as she cried out, “O, my child! My child!” How unspeakably sad! What a loss!

Just so, said the minister, will it be at last with many poor sinners. They spend all their lives “careful and troubled about many things”. They are taken up with their studies, then with their jobs, their families, their children and so on – and all these things are right in themselves.

Yet all this time they forget about the “one thing needful”. What good, the minister asked, will it do you at last to say, “I got a good house or a good job, but I lost my soul! I got a large fortune, but I lost my soul! I got many friends, but God is my enemy! I lived in pleasure, but now pain is my everlasting portion! I clothed my body attractively, but my soul is naked before God! O my soul! My soul!” What a loss!

Should it not make you think of the verses: “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mark 8:36,37). To gain the world and lose your soul – O what folly! O what sorrow! Will you not ask God to save your soul *now*, before it is too late?

J van Kralingen

For Younger Readers

“What is God?”

Long ago a King put a very important question to a man who was called Simonides. The question was: “What is God?”

Simonides asked the King to allow him a day to think about his answer. The King agreed.

The next day Simonides came back. He asked for two more days to think about his answer.

Two days later Simonides came back and asked the King to allow him four more days. When he came back again, he asked for another eight days.

This time the King asked him: “Why do you keep asking for more time?”

Simonides answered, “The more I think about God, the more I realise how little I know about Him”.

But no matter how long Simonides took to think about God, he could never know Him properly. If anyone is to know God properly, God must tell that person about Himself. So if you are to know God, it is God Himself who must teach you.

So how can you learn about God? He speaks to you through the Bible. That is where you must learn about Him.

The Bible tells you that God is great and holy. He made you. So you must learn to obey Him. Ask Him to teach you.

Young People's Conference Tour

Rev D W B Somerset

These are some notes of what was said on the tour which took place during the Youth Conference in Edinburgh, on Wednesday, 13 April 2011.

1 • *John Knox's House and Trunk's Close.* John Knox's house is one of the oldest surviving houses in Edinburgh. It is not definite that Knox lived in the house and, if he did, it was only for the last few years or months of his ministry. Yet the house was certainly around in his day. He lived in various places in Edinburgh, one of which was probably down Trunk's Close (immediately next to Knox's House). If you go down Trunk's Close, look

above your head at the old building work that is visible. The Netherbow (just down the Royal Mile from Knox's House) was where the hands and heads of various martyrs were displayed, including those of James Guthrie and Donald Cargill. Guthrie's head was taken down by a young man called Alexander Hamilton, at considerable danger to himself; Hamilton was later involved in the Marrow Controversy.

2. *The Old Mercat Cross*. The Old Mercat Cross (marked by a cross in the pavement, just down the Royal Mile from St Giles' church) was where most of the Covenanting executions took place between 1661 and the 1680s. The first martyr was the Marquis of Argyle (1661), to be followed by James Guthrie (1661), Hew MacKail (1666), Donald Cargill (27 July 1681), and many others.

The death of James Guthrie was startling. He was the first Protestant minister to be put to death in Scotland since the Reformation. He was found guilty of treason, but he had not led a revolution or anything of that sort. Had he done anything wrong, he could have been imprisoned or banished. He was simply a man who continued to uphold the Covenant which the King and all his judges had themselves taken.

For the execution of Donald Cargill, there were great crowds, and Cargill delivered a long speech. A description of the occasion is given in Maurice Grant's *No King But Christ*. One hearer whose life was changed as a result was James Renwick, later martyred himself at the Grassmarket.

3. *John Knox's grave*. John Knox's grave is at the back of St Giles', where there used to be a graveyard. Parliament House was originally built on the site in about 1632. We will not go into St Giles', partly because of the time and partly because it is full of scaffolding at the moment. It is worth visiting because it is the original pre-Reformation building, though it contains rather a lot of rubbish: for example, a new stone altar from Italy which must have cost hundreds of thousands of pounds. Another reformation is urgently needed to clear out all this stuff.

The most famous ministers of St Giles' were John Knox, Robert Bruce, and Alexander Henderson. John Knox died in 1572 and was buried just to the west of where the statue of Charles II now stands. There was no stone on his grave at first, though one was put up afterwards; it was removed in the 1960s. His first wife, Marjory Bowes, is, presumably, also buried here.

We will not stop there, but beyond the main entrance to St Giles is a heart-shape set in the pavement, which marks the site of the Tolbooth, or prison (the "Heart of Midlothian"). Many Covenanters such as Argyle and Renwick were imprisoned there at various times.

4. *The Grassmarket*. This was where the executions of some of the later

Covenanters took place. The other place of execution was Gallowlee on Leith Walk (at Shrub Place Lane, a little beyond the Youth Hostel where the Conference is being held), because the crowds assembling here were too great.

The most famous of the Grassmarket martyrs was James Renwick. He had entered Edinburgh and was staying on Castlehill. The authorities got wind that he was there and came to the front of the house early in the morning. He tried to escape out of the back. There were soldiers stationed there but he distracted them by firing a pistol in the air and he fled down the Grassmarket. He lost his hat and was stopped by a passer-by somewhere near the Magdalen Chapel. He was executed here on 17 February 1688.

5. *The Magdalen Chapel*. An address was given by Rev Sinclair Horne. The main points were that the Chapel dates from before the Reformation and that at least one General Assembly was held there in the sixteenth century. The Chapel was used for conventicles in Covenanting times. The table was pointed out on which the bodies of some of the Covenanters, such as the Marquis of Argyle, were placed to be dressed for burial.

6. *Greyfriars Church*. In the north-east corner of the graveyard is the Covenanters Monument, where the remains of many of the Covenanters were buried. The first monument was set up in 1706 and it was replaced by this one in 1771. The original still survives and is apparently in a better state than this one.

Among the remains buried here are those of James Renwick, and also the heads of five Covenanters who were executed at Gallowlee in 1681. Their bodies were buried under the gallows and their heads placed on the Netherbow. James Renwick was one who buried their bodies elsewhere and then took their heads down from the Netherbow – his first “public work”. As it was nearly daylight by this time, and they did not wish to be caught carrying heads through the middle of Edinburgh, they buried them in a garden. The heads were rediscovered in 1726 and were reburied here.

Near the south-west corner of the graveyard is the monument to Alexander Henderson. Henderson died in 1646, and the monument was set up soon after his death. It was defaced in July 1662 by order of Parliament at the start of the anti-Covenanting persecution, but it was restored after the Glorious Revolution of 1689. Also in the south-west corner is the so-called Covenanters’ Prison where about 1500 prisoners were held after the Battle of Bothwell Bridge in 1679. At the time it was a large walled-in area where they could be penned up in the open for several months. Over 200 prisoners were sentenced to be transported to America but were drowned when their ship was wrecked off Orkney.

Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2010-11

Senior Section

Prizes: *Barnoldswick:* Robert Ross. *Gairloch:* Mairi Wyatt. *Glasgow:* Kate Gillies. *King's Lynn:* Joanna Wiltshire. *Trowbridge:* Joanna Broome.

Awards with Merit: *Dingwall:* Andrew MacLeod. *Edinburgh:* Catriona and Eilidh Logan, Isla MacDonald. *Gairloch:* Rachel Mackenzie. *Inverness:* Thomas Maton. *Kings Lynn:* Matthew Wiltshire. *London:* Amy van Kralingen. *Longcot:* Lucy and Ruth Cooper.

Awards: *Dingwall:* Ruth M MacLeod. *Glasgow:* Ruairidh MacLeod, Peter Macpherson. *Luton:* Stephen Kingham. *Stratherrick:* Ewen Fraser. *Vatten:* Cameron Rose.

Intermediate Section

Prizes: *Gairloch:* Catherine Wyatt. *Inverness:* John Maton. *London:* Andrew Munns. *Sidcup:* Jeremy Turnbull. *Snizort:* Rebekah MacLeod. *Stornoway:* Iain Boyd. *Tonbridge:* Heidi Playfoot.

Awards with Merit: *Barnoldswick:* Rebecca Ross. *Dingwall:* Graham MacLeod. *Edinburgh:* Daniel MacDonald. *Gairloch:* Donald Mackenzie. *Glasgow:* Callum Macpherson. *Longcot:* Samuel Cooper. *Sidcup:* Jemima Turnbull. *Staffin:* Neil A Matheson.

Awards: *Barnoldswick:* David J Martin. *Broadstairs:* Ed Martin. *Dingwall:* Finlay Murray. *Kyle:* Nathan Whear. *Staffin:* Carey Ross. *Vatten:* Jayne-Anne Fleming.

Junior Section

Prizes: *Barnoldswick:* James Ross. *Chippenham:* Rosie Salkeld. *Gairloch:* Andrew Mackenzie. *Inverness:* Rebekah Maton. *North Tolsta:* Mairi Campbell. *Point:* Isla MacDonald. *South Harris:* Cameron Macleod. *Stornoway:* Joanna MacLean. *Tonbridge:* James Playfoot.

Awards with Merit: *Glasgow:* Kenneth Macpherson, Emma Norris. *Ness:* Johan MacInnes. *Sidcup:* Joseph Turnbull. *Snizort:* Sarah Macleod. *Stornoway:* Ryan MacSween.

Awards: *Aberdeen:* Sarah Somerset. *Broadstairs:* Oliver Martin. *Dingwall:* Uilleam Murray. *Edinburgh:* Annabelle MacDonald. *King's Lynn:* Susie Wiltshire. *London:* Sam Munns. *Ness:* Kathryn Ferguson. *North Tolsta:* Aimee Macleod.

Upper Primary Section

Prizes: *Dingwall:* Hannah MacKenzie, Laura MacLeod. *Gairloch:* Roddie Wyatt. *Glasgow:* Rachel Smith, Jessica Norris. *London:* Claudia Campbell. *North Tolsta:* Anna Campbell. *Trowbridge:* Abigail Broome, Daniel Broome.

Awards with Merit: *Aberdeen:* Rachel Somerset. *Broadstairs:* Claudia Martin. *Dingwall:* Matthew Ross. *Glasgow:* Katie MacPherson, Jonathan Norris. *Guildford:* Susanna Risbridger. *Kyle:* Sarah J Whear. *London:* James Campbell, Henry Munns. *Sidcup:* Henry Turnbull. *Stornoway:* Lucienne Doig.

Awards: *Broadstairs:* Miles Martin. *Dingwall:* Donald Murray, Alasdair Murray. *Inverness:* Daniel Maton. *North Tolsta:* Catriona Nicolson, Christie Nicolson. *Sidcup:* Annabelle Turnbull. *Stornoway:* Jonathan MacLean, Cara MacLeod.

Lower Primary Section

Awards: *Aberdeen:* Samuel McIntosh. *Barnoldswick:* Claudia van Essen. *Beaulieu:* Deborah MacLean. *Brighton:* Katharine Hills. *Chippenham:* Timothy Salkeld. *Dingwall:* Esther and Lydia Ross. *Edinburgh:* Bradley and Fraser Morrison. *Garrabost:* Duncan and Susanna Macdonald. *Glasgow:* Iain and Hugh Macpherson, Louise Norris, Rebecca Smith. *Inverness:* Jessica and Victoria Maton. *Kings Lynn:* Thomas Wiltshire. *Kyle:* Mark Whear. *London:* Rachel Campbell, David and John Munns. *Ness:* Catherine Thomson. *North Harris:* Hannah Jardine, Cara and Connor Macdonald, Neil Morrison. *North Tolsta:* Ross Campbell, Ruth Morrison, Beth Nicolson. *Snizort:* Andrew and Jonathan Macleod. *Sidcup:* Julius, Max and Sebastian Turnbull. *South Harris:* Jessica A Macleod. *Stornoway:* Jamie Doig, Fraser Macleod, Matthew Macleod, Kate and Mollie MacSween.

Australia and New Zealand Youth Conference 2012

This Youth Conference will be held, God willing, from Tuesday, January 10, to Thursday, January 12, at the Winmalee Christian Conference Centre in the Blue Mountains.



Members of this year's Youth Conference

Looking Around Us

Atheists in the Church

Klaas Hendrikse is a minister of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands. His church is in Gorinchem, in central Holland. Yet he does not believe that there is life after death; indeed he does not believe that God exists at all. According to a BBC report, the service in his church "is conventional enough, with hymns, readings from the Bible, and the Lord's Prayer. But the message from Mr Hendrikse's sermon seems bleak: 'Make the most of life on earth, because it will probably be the only one you get'."

But the true, and encouraging, message is: Make the best use of life on earth, because there is a much better life after death. In this short life we must seek God, who most certainly does exist – He made us. He has revealed Himself through the Bible. He has given His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for sinners, so that they may have a sure hope of a better life after death.

Even a secular body like the BBC seems amazed that such a man can continue as a minister. A book Mr Hendrikse wrote to proclaim his unbelief led to calls for him to be removed from the Church. Strangely it was decided that his views were too widely shared among church thinkers for him to be singled out. Can there be hope for such a Church? The words of Thomas Manton, a believing English minister, deserve to be considered seriously: "There may be atheists in the Church, but there are none in hell".

Price 80p