

# The Young People's Magazine

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## British Values

The British Government is looking into the idea of making all pupils between 11 and 16, in English schools, attend classes in “core British values”. These would include freedom, fairness, responsibilities to society and democracy. But other people are less enthusiastic; they claim it is difficult to say exactly what is meant by core British values.

One Member of Parliament has tried to sum up these values as “a sense of fair play”. No one, surely, will object to encouraging in everyone a sense of fairness. But there are at least two difficulties. The first we may mention is the difficulty of making a selfish youngster act fairly who thinks everyone ought to do exactly what he wants – especially if he is prepared to use violence to make others do his bidding. Too often education is seen as the remedy for all kinds of problems in society, especially among schoolchildren. Yes, education may help, but every child is born with a sinful heart, and some children are more sinful than others. Schools will never succeed in changing anyone's heart, and so they have great difficulty in influencing pupils' behaviour.

On what foundation can a sense of fair play be built? This is the second difficulty. How can you expect a selfish youngster, brought up as most children are today, to begin to treat other people fairly? Unless children are brought up to believe that God exists and that He has revealed Himself in the Bible, you cannot give them a good reason for treating others fairly. If schools go on trying to teach good behaviour without giving their pupils a solid foundation for it, they must fail. No one should expect anything else. They tell their pupils that the universe began through a big bang which no one can explain, and that life just happened to begin somehow – again without any real explanation. They go on to say that, as tiny change followed tiny change over billions of years and one kind of animal life changed into another, modern man eventually appeared on the scene. But, when this is presented to children as truth, no one should be surprised when children and adults increasingly behave as animals.

Why then should we treat others well? Why should we show a sense of

fair play in the way we treat them? The best answer most people can give is this: If you are nice to other people, other people are more likely to be nice to you. Which gives you the Golden Rule: Do to others as you wish others to do to you. But perhaps you can think of a good foundation for the Golden Rule. It is the fact that Jesus said, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke 6:31). And this has real authority because Jesus is the Son of God.

In fact God is speaking throughout the Bible. That is why the Bible – the whole Bible – has authority. And if God speaks, we ought to listen. We ought to listen when He tells us how we should live. He tells us: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Leviticus 19:18). This verse should govern all our relationships with other people. That is the kind of attitude we should have to them. God not only tells us what our behaviour should be, but also what kind of attitude we should have. We should want to treat them just as well as we treat ourselves. It is a high standard, and we must ask God for grace if we are ever to attempt seriously to reach it.

This verse points to the foundation on which schools ought to build when they set out to teach pupils their duty to other people. It sums up the last six of the Commandments – including, for instance: "Thou shalt not steal". When a thief steals from someone else, he is clearly showing that he does not love that person. The thief has no concern for the other person's best interests; he just thinks about himself – and perhaps his close friends and his family. He most certainly does not think about God and His glory.

Another of these commandments is: "Thou shalt not commit adultery". People may claim that it is because of love they commit adultery. But the Bible clearly shows that to tempt somebody to commit adultery is to do what is definitely not in their best interests; it is not true love. For true love will be guided by the Word of God and will only seek for the other person what is in their best interests. If we really see that every sin deserves God's wrath and curse for ever, we will do what we can to keep other people from committing sin.

The Bible ought to be the foundation of schools' teaching about relationships. It is a good foundation, for it has real authority. It is the foundation most people once had in Britain. They may not always have been consistent; they may not have read the Bible as they should have done; they may not have been in church as often as they ought to have been. But they knew that there is a God, that He has spoken, and that He ought to be obeyed. And it was a country with less violence than now.

But there is a higher command than to love our neighbour. It is this: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul,

and with all thy might” (Deuteronomy 6:5). We should not be content with leading a decent life; we need a new heart. Only if we have a new heart, will we even *begin* to love our neighbours as ourselves. And it is only what Christ did, in dying for sinners, that makes it possible for us to have a new heart and to be saved from all our sins. But, sadly, very few believe that now – in Britain or in other countries.

Yet everyone is responsible to God for what they believe. And if teachers, education authorities and the Government refuse to give God His place in British schools, they will all have to give account for that on the judgement day. And to the extent that today’s children are left in ignorance of the basics of the true religion, Britain and other countries will have to endure a generation of young people who do not know how to treat others. Core British values were once the values revealed in the Bible; that is what they ought to be today also.

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## Marriage: What the Bible Teaches

### 4. Some More Principles

*Rev G G Hutton*

The last article gave the first three principles: sustained love, scriptural order and sharing. The other three are dealt with here.

The fourth principle is that of *Christlike meekness*. Meekness is always a beautiful grace, completely opposite to pride and arrogance. It walks with gentleness and keeps company with compassion. The Saviour was very meek and we are exhorted to seek this grace and to exercise it. How often the spirit of meekness has prevented people from unnecessary conflict.

On the other hand, how often friends have parted in great bitterness because neither party showed meekness! It is mistaken for weakness but it is one of the strongest of all human virtues. Meekness can tolerate impatience, it can withstand abuse, it can bear ridicule, it can persevere in the face of insult. It can win when everything else fails, because it is dignified and inoffensive. Such a spirit within a marriage will do much to prevent trivial differences running out of control.

The Apostle Peter recognized the importance of meekness. He referred to meekness in wives as “the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price”. He went on: “After this manner in old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands” (1 Peter 3 4,5). A home graced with such an ornament should be more desirable than any amount of money or

worldly prestige. Meekness brings sweetness where sin would create bitterness. It calms the situation when sin would inflame passions. It will bring ease to the troubled spirit.

A fifth principle for sustaining marriage is *forgiveness*. The Apostle wrote to the Ephesians, "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you". He also told the Colossians to be "forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye". Here we have guiding principles for maintaining harmony in marriage. Husbands and wives are – like everyone else – poor sinners, liable to display sinful tendencies; this is inevitable. Neither the sinless husband or the sinless wife has ever been discovered in this world. But in His goodness, God has provided us with a perfect manual from which we may learn how to deal with sin in every situation.

To be conscious of our own sins will keep us humble before God, always relying on His mercy. It will make us more aware that we need forgiveness from others. And it will make us more ready to forgive others. Within the bounds of marriage, such an awareness is essential. Two poor sinners with such an understanding of their own and their spouse's failings will learn to apologize and forgive each other. They will not start blaming each other, ridiculing each other and despising each other. Genuine forgiveness will prevent many problems from ever developing. It is undoubtedly the absence of forgiveness that so often leads to the breakdown of marriage with all its unpleasant consequences.

Young people may start out full of romantic notions about marriage, without realising that sin in themselves is bound to show itself in the real world of married life. So often a young man or a young woman thinks he or she has found the perfect partner, only to discover later that they are confronted with habits, attitudes and personal peculiarities they were totally unprepared for. Young love is often real but very idealistic while true love is realistic.

I am sure we have all heard that love is blind. There may certainly be an element of truth in it, but I am sure that true love is not blind in the sense of being ignorant of reality. Love will overlook many a fault and may take little notice of blemishes and shortcomings in the one who is the object of the affections, but love does not rush blindly into a world of romantic fantasy. When two people enter married life together, they must be ready to meet the realities of possible trials, troubles and temptations as a result of the fall. They must also be aware however that, because marriage was instituted by God, it will always be a special target for the devil and the enemies of God.

## Missionary to India

### 2. "I Offer Thee Myself"

Alexander Duff belonged to Moulin in Perthshire. As a student in St Andrews in the 1820s, he came to the conclusion that he must become a missionary and bring the gospel to some distant part of the world.

The Church of Scotland had been looking around for someone whom they could send as a missionary to India. Several men had already refused when in 1828 a letter came to Duff from the Church's mission committee. At that stage he too refused; he wanted to finish his studies before he would commit himself to any such proposal. The next year, when his time in St Andrews was almost over, he was approached again. He had not only finished his first degree; he was almost at the end of four further years of preparation for the ministry. He had proved a very diligent student; one evidence of this is the more than 400 volumes he borrowed from the University library during his eight years in St Andrews.

Just before Duff's last session in university, Thomas Chalmers had moved to Edinburgh after five years as a Professor in St Andrews, where he had proved a good friend to Duff and other students who had an interest in missions. He now wrote to Chalmers to outline his thoughts on the prospect of going to India. Duff was already perfectly clear that it was his duty to devote his life to mission work. Yet, before he could respond to the Committee's offer, he felt that he must prayerfully ask himself two questions. The first was: Did he have the necessary qualifications to be a missionary? And the second question: Were his motives as pure as they should have been – did he have a sincere desire for God's glory and for the good of never-dying souls? He knew that, strong as they were, no ties to family or friends could hold him back. And, while many young men at that time went to India to earn lots of money, it was no desire to become rich that was moving Duff to go. The more he thought about these matters, the more he was encouraged by God's promises. He also felt rebuked for not being more resolute and trustful in going ahead.

So, after examining himself, Duff fully believed he could go on; he told Chalmers: "I yet felt I could find it in my heart to devote myself to the service of the Lord". "I am now prepared", he went on, "to reply to the Committee in the words of the Prophet [Isaiah]: 'Here am I, send me'." He knew that the work would be difficult but, because it was God's work, it must prosper. And nothing could come near to the glory which God would have in the conversion of souls; "everything else appears to fall out of view as being vain and insignificant". Duff also commented that the man "who

has been the means of subduing one soul to the cross of Christ” has raised a more permanent monument than anyone else – even if the monument became as famous as any of the pyramids in Egypt. It was in the hope that he would do good, both directly and indirectly, to many souls that he was preparing to go to India.

One weekday evening, with two members of the mission Committee present, he preached in Edinburgh's St Giles Church on the verse: “I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified” – Paul's description of his work in Corinth. It was as if Duff was taking these words as a motto for his work in India.

The Committee were impressed with his gifts. After all, it was no ordinary student who had studied Hebrew, German, Russian, Persian, Arabic and Chinese, in addition to the standard Latin and Greek which were the staple diet of everyone who then went to university. And as he preached in the old church of Leuchars, in Fife, on Romans 1:14: “I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians”, others must have been impressed with his sincerity as he declared: “There was a time when I had no care or concern for the heathen; that was a time when I had no care or concern for my own soul. When by the grace of God I was led to care for my own soul, then it was I began to care for the heathen abroad. In my closet, on my bended knees, I then said to God, ‘O Lord, Thou knowest that I have no silver and gold to give to this cause; what I have I give unto Thee. I offer Thee myself; wilt Thou accept the gift?’”

Around this time Duff visited an old couple in Blairgowrie, Patrick Lawson and his wife. Lawson bluntly asked the young man if he was planning to marry. No, Duff told him, he had not met anyone he felt would be suitable as a missionary's wife. But Lawson went on to emphasise that in India he would find very few people whom, as a converted man, he could take as his friends; what he really needed was a true friend with whom he could share his thoughts. The older man went on to give him some advice: Duff should “be quietly on the look-out” for a suitable young woman. If, in God's providence, he got to know one who was sincerely following Christ, he should try to get to know her better. Then, if he found that in mind and heart they matched each other “and if God puts it into her heart to be willing to forsake father and mother and cast in her lot with you, regard it as a token from the God of providence that you should use the proper means” to have her as his wife.

In God's good providence, he did find such a young woman – Anne Scott Drysdale, who belonged to Edinburgh. She became Mrs Duff on 9 July 1829. Just a little over a month later, Duff was ordained to missionary work

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in India in a service conducted by Thomas Chalmers. And in September of that year Alexander and Anne Duff set sail from Leith on the first leg of their long journey to India. It was to be a far more difficult journey than either of them probably expected.

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## The Book of Ruth

### 89. "I Will Never Leave Thee"

*Rev K M Watkins*

Ruth 4:14. "And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel."

Naomi has not been mentioned since the end of the third chapter. All the attention has been on Ruth: her marriage to Boaz and the birth of her son Obed. But the writer has not forgotten Ruth's mother-in-law. The wonderful things taking place in Ruth's life were for Naomi also. The Lord was doing great things for Naomi as well as for Ruth. And the women of Bethlehem realised this when little Obed was born. So it was to Naomi that they went, and they praised the Lord for His goodness to her.

"Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day." The women who said this had not forgotten the way Naomi spoke when she first returned to Bethlehem: "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?" (1:20,21).

At that time, it was as if the Lord had indeed left Naomi. Things were then so bad, she didn't even want them to use her name because it spoke of pleasantness. "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara." All her pleasant things were gone, and all she was left with was bitterness. Hence let her be called *Mara*, meaning bitter. What made it worse was her knowledge that it was the Lord who had done this: "For the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me". It was the Lord who had taken everything away from her: "I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty". She had gone to Moab with her husband and her two sons, and all three had died. The Lord had taken them away. She then felt that surely the Lord had left her too. "The Lord hath testified against me" – she knew that the Lord was witnessing against her for her sins. Where did all her afflictions come from? From the Lord Himself, for "the Almighty hath afflicted me".

But now the women were telling Naomi that the Lord had not left her. He had not left her when her husband died. He had not left her when Mahlon

and Chilion died. He had not left her when, as a poor childless widow, she returned to Bethlehem. He had not left her at all. And that is always true for the people of God. This is always His promise to His people: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

The Lord's people sometimes feel as if the Lord has left them, especially when passing through sore afflictions. "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me" (Isaiah 49:14). But that is only their feeling. It is not the truth. The Lord has the answer to all their fears: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee" (verse 15). Hardly ever has history recorded a mother forgetting her baby child. Yet it has happened. But the Lord's faithful love to His people surpasses any mother's love for her child. He will *never* forget His own.

All of this was clear to Naomi now. Yes, her husband and her sons had left her. But her God had not left her. With baby Obed in her arms, everything started to fit into place. She hadn't returned to Bethlehem empty, for she had come with Ruth. Ruth hadn't come to a place where marriage was impossible, for Boaz, Bethlehem's mighty man of wealth, had married her. Her family hadn't been blotted out of existence, for Obed would continue the family name. All of this had been in the Lord's plan all the time. He had not left her at all.

The women told Naomi that the Lord had not left her "without a kinsman". They were speaking of baby Obed, her newborn grandson. He was not only her near relative, he was also her "redeemer", for that is what the word means. Obed would save Naomi's family from going out of existence. He would carry on the name of Elimelech. And when he grew up, he would care for Naomi and save her from what would otherwise have been a most miserable old age. By caring for his grandmother in this way, Obed would become famous throughout Israel. No wonder the women praised the Lord for His goodness to Naomi in providing her with this boy! When her husband and sons died, it seemed as if the Lord had left her. But God always had this plan of rescuing the family through the birth of this son. He always knew the plans He had for her, plans of good and not evil.

Throughout all her afflictions, the Lord had not left Naomi without a kinsman-redeemer. This is true of all God's people. Their trials and tribulations can be very many. They may be left without their loved ones, removed by death. They may be left without their health and strength. They may be left without honour in the world. They may be left without riches and possessions. They may be left with very few of the good things of this life. But they will never be left without their Kinsman-Redeemer, the Lord



Jesus Christ. Everything else may be taken from them – even life itself – but nothing can remove Christ from their possession.

Think of Lazarus, the beggar laid at the rich man's gate. Did he have health? Did he have wealth? Did he have the good things of this life? Did he have an important place in the world? No, he was left without any of these things. He was "full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table" (Luke 16:20,21). His only visitors were the dogs that licked his sores. But he was not left without his Kinsman-Redeemer, for at his death he immediately passed into glory, to be with Christ, which is far better. The rich man, on the other hand, had all the good things of this life: riches, honour, health, pleasures. But he was left without a Kinsman-Redeemer. The one thing truly needful he did not possess, and so he went to hell when he died.

Becoming a Christian does not guarantee you the things that the world seeks after. You might be left without those things, just as Naomi was left without so much. But every Christian is guaranteed this: he will never be left without the Saviour. He will always have Christ as his Redeemer from sin. To all eternity, he will never be left Christless and hopeless. This will be to the everlasting praise of Jesus the Redeemer. His name will be famous for ever, because of His constant faithfulness to His people.

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## Merapi – Mountain of Fire

*Rev Neil M Ross*

Indonesia has 129 active volcanoes, more than any other country. Merapi (which means *Mountain of Fire*) is the most active, and has small eruptions every 2-3 years, bigger ones every 10-15 years, and very large ones every 50-60 years or so. Many people have been killed by them – about 1300 in an eruption in 1930, and 48 in 1994.

Although most Indonesians are Muslims, many also follow animist beliefs and so they worship spirits. They believe that they need to appease the spirits of Merapi – to do something so that the spirits will no longer be angry. So a pagan priest climbs to the top of the mountain every year to make an offering. Also, at full moon, people may trek to the rim of Merapi's crater to throw in rice, jewellery and live animals to appease these imaginary spirits. How sad that they should believe such lies.

At the beginning of May, lava began to flow again from the top of Merapi. Red-hot rocks and scorching clouds of gas swept down the mountain, burning everything in their path. On May 13, Indonesian authorities ordered

all residents away from their homes on the mountain slopes, fearing that another big eruption was near. Thousands of people fled from their mountain-side villages, climbing aboard vans and trucks to seek shelter in schools, mosques and government buildings. A mother of three called Katimi (who like many Indonesians has only one name) said as she boarded a vehicle: "I am panicking this time. Merapi appears angry."

But hundreds of people have remained behind. Why should they risk their lives by remaining in such a dangerous area? Because they do not wish to lose their homes and other belongings which are so precious to them. "We will not leave soon because of our livestock", said one farmer. This reminds us of sinners who refuse to flee to Christ, in whom they will find safety from God's punishment, which their sins deserve. They do not want to leave their worldly pleasures, give up sinful practices, and lose ungodly friends – and so they continue in danger of losing their souls for ever.

Some who remain on the slopes of Merapi are quite unafraid of the danger they are in. One villager said, "For us, life is going on as usual. This morning I'm hauling grass to feed my cows. I'm not afraid of Merapi." How can he and his neighbours be so complacent? Many of them think they can pacify the "Mountain of Fire". In one of the villages, so-called holy men set offerings of rice floating down a stream, hoping to prevent an eruption by "appeasing the spirits". They are like people who are not afraid of the judgement of God for their sins because they think they can prevent God's anger coming against them if they appease God by their good works and religious activities. How mistaken they are! The Bible shows us that we cannot atone for even one of our sins.

Another villager, 30-year-old Edi, said, "People around here believe that, if Merapi is going to explode, there will be a magical sign. Either it comes in a dream or in the form of a hallucination." But is it not equally foolish for anyone to think he will get some kind of warning before death so that he will be able to prepare to meet God at the last minute and so avoid God's punishment? How suddenly death came to those who died when Merapi erupted in 1994! They did not get another moment to escape.

Romadi, a 50 year old farmer, whose house was covered in volcanic ash, said, "I am calm because I have experienced this many times before. Officials have told us to leave, but I know that it is not that dangerous." Many sinners are like Romadi. They think, "I have escaped danger many times in the past. I am still safe." They keep deluding themselves, thinking they are not in danger of being lost for ever because of their sins.

But if we were not in danger of being punished for our sins, why did God send His dear Son into the world to die instead of sinners? The Bible

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shows us very clearly that we have sinned against God, that God is angry with sinners, and that He will punish them for ever if they continue living sinful lives.

God also tells us that if, with all our sins, we turn to the Saviour and trust in Him to save us from them, we will be safe – safe now, safe at death, and safe for ever. He is the only refuge for our souls. “For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:17). I advise you to be really serious in asking God to make you willing to believe in Christ.

Finally I ask you: Are your sin and guilt a heavy burden to you? Christ warmly calls you to come to Him to be relieved of your burden. “Come unto Me,” He says, “all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

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*For Junior Readers*

## **The Leak in the Dyke**

I am quite sure you will have heard of the dykes in Holland. A lot of the land in that country is below the level of the sea, so dykes have been built to hold back the sea – to keep it off the land. Without these dykes the sea would flood the land and the villages. The fields would be under water and much damage would be done.

Many years ago, a young Dutch boy was on his way home one evening. He had to walk across the top of one of these dykes. He noticed a small leak in the dyke and a trickle of water oozing through its side. He knew that the leak would grow bigger and bigger if it was not stopped. As it was getting dark, no one else might pass over the dyke that evening. The leak might not be noticed until the morning. By then the trickle would become a stream and the stream become a flood, breaking through the dyke and destroying the whole area.

The brave boy lay down on the top of the bank, reached out and stopped the gap with his fingers. As it was already late, no one else passed that way and the poor boy remained at his post through the whole long night. He did not leave until people came past the next morning and sent some local men to repair the gap. By his thoughtful action, he saved a whole village from being destroyed.

Does that remind you of the damage which sin can do? You might think

at first that some actions or habits are only little sins. You only take part in them occasionally and you certainly do not want them to cause havoc in your life. But if you do not stop, these sins will get more and more of a hold of you. They will become a habit. The secret sin will eventually grow into an open sin, or what the Bible calls a "presumptuous" sin. This can then become a flood of unchecked sin that will sweep your soul away into a lost eternity.

Should you not be like the young Dutch boy? Be very watchful for the least sin. Stamp on your secret faults before it is too late. Should you not pray like the Psalmist every day: "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults. Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins." *J van Kralingen*

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## The Last New Testament

**I**t was sometime in the 1850s. Britain and France were at war with Russia in the Crimea, a peninsula jutting into the Black Sea. Several regiments of French soldiers were stationed in Toulon waiting for the command to sail to the Crimea. A man living in the city decided to visit their camp in the hope of doing the soldiers some spiritual good. He took with him some New Testaments and began giving them out to the men. Most of them seemed glad to have them.

At last, there was just one Testament left. The man offered it to a soldier standing near him. He took the Word of God, opened it, turned to another soldier and told him: "O, this will do to light your pipe with".

It was possibly as discouraging a response as the soldier could possibly have given. But the Bible says, "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days". The idea was that when the River Nile flooded the fields beside it, then was the time to sow seed. Soon the water would go down, leaving the seed to sprout in the ground and, in due course, there would be a harvest providing bread for the coming year. So the man in Toulon had cast the good seed of Scripture where it might yet take root. And, perhaps much to his surprise, it did.

About a year and a half later, the man stopped one evening at a roadside inn to have a meal and to spend the night there. As he talked with the landlady, she told him that her eldest son had been buried that week. She spoke about his happy deathbed and explained: "All this happiness came from a little book which was given to him some time ago". The man asked about the book. So she went upstairs and brought it down.

It must have been a tremendous surprise, as well as a huge encouragement,

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to find that it was that last New Testament, which he had given out to the soldier in Toulon. He found that five or six pages had indeed been torn out, which suggested that the soldier had fulfilled his threat to use it to light a pipe. But inside the cover was written: "Given to me at Toulon. First despised, then read, and finally blessed to the saving of my soul." God's Word had indeed been fulfilled; there was bread after many days.

What cannot the Bible do when God applies it to a soul by the Holy Spirit? But what about *your* Bible? Do not despise it. Read it. And ask God to bless it to the saving of your soul.

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*For Younger Readers*

## Jesus in the Storm

Jesus was in a boat on the Sea of Galilee with His disciples. He was tired. He went to sleep in the back part of the boat, with His head on a pillow.

As they crossed to the other side of the Sea, a big storm blew up. There were huge waves. The waves were so big that they were going over the boat. It was now full of water. The disciples were very afraid.

What could they do? They could not stop the storm, but they believed that Jesus could stop it.

So they wakened Jesus. Then they said to Him: "Lord, save us; we perish".

Jesus spoke to the sea; He said, "Peace, be still". And the storm went down. There was no more wind. There was a great calm.

How wonderful! The disciples could not have done that. They had no power to quieten the storm. But Jesus had. That was because Jesus is God. Nothing was too difficult for Him.

The disciples themselves were amazed. Though they knew that Jesus could help them in the storm, they were really amazed at how the wind and the water obeyed Him.

But did the disciples really need to have wakened Jesus? No, He was with them in the boat. So they should have known that they would be safe.

Yes, Jesus is now in heaven, but He can still take care of us. If Jesus goes with us, we will always be safe.

## Diligent in Business

*C H Spurgeon*

Another chapter taken from the book *A Good Start* and abridged.

A father told his son: "William, I am pleased to see you incline towards religion. But take my advice, and be reasonable. I have been in business now for 40 years, and my advice is: stick to trade and make money, and then attend to religion." Now the young man, as young men are apt to do, had begun to think for himself. And, strangely enough, his thoughts ran in the right groove; so he replied, "Father, I am always grateful to you for your good advice; but this time you must excuse me if I differ from you, for the Scripture says, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness'. And therefore I cannot go in for making money first, but I must at once serve God, and yet I hope I may be none the less attentive to business."

It is a good rule to begin as you mean to go on. That son was wiser than his counsellor. True godliness is as good for this life as for the next. If I had to die like a dog, I would still wish to be a Christian. Place religion first in the order of time. Begin each week by carefully setting apart the first day for rest and holy worship. Begin each day in communion with heaven. Begin your married life by seeking the blessing of the great Father, and choosing for a partner one who will agree with you in the fear of God. In opening a new business, sanctify the venture with the prayers of godly friends, and in all fresh ventures be guided of the Lord. Our way will be strewn with blessings if we begin, continue and end with God.

Seek also the kingdom of God first in order of preference. If it should ever become a choice between God and mammon, never hesitate. If wealth runs counter to righteousness, let the gold perish but hold fast to righteousness. Follow Christ, however much it costs you. Blessed is that man who never has to think – because his mind is made up rather to "suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season".

"Well," cries one, "but we must live, you know." I am not sure about that. There are occasions when it would be better not to live. An old motto says, "Better death than false of faith". But I am quite clear about another necessity – we must die; and we had better take that *must* into consideration and not quite so often repeat the thoughtless phrase, "We must live".

Let godliness be first *in intensity*. It is to be feared that many give their force to worldly pursuits and their feebleness to religion. They are "all there" during banking hours; but they are not "all there" at the hour of prayer. They remind me of someone whose voice in our meetings for prayer could scarcely be heard, but in the shop he could be heard almost too well. Should

self have our energies, and Christ have our lukewarmness? If ever we grow enthusiastic, it should be in the noblest of all causes: in the service of the best of Masters. In that work we cannot be too earnest. For Him who has redeemed us with His precious blood we cannot do too much; indeed we cannot do enough. Alas, the comparative sizes of the Bible and the ledger are frequently symbolical: a neat little Bible is buried under a huge ledger. Let that be first which is first; throw your whole soul into the love and service of the Lord.

“Is your father a Christian?” said a Sabbath-school teacher to a child. The girl answered, “Yes, I believe that Father is a Christian, but he has not worked much at it lately”. No doubt there are many of that sort. Their religion has taken a holiday, and they have gone up to a sluggard’s bed. Let them be aroused, for it is high time to awake out of sleep.

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, by giving to true religion a sovereignty over your lives. The helm by which life is steered should be in the hand of God. Be first a man of God: after that a banker or a merchant or a working man. I would to God that our politics, our trade, our literature, our art, were all saturated with this idea – first a Christian. Then the secondary character would rise in excellence and nobility. Science, social laws, trade practices, home life would all be the better for coming under the supremacy of living religion. The fear of God should be the foundation and the top-stone of society. Christ first, and other things in due order. Does anyone ask, “What will become of our business if we place godliness first?” The answer is, “All these things shall be added unto you”. A young man begins life, resolves that he will do everything in the fear of God and that, as God helps him, he will do nothing that is against the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ; shall he prosper? He shall get on so far as this: he shall have bread to eat, and raiment to put on – all that is necessary for this life “shall be added” to him.

Someone sighs, “I am out of work, and I do not know how to provide for myself”. Are you sure that this trial is not your own fault? If it is not, do not be upset, for the Lord will provide for you. He has said, “Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed”. David’s experience was, “I have been young and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken”. The drunken, the idle, the dishonest may suffer hunger, and it will be well for them if that changes them; but to the upright there arises light in the darkness. They that serve God shall not have to complain of Him deserting them. Queen Elizabeth I asked a merchant to go abroad to represent the country. He pleaded that his own business would suffer, and her Majesty replied, “Sir, if you will mind my business, I will

mind your business". Rest assured that God will care for you if you make His service your delight. "All these things shall be added unto you."

The blessings of this life come to gracious men in the best form, for they come by divine promise. Suppose each one of us could be rich, I suspect that the most of us would be eager to take up the opportunity; and yet it is doubtful if it would be best for some of us to have the burden of wealth. We do not know what is best for us. It is sometimes very much better for us to suffer loss and disappointment than to obtain gain and prosperity.

When that noted servant of God, Bernard Gilpin, was arrested to be brought to London to be tried for preaching the gospel, his captors made fun of his frequent remark, "Everything is for the best". When he fell from his horse and broke his leg, they were specially merry about it; but the good man quietly remarked, "I have no doubt but that even this painful accident will prove to be a blessing". So it was; as he could not travel quickly, he arrived at London some days later than expected. At Highgate, they heard the bells ringing merrily in the city. They were told, "Queen Mary is dead, and there will be no more burnings of Protestants". "Ah," said Gilpin, "you see it is all for the best." It is a blessing to break a leg if thereby life is saved. Many might have soared into the clouds of folly if their wings had not been clipped by trouble. Better struggle honourably than become wealthy by disgraceful deeds. Agur's prayer, "Give me neither poverty nor riches," was a wise one; but our Lord's is still better, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt".

"All these things shall be added unto you," and the measure of the addition shall be arranged by infallible wisdom. Temporal things shall come to you in such proportion as you would yourself desire them – if you knew all things and could judge according to infinite wisdom. Do you not joyfully sing with the Psalmist: "He shall choose our inheritance for us"?

Does the promise not also imply that the believer shall have what he needs, without vexing worry and exhausting labour? While others are worrying, you shall be singing. Your place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; your bread shall be given you, and your waters shall be sure. Confidence in God and contentment with your lot will make life peaceful and happy; a dinner of herbs with contentment will yield a satisfying flavour unknown to those who eat the stalled ox. It is better to be happy than to be rich; and happiness lies in the heart rather than in the purse. But "all these things shall be added unto you", reminds me that to get property often makes a man smaller rather than greater. Not what a man has, but what a man is, will decide his bliss or woe in this life and the next. Yes, if God adds to you the things of this life, while you serve Him, the lines will fall to you in pleasant places, and you will have a goodly heritage.



## Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2005-6

### Overseas Names for Exercise 2

**Senior Section:** *Auckland:* Liana Sullivan, Susan Thomas, Jessica van Kralingen. *Brisbane:* Sarah Brigden. *Chesley:* Randy Winkels. *Dunedin:* Hayley Worth. *Gisborne:* Mark and Stephen Geuze, Trudy Haringa. *Grafton:* Cassandra van Dorp, Natalie White. *Holland:* Anne Bakker. *Sengera:* Lydia Momanyi, Kevin Nyabuto, Pius Obondi, Benmark Okioga. *Sydney:* Alison and Laura Marshall. *Wellington:* Joanna and Naomi Hicklin.

**Intermediate Section:** *Auckland:* Sam McCrae, David Thomas, Jonathan van Kralingen. *Brisbane:* Miriam Brigden. *Chesley:* Martha Bouman, Rachel Winkels. *Dunedin:* Richie Worth. *Gisborne:* Anita Geuze, Herman Haringa, Louise van Dorp. *Grafton:* Shelley van Dorp, Matthew White. *Holland:* Peter Bakker, Daniel van Draanen. *Israel:* Jennifer Goldby. *Sengera:* Joan Abel, Jennifer Mosiria, Bernard Mosoti, Edinah Ombega. *Sydney:* Andrew Marshall, Madison van Praag. *Wellington:* Elizabeth Hicklin, Alison Optland.

**Junior Section:** *Auckland:* Samantha Muirhead. *Brisbane:* Mary Brigden. *Chesley:* Jenny Bouman, Audrey Zekveld. *Dunedin:* Gresham Worth. *France:* Julia Davenel. *Gisborne:* William Geuze, Heidi Haringa, Alexander and Kirsten van Dorp. *Grafton:* Chelsie and Jackie Cameron, Chloe van Dorp, Abraham Wallis, Cameron White. *Holland:* Jelle Bakker. *Sydney:* James Marshall. *Wellington:* Lydia and Rebekah Hicklin.

**Upper Primary Section:** *Auckland:* Bianca Jago, Laura McCrae, Amy Thomas. *Brisbane:* Rachel Brigden. *Chesley:* Jacob Zekveld. *Connecticut:* Rachel Mack. *Gisborne:* Anne-Marie Geuze, William Haringa. *Holland:* Gerben Bakker, Nathalie MacDonald. *Grafton:* Bethany McAlpine. *Sengera:* Joel Kembene, Asher Kengere, Judys Kennedy, Mary Mosoti, Abram and Kwamboka Nyasaka, Dominic Ogoro, Maurine Okioga, Eusaphiar Ombega, Dickson and Salome Ontiri, Wilfred Onwonga. *Sydney:* Keith Marshall, Emily van Praag. *Wellington:* Abigail Hicklin.

**Lower Primary Section:** *Auckland:* Claudia Campbell, Rita de Bruin, Jarrod and Monique Jago, Lachlan McCrae. *Connecticut:* Rebecca and Sarah Mack. *Gisborne:* Hannah Geuze, Anna, Annika and Emma van Dorp. *Grafton:* Joshua Kidd, Alexandra van Dorp. *Holland:* Samantha MacDonald. *Sengera:* Josinah Aboki, Diviner Ayubu, Susan Babu, Dick Boiro, Janet and Salim Isaac, Anidah Joel, Eliud Juma, Nyangaresi Kengere, Jessy Maera, Margret Matara, Isabella Michieka, Finlay Mogari, Justin Mokua, Ericson Momanyi, Truus Moraa, Duncan and Peter Moses, Christine Mosoti; Christine, Linnet and Sisiria Nyabuto, Moraa Nyasaka, Andrew Obiri, Vincent Ombura; Fridah, Ngara W, Nyatera, Patrick and Vincent Ondieki; Macdonald Onduso, Issaberah and Samuel Ontiri, Nyabonyi Orina, Gesare Orinah, Veronicah Thomas. *Sydney:* Duncan Marshall; Heather, Kaitlyn, Nathan and Zoe van Praag. *Wellington:* Julia and Timothy Hicklin.

## Looking Around Us

### Atoning for Sin

Shyam Narayan Sharma lives in a village in the Indian state of Bihar. If you were there, you would probably pick him out very easily with his filthy clothes, made out of torn sacks, and the old shoes hanging from his neck.

Why does he dress so strangely? “I took a vow to repent of my criminal past publicly”, he explains. He confesses that he murdered 16 people over a period of some years; he was a hired killer. He also ran an illegal gun factory. Now he dresses in this way to atone for his sins. And when he came

out of prison, he began teaching 60 poor children in his district – no doubt also part of his attempt at atonement. In prison he read what he describes as a revolutionary book, which changed his “approach to life”. He also read various religious books and claims he was influenced by the Bible.

But the Bible does not commend this way of dealing with sin. Of course, we must turn from our sins, which is what Sharma began to do when he stopped murdering people and gave up his illegal activities in making and supplying guns. It is good too that he is giving himself to teaching poor children who, one assumes, could never get an education otherwise.

Yet none of this can do anything to take away the guilt of even one of his sins. The Bible tells us plainly that “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in [God’s] sight” (Romans 3:20). No matter how great the change in our lives, we cannot make ourselves acceptable to God. And we still go on sinning – even if we are more restrained in our sins.

But there *is* salvation for sinners – even the worst of them. So Paul made plain: “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Timothy 1:15).

How good if Sharma would go back to the Bible, study it carefully and pray earnestly to the true God that He would reveal Christ to him as the perfect Saviour that He is! And it is just as necessary for those who have never committed even one serious crime to seek salvation in the same way. There is no hope for any sinner in what they do themselves – only in Christ.

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## Prayer

Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire,  
unuttered or expressed,  
The motion of a hidden fire  
that trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,  
the falling of a tear,  
The upward glancing of an eye  
when none but God is real.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech  
that infant lips can try;  
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach  
the Majesty on high.

Prayer is the Christian’s vital breath,  
the Christian’s native air,  
His watchword at the gates of death;  
he enters heaven with prayer.

Prayer is the contrite sinner’s voice,  
returning from his ways;  
While angels in their songs rejoice  
and cry, Behold, he prays.

*James Montgomery*