

# The Young People's Magazine

Vol 68

January 2003

No 1

## What Kind of Christianity?

**I**t may be reasonable to assume that anyone who takes the trouble to read this magazine is religious. But it would be sensible for each of us to ask ourselves: What kind of religion do I have? Assuming again that we follow Christianity, what kind of Christianity is it? Is it just what you have grown up with? Or is it a religion that God has put in your heart? Perhaps you are not what you used to be. You may have given up many of your sins; you may have taken up many religious practices. But the question must still be asked: Is your religion natural, or is it God-given?

C H Spurgeon was a famous minister in London over 100 years ago. He was clear that we are all fallen sinners with corrupt hearts, so that – unless God changes us – we do not love God and we will never really want to do what He commands. Spurgeon knew that, unless God the Holy Spirit will work in our hearts, our religion can never be satisfactory. Concerned that people would be clear about whether they were true Christians or not, he wrote: “Ordinary religion is nature gilded over with a thin layer of what is thought to be grace. Sinners have polished themselves up and brushed off the worst of the rust and the filth, and they think their old nature is as good as new. This touching up and repairing of the old man is all very well, but it falls short of what is needed.”

To distinguish between those who have a true, God-given religion and those who do not, Spurgeon asked a series of searching questions: “Are you saved by what you have done? Is your religion the product of your own natural strength? Do you feel equal to all that salvation may require? Do you conclude yourself to be in a safe and happy condition because of your natural excellence and moral ability?” Searching questions indeed! And as we face up to our situations, we should be quite clear that we are completely unable to save ourselves. Our condition is far too serious for that. Sin is altogether too powerful for us even to begin to root it out.

But we ought not to despair, for God has made known a way of salvation, and we are encouraged to walk in it. He has given His only begotten Son, Christ Jesus, to die in the place of sinners, so “that whosoever believeth in

Him should not perish, but have everlasting life". And Spurgeon turns around to encourage those who do believe – those who can say, "My hope lies only in the promise of God. He has set forth that promise in the person of His Jesus to every sinner that believes in Him. . . . I look for heavenly blessedness, not as the result of my own efforts, but as the gift of God's free favour." Those who can speak like this have every reason for confidence.

The Bible gives us many examples to help us understand the difference between the religion which pleases God and the religion which does not. Spurgeon points out the distinction between Ishmael and Isaac, the two sons of Abraham. He notes how Ishmael "was a princely man like his father", but that "Isaac had the faith of his father" and his "inward spiritual life" was holy. That faith and that life were what really mattered.

Ishmael showed what kind of man he was by the way he lived, and so did Isaac. "Isaac meditated in the field at eventide, for his conversation" was about the holy things, but Ishmael "minded earthy things". Again Spurgeon notes how "Isaac surrendered himself as a sacrifice to God, but you see nothing of that kind in Ishmael; self-sacrifice is not for Ishmael".

We too make clear what kind of people we are by the way we live. So Spurgeon goes on: "You may show many of the outward marks of the Christian; you may be able to sing and to pray and to quote Scripture and perhaps to tell some little bits of imaginary experience, but you must be born again to know in truth the fellowship of the saints, communion in secret with the living God, and the yielding of yourself to Him as your reasonable service". These are parts of true experience.

Spurgeon refers to someone who might, like Ishmael, do his best. But that is not enough. We must, he emphasises again, be born again. "Hard lines", he imagines someone saying. And he responds: "Sometimes it is a great blessing to have those hard lines drawn, and drawn very straight too. By this means we may be set on the right track for eternity." Many have found it so.

One of them was a man who told about his first visit to Spurgeon's church: "If you had asked me about myself, I should have judged that I was as religious a man as ever lived in Newington [a district in London] and as good a man certainly as ever made part of the congregation. But all this was reversed when I heard the gospel that day. I came out of the place with every feather plucked out of me. I felt myself the most wretched sinner that could be on the face of the earth, and I said, I will never go to hear that man again, for he has spoiled me altogether. Yes, but that was the best thing that could have happened to me. I was made to look away from myself and all that I could do, to God and to His all-powerful grace."

We must all die. We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ.

How can we hope to be accepted then unless we have true religion – unless we are like Isaac rather than Ishmael? As another year begins, listen to a gracious God calling you in mercy for the sake of Christ, the Saviour who died for sinners. He says: “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near”. Those who seek will find, and those who call will be heard. They will be saved from all their sins; they will get a new heart; theirs will be a true religion. It will be much more than touching up the religion they grew up with; it will be much more than brushing away the worst of the rust and the filth. They will have a new heart; they will have new attitudes and desires; they will have a new way of life. This is true Christianity. It is the religion that you and I need – urgently.

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## “We Must Let Him Out”

Young Burchell seems to have been a weaver. He had made a piece of cloth and he gave it to a store in Bristol to sell for him. But, only about a week later, he heard a rumour that this business was likely to go bankrupt. If that happened, he would never get the money for which his cloth was sold. He decided that he must go to Bristol and recover the cloth before it was too late. It was already near evening and Bristol was almost 30 miles away. And he had to go on foot.

He decided he had no time to lose; he must leave as soon as possible. That evening he set off for Bristol, walking as quickly as he could; he hoped to get part of the way before darkness fell. When the light faded, he went into a roadside inn to rest till daybreak, and then he was on the road again.

The landlord of the inn told him to make straight for the Severn and that he was bound to find a boat which would take him down the river in good time. As he reached the river, Burchell saw a boat push out from the shore. He shouted after them, but the men in the boat continued on their way. He shouted again, more loudly this time, but they seemed to row even harder, and were soon out of earshot.

Burchell looked around and noticed a second boat. He was determined to do all he could to persuade the crew of this boat to take him where he wanted to go. So he waved his coat in the air, and no doubt shouted to them at the top of his voice. He saw the boat stop as the men on board discussed whether they should turn back to the shore or not. Before long, Burchell was glad to see the boat coming towards him. But as they drew nearer, he decided he did not like the look of the men. And once aboard the boat, his suspicions were confirmed. They whispered between themselves, and

the few words Burchell could hear suggested that he was in real danger.

After a while, he pointed out to the men that they were heading in the wrong direction. One of them asked in reply: "Do you think you are going to leave us so soon, now that we have caught you at last?" Then they threatened to throw him overboard. Burchell was rather alarmed. He asked them, "Who do you think I am?" They laughed and said, "Do you take us for fools?" At last he saw some barrels of whisky (or some other alcoholic drink) in the bottom of the boat, and he realised that the men were smugglers. They obviously believed that Burchell was a government official trying to catch smugglers. He assured them again and again that he was not. But they did not believe him and went on repeating their threats. So he began to warn them that, if they harmed him in any way, God would judge them for it. This did not have much effect although he noticed the expression on the face of one of the men relaxing; he was probably realising that Burchell was not who they thought he was.

Burchell then spoke to them one by one, saying that each of them would yet have to stand before God to be judged according to his deeds, whether they were good or bad. At last, one of the men – he seemed to be the leader of the party – cried out, "Dick, I can't stand this. We must let him out. I don't believe he is the man we thought he was." He then asked, "Where do you want to be put out, sir?" Burchell told them that he wanted them to turn into the Avon and take him upriver to Bristol. They were unwilling to go as far as that; they seem to have been afraid that they would be arrested at some point before then. But they took him as far as they dared. And, as the men were now quite subdued, Burchell went on speaking to them, warning them about their sinful way of life.

When the men put Burchell ashore, they refused to take the money they had agreed as the fare for his passage. They even offered to send him one of their barrels of drink. We can assume that Burchell refused! One of them brought him to a farmhouse and persuaded the farmer to take their passenger to Bristol in his cart. Burchell reached the city safely that morning and was able to recover most of his cloth.

Some years later, he met the smuggler who had brought him to the farmhouse. "After your talk," the ex-smuggler told him, "none of us could ever follow that calling again. I have learned to be a carpenter and I attend a church three or four miles away. Our poor master never forgot to pray for you till his dying day. He was quite an altered man. He took his widowed mother to his house and became a good husband and a good father, as well as a good neighbour. Before, everyone was afraid of him; he was such a desperate fellow. Afterwards he was just the opposite. He opened a little

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shop and, what was better still, he held prayer meetings in his house and wanted God's people to be with him." The other three men joined the crew of a ship, but we are told nothing more about them. Burchell himself later became a minister.

If even one man was converted as a result of his experience, and of his faithful words, what a blessing it was that these incidents ever took place, however unpleasant they were for Burchell at the time!

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## Man in the Image of God

### 3. What Should We Learn?

*Rev G G Hutton*

This is the last article in a series taken from a paper presented to last year's Youth Conference. The previous article give three answers to the question: Why was man created in the image of God? (1.) Man was created to display the glory of God in a special way. (2.) Man was to be the friend of God. (3.) Man was to be the unique servant of God.

**A**lthough man is now a sinner, he was created in the image of God. Even now in his fallen state, he bears a marred image of his maker. But what should we learn from these facts?

(1.) We must surely recognise *the dignity of man*. Man, created in the image of God, possessed a unique dignity. It was clearly God's purpose that man would offer Him holy and dignified service, which could not be expected from any other creature. When people do not recognise this, there is inevitably a lack of respect for man. He is treated as just a superior kind of animal. This has contributed largely to the moral decline in our society. It has excused the exploitation of the weak and the vulnerable; so slavery, murders, abortions, euthanasia, large-scale massacres, ethnic cleansing and a host of other brutal activities have marred human history. Human life is treated as just a commodity at the disposal of someone else, who can do with it as best serves his own selfish aims. When this is the case, we cannot expect anything but widespread injustice, as the strongest in society contend with each other for power over others. We must recognise that man has become truly debased when he treats his fellow beings as somehow or other subhuman because they are handicapped or are not expected to recover from illness, or just because they have not yet been born. Only the knowledge that man was created in the image of God, with a dignity which sets him apart from every other creature, will prevent our already depraved society from becoming even worse.

(2.) We must also recognise *the duty of man*. Because man is God's image-bearer, special duties and responsibilities are laid upon him. He possesses a greater capacity to reflect the glory of God than every other creature. So, when he fails to reflect this glory, God is denied the honour that is rightly His. Besides, man does not fulfil the role for which he was created. Whatever role he may fulfil in society, it falls far short of what he might have done with the ability he was created with. If he is not conscious of being accountable to God, man can only seek to please himself. And if God is not the supreme object of man's service, he raises himself to a position which should only belong to God. He may follow a wide variety of paths: from uncontrolled violence, unrestrained aggression and blatant dishonesty, on the one hand, to patriotism, benevolence and humility, on the other hand. But, whatever he does, his motives are the opposite of what they ought to be. His understanding of his role in society and his goals in life are completely different from what God purposed when He created man in His own image.

(3.) We must also recognise *the discredited state of man*. He has fallen from the state in which he was originally created. Whatever wisdom he may have, whatever ability he may demonstrate, whatever intellectual or social progress he may make, the fact remains: he is a discredited creature – for he fell in Adam, his first covenant head. When the Holy Spirit brings such a creature to realise this, he must feel humbled. He sees himself as hopelessly ruined, and a deep sense of shame arises within him. If the Holy Spirit will further enlighten his mind, he will see that his only hope of recovery, and of acceptance with God, is in Jesus Christ. So Paul prayed that Christ would be formed in the Galatians (4:19).

A believer will pray to God to be made holy in soul and life. He will want to bear the image of God, so that he will give God His rightful glory. He will seek from God the ability to make some contribution to alleviating pain, sorrow and suffering throughout the world, because he understands that these are the consequences of sin. Only someone who has been spiritually enlightened can understand the cause of the world's problems, and their solution. So only someone who is spiritually exercised can really understand, and therefore lament, the "estate of sin and misery" into which the human race has fallen. If man does not have God in his thoughts, he must inevitably blunder on from crisis to crisis. There can be nothing but trouble while every man does what is right in his own eyes, as in the days of the Judges of old.

If men are only accountable to themselves, why should not one man lord it over another? And if man was not created in the image of God, it may make sense to improve the human race by getting rid of everything in it that

seems to be a defect. Even if this requires the disposal of the weak, the infirm or the physically and mentally handicapped, it is difficult for those to object who believe what evolution teaches them about the survival of the fittest.

Because man is ignorant of himself and of God his creator, God must, by supernatural revelation, show him what he was created to be – and what, by grace, he may yet become. It is in Christ, who took to Himself “a true body and a reasonable soul”, that we see most clearly the image of God. Christ is the perfect man. Paul refers to the Son of God in our nature as “the last Adam” and “the second man” (1 Corinthians 15:45,47). Paul also speaks of the first Adam as “the figure of Him that was to come” (Romans 5:14). To discover what man ought to be, we must go to the Bible, where we see in Christ Jesus the perfection of human activity. God Himself testified to this perfection when he declared: “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased”.

What does all this mean for us today? (1.) Fallen man, under the dominion of a corrupt nature, does not give to God the glory which he was created to give Him. This should convince us that our relationship to God our Creator is not what it should be. And it ought to cause us concern until we are reconciled to our offended Creator.

(2.) In the place of Adam, we need another covenant head in whom the image of God will not be lost or marred. So we must embrace Christ as the One who is the same yesterday, today and for ever. In Him, human nature remains unchangeably the same, there is no possibility of corruption. The righteousness He worked out for sinners by His perfect obedience, in our nature, is what we need so that we may be fit to appear before God. When the righteousness of Christ is imputed to a lost sinner, he is accepted in Christ. In Him alone we have the image of God restored, and therefore, through Him, renewed fellowship with God. Nowhere but in the union of the divine and the human can we discover the image of God. Only in Christ can we have restored to us the image which was shattered in Adam.

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## “This Is the Way for Me”

Uncle Amadeu was our favourite uncle. He was very fond of children – he had five of his own – and he would take time to play with us. Our favourite game was to play hide and seek in the tall rice plantation, and it was much more fun when he would play with us. Also, when we had watermelon he would carve little figures out of the thick green skin. But the best part of all was Saturday afternoon. After Uncle Amadeu had finished work,

he would offer us all a ride in his horse and cart. There were few things we enjoyed more than the bumpy ride that was to follow.

The years passed, and Uncle Amadeu left to work far away from our home. For many years we did not hear of him. And then, only a few years ago, we heard that he had come back to live with one of his daughters, and that he had become a new man in Christ Jesus.

During my last trip to Brazil I was able to go and visit him. He had come back to his family because he had suffered a stroke and was very weak. I was looking forward to seeing him again very much, but I felt a bit unsure. I did not know if he had truly been brought to a saving faith in Christ, and I wondered if I would see any fruits of the faith he was professing.

As I entered his bedroom, I saw something that cheered my heart: an open Bible lay on his bed, and his glasses were lying on top of it. I discovered that he reads it all the time, for he finds great comfort in the Word of God. In fact, when his family went up to bring him to live near them again, they left his Bible behind. This upset him greatly; so he borrowed one from a kind Christian lady who lived nearby, as he could not bear to live even for a day without reading the Bible.

We had a nice conversation about spiritual matters. He then told me that, before he returned home, he began to be concerned about spiritual things and wanted to find out more. Someone came along and lent him some books on spiritism, which he started to read. As you may know, spiritism is completely opposed to the teachings of the Bible. These books were telling Amadeu that, after we die, we come back to this world as another person and that we keep on coming back until we reach perfection. We know that this is not true, for the Word of God says: "It is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgement" (Hebrews 9:27).

A while after he was given the books on spiritism, Amadeu thought: "This doesn't make sense! This is not the way for me." He continued in darkness for a long time after this, but one day he had a very interesting visitor. Normally, Amadeu had few visitors, because the farm where he worked was far away from everyone. But that day an elderly man came who soon began to talk to him about his soul. He told Amadeu that we are all sinners who will perish unless we have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who died for sinners. Uncle Amadeu thought: "This does make sense. This is the way for me!" The Spirit of God had already given him a concern for the welfare of his soul, and now caused him to believe what his visitor was telling him.

The elderly man was, in fact, the pastor of a little church in a distant village. He understood "what man is to believe concerning God and what

duty God requires of man". Uncle Amadeu moved to that village and started to attend church. He was now under the preaching of the Word of God, and it was not long before he realised something of the extent of his sins and the punishment he deserved to suffer throughout eternity. The Spirit enlightened his mind in the knowledge of Christ and he was persuaded and enabled to embrace Jesus Christ as He was offered to him in the gospel.

This is a truly wonderful story of the mercy of God towards sinners. This man was in the middle of nowhere, and the Lord sought and found him. I am told that Uncle Amadeu sometimes weeps bitterly. Why would he do so? After all, he has been renewed in Christ Jesus; his soul is secure; he will spend eternity in glory with the Lord. But this is what he says when he weeps: "If only I had known the Word of God in my youth, I wouldn't have sinned so much against such a tender Saviour!"

Here is a man who was brought up in spiritual darkness, who did not know that God is holy, and that he was a sinner in God's sight. He never knew, until quite late in life, that God has provided His only Son as a sacrifice for sin. And he is grieved that he lived most of his life as God's enemy.

Do *you* sometimes consider your privileges? What a mercy if you are brought up in a home where God is known and worshipped! Make the most of your privileges and do not go on living in enmity against such a loving God. How very sad to grow old and weep over the sins of one's youth! But how unspeakably sad and solemn it will be to weep bitter tears for ever and ever in eternity. Jesus is saying: "I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me" (Proverbs 8:17). *C Johnson*

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*For Junior Readers*

## Beginning the Year with God

“O that I could begin this year with God, and spend the whole of it to His glory, either in life or death.” This is what David Brainerd wrote on 1 January 1744. He was a godly young missionary to the North American Indians. It was a good desire to begin the New Year with, was it not?

Is this what *you* want as you begin 2003? Should you also not pray that you would begin the year with God and spend all of it to God's glory? Does it not remind you of the first answer in the Shorter Catechism: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever".

Have you ever thought what the words "chief end" mean? *Chief* here means *most important* or *main*; *end* means *purpose* or *aim*. So your most important purpose, or your main aim, in life should be to glorify God.

But what is your main aim in life? As you look forward to the year ahead, God sparing you, what would you like to achieve? Your desires may be good and right in their own place but, above everything else, your main aim should be to glorify God in everything you do.

And how can you glorify God? Only by putting Him first in your life, by confessing your sins to Him, by believing the Bible, by seeking to know and love Him, by trusting in Christ, by praising God. And I will mention one thing more: you are to glorify by praying that you would obey God in all your thoughts, words and actions.

Do you remember the parable which Jesus told about the fig tree? The owner had come for three years looking for fruit on it, but he could not find any. At last he gave the order: "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" But the man who looked after the vineyard begged that it would be spared for one more year. "Let it alone this year also . . . and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down".

You are like the fig tree in the vineyard. You enjoy many blessings and privileges, especially if you are able to listen to the gospel being preached. You probably know a lot about what the Bible teaches. But what fruit are you bringing forth in your heart and life? Take heed of the warning here: "Cut it down". Will God say this of you: Cut down the unfruitful listener to sermons; cut down the unfruitful answerer of questions on Bible knowledge? What a solemn thought!

Will you not pray that God would save you this very year. Then you will be able to spend the rest of your life to God's glory. *J van Kralingen*

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## Spiritual Landmarks

*J B Waterbury*

This is another edited chapter from the book, *Advice to A Young Christian*. The previous chapter was printed last November. This is chapter 20; it continues the series on self-examination.

**T**o examine yourself each day is an important means of making progress in holiness. But I would also recommend that you attend to the same duty at special times – for example, at the beginning of a new year, on your birthday, or when there is some important change in your life. By reading the biography of those saints who have been most distinguished for their godliness, you will find that they never allowed such times to pass by without trying to get some benefit from them.

There is something in the passing of the seasons which must strike anyone

who thinks seriously. A single day has great importance. When it is over, it can never be brought back. With all its pleasures, cares and difficulties, it has sunk into eternity. It has gone ahead of us to bear tidings of how we have lived, and these will be faithfully recorded for the day of judgement. So, one would think, only the most foolish would dare to murder the hours of that day in feasting and mirth, when those hours pass so quickly and are so full of eternal consequences. If a day is so important, then a week – or a month, or a year – is much more valuable. Each forms a period in which much may be done to grieve the Spirit of God and ruin the soul, or else to promote the cause of Christ and to secure for ourselves an inheritance in the kingdom of glory.

I trust you will, at least once a year, look over your diary. As one year rolls away and another comes in its place, look back over the past and look forward to the future. If you have been in the habit of examining yourself every day, this will not be a difficult task; it will be full of spiritual benefit. As you think over the events of the year, the blessings which you have received will inspire you with loving confidence in God, and you will be thankful. And the evils of your heart and life during that time will fill your soul with the sorrow of repentance. Like David, you will be constrained to sing both of mercy and judgement.

What, you will ask yourself, have I done during the past year to promote the glory of my Redeemer's kingdom? Have I done everything that my circumstances would allow? What victories have I obtained over myself? Have I laid aside the sin which I most easily give in to, or does it too often master my strongest resolutions? Have I a deeper and closer communion with God than at the beginning of the year? Are my desires for holiness stronger? Or do my sins oftener prevail, and is the world getting more of my attention? Am I colder and less often in prayer?

These are some of the questions which ought to be suggested by such special times. Answer them seriously and sincerely. If possible, set apart a day for the duty, and let it be accompanied by fasting and prayer. I have no time to list all the advantages of making such investigations. Do so diligently and honestly and you will find by your own experience that self-examination is not only an important duty, but one which is easy and delightful.

By watching carefully what has happened in the past, you will be able to protect yourself for the future. You will place a double guard against the temptations which have proved most successful. You will avoid the circumstances in which you have found yourself specially exposed to temptation. You will note the means which have proved most helpful, and in future you will make more use of them. You will also note the people

whose advice has been most effective in spurring you to your duty, and you will enter into closer communion with them.

You will also make better use of your birthday. I know that many spend that day in feasting and merriment. They think it is a time for mirth and excitement. Herod made a royal banquet, assembled all the wealth and beauty of the kingdom, and celebrated his birthday with music and dancing. Many who do not have his wealth imitate his example on a smaller scale. But is there anything about our birthday which demands such a parade of folly? Is it a matter of rejoicing that another year of our short lives has passed away for ever? Should we celebrate our own speedy journey to God's judgement seat with music and dancing? And especially, if the soul has not yet been reconciled to God, should we celebrate the fact that it is approaching nearer to hell?

If anyone has reason to rejoice, it is the Christian. He is one year nearer his happy, eternal home. But he knows that he comes very far short of what he should be and that his work on earth has important consequences; so he does not wish to spend his birthday feasting. With him it should be a day for humbling his soul and examining himself seriously. It should be set apart to God and to the prosperity of his soul.

I hope you will observe it in this way; then it will be a sort of spiritual landmark to which you can think back when you experience storms on the sea of life. And, when your days are numbered on earth, you will be able to see that you have spent them in wisdom's ways, which are "ways of pleasantness"; and you will be able to look back on life, though with deep humility, without any heart-rending regret.

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*For Younger Readers*

## **Listening to the Words of Jesus**

**I**t was mealtime at the house in Bethany. Two sisters lived there. They were called Mary and Martha. Their brother Lazarus lived there too.

Martha had brought Jesus to their house. Now she was finishing off preparing for the meal. She was not pleased that Mary was leaving her to do all the work alone. She thought Mary should be helping her.

But Mary had something better to do. She was sitting at Jesus feet listening to what He had to say. We can be sure that Mary was enjoying every minute of it. What wonderful things Jesus had to

say! He would have been speaking about God and the wonderful things He does.

And Jesus would have been speaking about what He Himself came into this world to do. He came into the world to save sinners. And that is the most wonderful thing that has ever happened in this world. Mary thought so too. That is why she wanted to sit where she was – so that she could listen to Jesus as He told her so many wonderful things.

Martha complained to Jesus about Mary. Did Jesus not care, she asked Him, that Mary was leaving her to work alone?

Well, if Mary was doing something wrong, Jesus would have cared. He hates sin. So it must have been Martha who was wrong. She was being too fussy about the meal. She was doing more than she should have done, especially when there was something more important to do.

What was more important than making a really nice meal for Jesus? To listen to Him. He told Martha that Mary had “chosen the good part”. Listening to Jesus was far more important than preparing a meal for Him.

Do you feel that it is important to go to listen to Jesus? You might answer: “There is nowhere I can go to see Him. Jesus isn’t in this world now. He has gone to heaven.”

But you can go to listen to Jesus’ words. Every time you go to church, you can hear the words of Jesus. You can find the words of Jesus in the Bible. If you are able to read the Bible, you can listen to the words of Jesus there.

And when your father or your mother reads from the Bible, you can again listen to the words of Jesus. That is why family worship is so important – because then you can listen to the words of Jesus.

Yes, Jesus is speaking to you. And you should want to listen – just like Mary long ago. Ask God to make you want to listen to the words of Jesus.

### **2003 Youth Conference**

This year’s conference will be held in Inverness from Tuesday, April 8, to Thursday, April 10, God willing. Further details will be given in next month’s magazine.

## Ann Judson

### 6. "You Can Do Nothing More for Your Husband"

Adoniram and Ann Judson were missionaries from America who began work in Burma in 1813. After several years of work, they saw some conversions among the Burmese – including Moug Ing. Then war broke out between Britain and Burma. Adoniram and his colleague Dr Price were suspected of being spies. They were arrested in Ava and carried away to what was known as the Death Prison.

**I**t was not long before the local magistrate was standing at the Judsons' door shouting to Ann to come out and be questioned. Ann took her time to obey. First she was determined to destroy all her letters and diaries, which might betray the fact that she had contact with people in Britain. When she went out, the magistrate questioned her in great detail about everything she knew. Afterwards he left her, placing a guard of 10 men at the gate with orders that they were to allow no one to go in or out.

Ann sent Moug Ing to the prison to find out what her husband's conditions were like and to bring him some food. He came back with the information that each of the foreigners was tied up with three sets of chains and attached to a long pole so that they could not move. She begged the magistrate to let her go to call on some member of the government to plead for her husband, but he refused to give her permission; he said he was afraid she would escape.

She then wrote to one of the King's sisters seeking her help. Ann used to be friendly with her, but the woman's reply was: she did not understand the message. It was a polite way of expressing herself; the fact was that she did not now dare to do anything to help her former friend. On the third day, Ann was able to send a message to the Governor of the city. He sent orders to the guards to allow her to leave her house. He received Ann pleasantly, and she told him that, as Americans, they had nothing to do with the war. He passed her on to a superior official, who eventually gave her permission to visit Adoniram. It was heart-rending for her to watch him crawl to the door of the prison in his chains; she was not allowed to go any further. Then the jailors sent her away. Ann pleaded the authority of the official she had spoken to but they would not listen. "Go away," they told her, "or we will put you out." But some good followed Ann's efforts; that evening the missionaries were taken out of the common prison and kept in an open shed in the prison compound. There Ann could send food, and mats for them to sleep on, but she was not allowed to come herself for several days.

One of her most important tasks was to bury her husband's translation of the New Testament. If it fell into the wrong hands, it could easily have

been destroyed. But she was afraid that it would rot in the ground, and so, some time later, she packed it into a pillow and, surprisingly, brought it to Adoniram in the prison. And it was still safe when he left the prison. We can be sure that both Judsons prayed much that the translation would be preserved, hoping it would some time be printed so that it might be blessed to the souls of many people in Burma.

Ann spent as much time as she could spare visiting everyone she could think of who could do anything to help secure the release of her husband and Dr Price. "Hardly a day passed," she wrote, "that I did not visit one of the members of government or branches of the royal family in order to gain their influence on our behalf. But the only benefit resulting was that their encouraging promises preserved us from despair and . . . enabled us to bear our distresses better than we otherwise should have done. By my repeated visits to the different members of government, I gained several friends who were ready to assist me with articles of food . . . and who used their influence in the palace to destroy the impression of our being in any way engaged in the present war. But no one dared to speak a word to the King or Queen in favour of a foreigner." No doubt everyone felt that it would have been dangerous while British troops were advancing towards the city.

Things were very difficult for Ann; she had to bring Adoniram his food every day. Often she could not go to the prison till after it was dark, and then there was the two-mile walk home afterwards. She often reached the house at nine o'clock at night, exhausted and anxious, and threw herself down in her rocking chair only to try "to invent some new scheme for the release of the prisoners". Everything was so uncertain. The most likely outcome was that Adoniram would be put to death and that Ann would be made a slave. But, looking back, she noted how God upheld her through these difficult months. She told her brother that "the consolations of religion in these trying circumstances were neither few nor small. It taught me to look beyond this world to that rest, that peaceful happy rest, where Jesus reigns and oppression never enters".

At this time, the most powerful man in the country was Bandoola, the army commander. Eventually, Ann decided to go straight to him to plead for Adoniram's release. That effort too was unsuccessful. She then turned her attention again to the Governor of Ava. Although she was not able to persuade him to set her husband free, the conditions in which he was imprisoned were afterwards made easier. Ann was allowed to make a little bamboo room for him in the prison enclosure. Adoniram could spend a lot of time there by himself and Ann could sometimes spend two or three hours with him. It was the coldest part of the year and his little bamboo room was more comfortable

than the open shed where he used to have to spend his days and nights.

Near the end of 1825 a little girl was born to Ann. It must have been a very lonely time for both Ann and Adoniram. For some weeks, Ann was unable to make the two-mile trip to the prison. At last, Ann arrived one day at the prison carrying three-week-old Maria. Adoniram crawled out, still in chains, to see his little daughter for the first time.

Ann again resumed her rounds of government officials. Just then orders reached the Governor of Ava directing him to kill all the foreign prisoners. But he had too much respect for Ann to obey; instead he hid the prisoners away in the inner part of the prison, secured now with five pairs of chains. The little bamboo room was torn down, and the jailors removed Adoniram's mat and pillow. The weather was now very hot. More than 100 prisoners were locked up in one room where the only ventilation was through the cracks in the boards that formed the walls of the room. Sometimes Ann was allowed to go to the door for five minutes. Now the white prisoners seemed more dead than alive. After a month in the inner prison, Adoniram was suffering from a fever. Ann went to the Governor again and again to plead with him to move Adoniram somewhere else. At last he gave in and Adoniram was moved into a little bamboo hut. The Governor also gave orders to the head jailor to allow Ann to go in at any time to bring him medicines. Ann was delighted. But before long, the progress of the war made matters worse than ever.

Bandoola was killed in battle, and the new commander ordered the foreign prisoners to be taken to his home village. When Ann heard that Adoniram and the others had left, she rushed around trying to find out what was happening, but no one could tell her. At last an old woman told her that the prisoners had gone towards "the little river" on their way to Amarapoora. Ann ran to the bank of the river, but she could not find them. The Governor warned her: "You can do nothing more for your husband. Take care of yourself." His words left Ann suspicious that Adoniram was in serious danger. This was one of the most difficult days she ever experienced, and that evening she decided to set off the next day for Amarapoora with her little child – no doubt committing herself and Maria into the care of God.

But what about the precious translation of the New Testament which Adoniram had spent ten years working on? Soon after the prisoners were taken away, the faithful Burmese Christian, Mounng Ing, went to the prison to see if any of the prisoners' possessions had been left behind. He found the hard, shabby pillow in which the translation had been hidden, took it away and kept it safely in the Judson's house in Ava. But was it possible that Adoniram would be spared to continue work on it?

## Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2002-03

### Names for Exercise 1

**Senior Section:** *Blunsdon Hill:* Jo and Sarah Woodhams. *Bracadale:* Andrew and Johan Campbell. *Cranbrook:* Corinne Bailey. *Farr:* Andrea MacQueen. *Fort William:* Johanna MacKinnon. *Gairloch:* Kathryn MacKenzie. *Glasgow:* Jacqueline Freeke. *Halkirk:* Andrew Sutton, Cherith Sutton. *Inverness:* Christine Boyd, Ben Fiddes, Joanne Murray, Alexander Schouten. *Kyle:* Caren and Joanne Whear. *London:* Anna Rowland. *Matfield:* Adrienne Woodhams. *North Uist:* Margaret Macdonald, Ryan Macdonald. *South Harris:* Iain Maclean. *Stornoway:* James and John Dickie. *Vatten:* Ruth Fleming.

**Intermediate Section:** *Bracadale:* James Campbell. *Dingwall:* Joanna Mackenzie, Neil MacLean. *Farr:* Ruth MacQueen. *Fort William:* William S Mackinnon. *Glasgow:* Marion MacLeod. *Inverness:* Chloe W E Fiddes, Hanna J Schouten. *London:* Lydia Martin, James and Rebecca Munns, Naomi Rowland, Josie van Kralingen. *North Uist:* Rhoda Cameron, John A Macdonald, Kathleen Macdonald. *Peasmarsh:* Alexander Bailey. *Portree:* Rachel MacCuish, Finlay MacRaild, Iona A Paterson. *Scaynes Hill:* Sam Main. *South Harris:* Donald N Morrison. *Stornoway:* Kimberly Ferguson, Stephen M Macdonald, Angus D Macleod. *Swordale:* Sara Macleod. *Westerham:* Edward Hanks.

**Junior Section:** *Bonar Bridge:* Rebecca and Sandy Campbell. *Bracadale:* Neil Campbell. *Dingwall:* Beverly and Kathryn Mackenzie. *Dunoon:* Esther Maley. *Farr:* Caitlin R MacQueen. *Gairloch:* James McBride. *Glasgow:* Neil Freeke, Kenneth C Gillies, Donald MacLeod. *Guildford:* Matthew(?) Risbridger. *Highworth:* Becki Woodhams. *Inverness:* Esther and James Boyd, Mark Campbell, Lois H Fiddes, James Fraser, Aonghas Murray, Jonathan Schouten. *Kyle:* Paul Whear. *Larne:* Philip Acton. *Lochcarron:* Jonathon Stewart, John Strang. *London:* Abbie Martin, Elizabeth Munns, David Rowland, Alexander Turnbull, Jeremy and Justin van Kralingen. *North Harris:* Cailean, Eilidh J and Sara McCombe. *North Tolsta:* Chrisann MacLeod. *North Uist:* Flora M Macdonald, Kerri Macinnes. *Scaynes Hill:* Abigail and Martha Main. *South Harris:* Stewart MacLean. *Stornoway:* Anne Dickie, Karina Ferguson. *Stratherrick:* David Fraser. *Swordale:* Murdo S Macleod. *Tomatin:* Lois Cameron-Mackintosh. *Ullapool:* Siobhan MacCulloch, Susannah C Mackenzie.

**Upper Primary Section:** *Barnoldswick:* Philip J Martin, Siphon Ncube. *Bonar Bridge:* Elizabeth Campbell. *Farr:* Alasdair MacQueen. *Dingwall:* Alistair Mackenzie, Sarah M MacLean. *Edinburgh:* Eilidh Logan, Jonathan MacDonald. *Fort William:* Rachel M Mackinnon. *Glasgow:* Laura Chisholm, Catherine Freeke, Hugh Gillies, Neil Gillies. *Inverness:* Andrew Campbell, Natalie Macaskill, Catherine Schouten. *Kyle:* Daniel Whear. *Larne:* Deborah Acton, Alison Sharp. *London:* Richard Hawke, William Munns, Constance and Rupert Turnbull. *North Tolsta:* Don Neil and Mark Mackenzie, Sean MacLeod. *North Uist:* John Cameron, Alastair and Christina Macdonald, Laura Macinnes. *Scaynes Hill:* Philip Main. *Shieldaig:* Jennifer Goldby. *Stornoway:* Alasdair Gillies. *Stratherrick:* John Fraser, Roma MacRae. *Ullapool:* Stuart McCulloch. *Vatten:* Rebecca Fleming.

**Lower Primary Section:** *Barnoldswick:* David Martin, Rebecca and Robert Ross. *Dingwall:* Alasdair MacLean, Andrew and Graham MacLeod, Ruth Macleod. *Edinburgh:* Catriona Logan, Daniel and Isla Macdonald. *Fortrose:* Jerusha and Sarah Nixon. *Gairloch:* Donald and Rachel Mackenzie, Rebecca McBride, Catherine and Mairi Wyatt. *Glasgow:* Ewen and Fiona Beaton, Donna Chisholm, Ian Gillies, Iona Gillies, Kate Gillies, Rachel and Ruairidh Macleod, Callum and Peter Macpherson. *Inverness:* Jonathan Fiddes, Anna Fraser, Thomas Maton, Peter Schouten. *Knock:* Joanne and Murdo Macdonald. *Kyle:* Nathan Whear. *Larne:* Andrew and Philip Bonar, Cameron and Renwick Sharp. *Lochcarron:* Malcolm Stewart, Sarah and Thomas Strang. *London:* Edward Martin, Andrew and Edward Munns, Benjamin, David and Rachele Strata, Jemima, Jeremy and Lucy Turnbull, Amy van Kralingen. *North Harris:* Donald Macleod. *North Tolsta:* Sheena Mackenzie. *North Uist:* Iain Boyd, Margaret Cameron, Fraser MacDonald, John A Macdonald. *Peasmarsh:* Alasdair Bailey. *Salisbury:* Jill Buchanan. *South Harris:* Catherine Macleod. *Stornoway:* Leah Beaton, Kirsty and Sarah Gillies, Lauren Macdonald, Andrew MacQuarrie. *Stratherrick:* Ewen Fraser. *Uig:* Murdo George Mackay. *Ullapool:* Lewis Mackenzie. *Westmuir:* Ailidh Drake-Watson.

# Looking Around Us

## Relevant?

Jack McConnell, Scotland's First Minister, has set up a review group to look at ways of improving school assemblies. There are no doubt two problems. One is that more and more pupils are being brought up without religion and assume that religious worship is completely irrelevant to them. The other problem is that fewer and fewer teachers are religious; so those who lead assemblies are more likely to be doing so without conviction; they are unlikely to put their heart in what they are doing.

Senior schools inspector Douglas Osler has claimed that the present guidelines are out of date and need to be modernised. He wants to encourage pupils "to develop their own spiritual dimension, their own values and to celebrate the values of their family, school and community". "We need a debate on this issue," he says, "in order to find ways to help schools provide religious observance in ways which are meaningful in today's . . . cultural context."

Sadly, Scotland as a whole is no longer actively Christian and it is fashionable to emphasise the variety of religions which are practised in the country today. But it should surely be obvious to everyone that an assembly programme drawn from a mishmash of religions will not feel any more meaningful to pupils than one which is consistently Christian.

What a pity that leaders in government and education do not face up to the fact that Christianity has a great advantage over every other religion the world has ever seen: Christianity is true! And because it is true, it is always relevant. It is as relevant to children and teenagers as to adults. It is as relevant to people at the beginning of the twenty-first century as to people in the first century, in the time of Paul and Peter.

No other religion can answer the big questions about human existence, such as: Why are we here? What lies beyond death? How can we prepare for another world? Pupils today need reliable answers to these questions. What a difference it would make to young people – so many of whom feel intensely a lack of purpose in life – if they believed the testimony of Scripture! The situation has not been helped by the refusal of so many ministers to believe that the Bible is true. Those who have doubts about the Bible cannot expect to convince young people that religion is relevant.

Would that the Scottish Executive would face the fact that young people need the perfect revelation of Scripture as a guide for their lives. Let it be confidently presented. It is the Word of God. True religion is never out of date.