

# The Young People's Magazine

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## Learning God's Judgements

**P**salm 119 is by far the longest in the Bible. Yet we do not know who wrote it. It may have been David, but we are not told. If it was important for us to know, God would have told us. Yet one thing we can be perfectly sure of is: it was a godly man who wrote it.

One reason we can be sure that the writer was godly is found in verse 102, where he says before God: "I have not departed from Thy judgements". But what does he mean by the word *judgements*? Was he thinking of when, for instance, God punished the people of Babel? That was when they rejected God's authority, in their plans to build a very high tower which, they said, would reach to heaven. God came against them in judgement; He made them unable to understand each other any longer. Or was the Psalmist thinking of when God poured fire and brimstone out of heaven on the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah?

No, it was not *judgement* in that sense. Instead, think of a judge with two parties before him in a court. It is not a criminal trial, but two parties are asking him to decide who is right on some particular point. It might be a dispute over who owns a piece of land or who has the right to the fish from some river. The judge listens to arguments from both sides; he hears all the evidence; then he goes away to think about it and comes to a conclusion. He makes a judgement on the case and he comes back to court to announce it.

And God has pronounced judgement on many matters. One of these judgements is: "Thou shalt not kill". This is God telling us, in just a few words, how He views human life. He is telling us His mind about it. And we should listen. We should try to notice everything else we are told in the Bible about the matter. For example, Jesus tells us that we are breaking this Sixth Commandment when we are angry without a cause. We are always in danger of going too far; anger has often led to murder. But even when anger does not get so badly out of hand, we should realise that it is basically the same kind of sin as murder – not so serious, but there is in it something of the same wish to damage the other person. So we have God's judgements on these matters and, like the Psalmist, we should not depart from them.

Another of God's judgements is the Fourth Commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy . . .". God understands our needs. He knows that people need a day of rest from their ordinary work. And He knows that we all need a day to worship Him, a day which is as free as possible from ordinary work. He has made these judgements and He has told us about them. So we should listen; and they should influence the way we live.

John was a very ordinary man. But he was someone who respected God's judgements and was an elder in his church. A Duke lived near him and often dropped in to John's house for a visit. The Duke would talk about almost anything and he would play with the baby. One Sabbath afternoon, he came in and began to talk in his usual way. He spoke about how the crops were getting on and other ordinary things, just as if it was a weekday.

Then John asked the Duke, "Are you not forgetting it is the Lord's Day?"

Of course John was right to be concerned. But the Duke did not think God's judgements about the Sabbath were really important. He asked John, "Are you not over-scrupulous?"

"I don't think so", John answered. He knew he was not over-careful. He knew that it was *God* who had spoken in the Fourth Commandment. So he went on to explain: "I am a humble servant of Jesus Christ, whose day the Sabbath is, and I dare not wilfully disobey His command to keep it holy. If I were your servant, you would expect me to obey your orders and support your authority and honour." Surely, John was telling him, the Duke should accept that John should support the authority and the honour of his Master in heaven.

The Duke agreed. But soon afterwards he took ill. Some months later he died. During these months he became very concerned about the salvation of his soul. And he passed away assured that he had found that salvation. Perhaps John's few words in support of the Sabbath and of the Lord of the Sabbath were used to bring the Duke to think about spiritual things.

In Britain at that time, everybody considered that an ordinary country elder was far below a Duke. John accepted that. But he knew that such distinctions were as nothing compared with how far the God of heaven was above both him and the Duke. Let us too remember that the Fourth Commandment directs us, not only in what we *do* on the Sabbath, but also in what we say. Let us remember too that all the commandments take to do, not only with what we do and say, but also with our thoughts and motives – on every day of the week. This is what God has judged to be right for us.

Like John, the man who wrote Psalm 119 did not depart from God's judgements, but others have. Paul writes about Demas, who left him because he "loved this present world". Moses made a different choice; he wanted to

follow the people of God although, by doing so, he lost his share of the wealth of "this present world" – what would have been his if he had stayed on in Pharaoh's palace in Egypt. Moses knew how God had judged these things and he also knew what God had told him about life after death. So he held on to God's judgements, although Demas did not. Moses and the Psalmist are now in heaven, but what about Demas? All we can say is that, *unless* he repented and began sincerely to obey God's judgements, he is now in hell.

But why did the Psalmist not depart from God's judgements? He tells us himself: because God had taught him. "I have not departed from Thy judgements," he said to the Lord, "for Thou hast taught me." That was true also of Moses and of John, but not of Demas. Is it true of you?

It is true of you only if you sincerely seek to obey God's commandments and do not wander away from them. And what will make you obedient? It is the work of God the Holy Spirit. We are all born into the world with Adam's fallen nature. That means we do not love God's commandments; we do not submit to His judgements. And we never will, unless the Holy Spirit will change our hearts, unless He will give us a new nature – one which will respond to God's judgements, recognising that God knows everything and that we cannot afford to reject anything that He says. That was why the Psalmist said, "I have not departed from Thy judgements". It is what you too will want to say if the Holy Spirit has given you a new heart.

Not all our learning is the result of the Holy Spirit's teaching. Think of Saul of Tarsus as a young Pharisee; he knew a great deal about the Bible and about the Commandments revealed in it. But the Holy Spirit had not as yet taught him anything. No doubt Saul thought he could say, "I have not departed from Thy judgements", but he certainly had no right to add, "Thou hast taught me". It was only when the Lord Jesus met him on the road to Damascus that he began truly to understand the Scriptures. Only then did he learn that Jesus of Nazareth – whose disciples he had opposed with all his energy – was the Messiah whom God was to send. Only then did he learn that he must take Christ as his King. And he did so when he began to call Jesus "Lord" (Acts 9:5). He could never have spoken like that from the heart unless the Holy Spirit had taught him.

We all need to be taught. Those who are still unconverted need the Holy Spirit to begin teaching them. Those who have been converted need more of His teaching. So we all need to pray, as the Psalmist did: "Give me understanding, that I may learn Thy commandments" (Psalm 119:73). And: "Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end" (Psalm 119:33). If we are taught in this way, we will continue on the safe way through life, the way that ends in heaven.

## The Book of Ruth

### 88. "And She Was His Wife"

*Rev K M Watkins*

Ruth 4:13. "So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son."

“**A**nd she was his wife.” The whole Book of Ruth has been building up to this. Ruth, the widow from Moab, has become the wife of Boaz, Bethlehem’s mighty man of wealth.

Suppose you were a visitor to Bethlehem who met Ruth the Moabitess and wanted to know who she now was. You would learn almost everything you needed to know if you were told that she was the wife of Boaz. It is the same with the Church of Christ – we mean His spiritual body, made up of Christians who are truly born again. How can her status be summarised? How can one say almost everything that needs to be said about the Church of Christ? What better words than these: “And she was His wife”? She has become the wife of the gospel Boaz, the Lord Jesus Christ. She is the one He calls “My spouse” (Song of Solomon 4:10). Young friend, have you become part of Christ’s bride? Is this the most important thing about you, that you are His?

“So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife.” The marriage came to pass after many hopes and fears. Ruth had been warned that she was most unlikely to find a husband in the land of Judah. But she met Boaz when she gleaned in his field. He talked so kindly to her. Naomi explained that Boaz was a near relative of their family; so he had a duty to marry a widow in Ruth’s position. Yet nothing seemed to happen, and the harvest season was nearing an end. Soon Ruth might not see Boaz any more. What could she do? Naomi advised her to go at night and ask him to marry her. This she did and, although Boaz received her graciously, there was an obstacle: a nearer relative with the first right to marry Ruth. She had to wait in suspense to see the outcome. In the end, the nearer relative withdrew. That opened the way for Boaz. And “so Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife”.

Often it is similar for sinners coming to Christ in the gospel. Their experience can be filled with any number of twists and turns. Rarely is their path to the Saviour straight and easy. At times He seems to encourage them, assuring them of His welcome. Then they want to say with Ruth, “Thou hast comforted me, and . . . hast spoken friendly unto Thine handmaid” (2:13). At other times, it is as if the gospel Boaz is warning them of obstacles in the way. Their love for sin and their trust in their own righteousness seem so

strong that they fear these “nearer relatives” will never let them go. But in the end, the Lord Himself removes all the obstacles, deals with all the difficulties, overcomes all the discouragements, and takes them to Himself by the power of the Holy Spirit.

“So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son.” It was only through her relationship with Boaz that Ruth became fruitful and had a child. In her former marriage, to Mahlon, Ruth had been barren. She had no children then. So with believers. Formerly married under the covenant of works to Satan, the world and sin, they were then fruitless as to any good works for God. Paul reminded the Roman believers of their unconverted days, and asked them: “What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?” (Romans 6:21). What good fruit was there for God or their own souls before they were born again? The fruits of the old life brought them only shame.

For Ruth it was a great change when she was married to Boaz. She became fruitful: “she bare a son”. So it is with believers. Paul continued in his great letter: “But now . . . ye have your fruit unto holiness” (Romans 6:22). When they were united to Christ in the marriage of the gospel, they became fruitful in good works. So it was with Paul himself. When Christ met him on the Damascus road, the spiritual fruit began: “Behold, he prayeth” (Acts 9:11). What a difference! From spiritual barrenness to spiritual fruitfulness. “Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child . . . For thy Maker is thine husband” (Isaiah 54:1,5).

Spiritual fruitfulness comes only through union to Christ. As He enters the souls of His people and dwells within them, they become fruitful in His kingdom. The Saviour told His disciples: “I am the vine, ye are the branches” (John 15:5). The fruitful clusters of grapes grow on the branches. But those branches must remain joined to the vine itself, and from this vine comes all their ability to be fruitful. If the branch is cut off from the vine, the sweet grapes will never grow. So with Christians: “As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me” (verse 4). Let us remember this. If we are not united to Christ as His spiritual bride, we will always be barren as to all the good fruits of righteousness. Only those who are married to Christ are able to do works that are truly good in God’s sight. Before that, all our works are evil.

“The Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son.” Even when Ruth was married to Boaz, she still needed an act of God’s almighty power to make her fruitful. Being the wife of Boaz in itself could not bring forth a child. The Lord Himself must give her that. It is so also with the Bride of Christ; she

will never be fruitful without that union to her spiritual Husband, the Lord Jesus. But even then, she needs an actual act of God to produce spiritual fruit. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). The *Westminster Confession* explains: "Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ. And that they may be enabled thereunto, beside the graces they have already received, there is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit to work in them to will and to do of His good pleasure" (16:3). If you are Christ's bride, you must seek His Spirit to make you fruitful.

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## Missionary to India

### 1. Taking up John Urquhart's Cloak

Two hundred years ago, on April 25, Alexander Duff was born. He was to become one of Scotland's most famous missionaries but was born in just a little village – Moulin in Perthshire, not far from what is now the well-known tourist resort of Pitlochry.

There was a local school in Moulin, but little Alexander was not likely to learn much there. The schoolmaster spent a lot of his time during school hours repairing watches and violins, leaving the older children to help the younger ones with their lessons. And when he went off to fish in the River Tummel, the children trooped into the kitchen of his house, where his wife listened to them reading from the Bible. But when he was 8, Alexander's father sent him to a new school some miles away and, when he was just 15, young Duff became a student at St Andrews University.

Alexander's father James was a good man who used to read to his family from the verse of the great Gaelic poet Dugald Buchanan. Among Buchanan's most famous poems was *The Day of Judgement*. One night Alexander dreamed that he was watching vast numbers of people being summoned before the Almighty Judge on the great white throne; some were being called to everlasting life in heaven and others were being sent away to everlasting punishment in hell. As he watched, Alexander was terrified; he could not be sure what the Judge would say to him. And when his turn for sentence was approaching, he wakened up trembling all over. This experience made him pray earnestly for the pardon of his sins, and we are told that he "came to an assurance that he was in fact accepted by God through the atoning blood of Christ".

One Saturday in winter, when Alexander was just 13, he and a friend were making their way home for a Saturday visit from school. They were following

a 10-mile track through the hills, and when darkness fell on them they were still some distance from home. They had no doubt been delayed by the deep snow on the ground. In total darkness they could see nothing, but they tried to press on; all they knew was that on one side of their track flowed a river and on the other side were deep bogs. They were in great danger; at one point they felt the ice on a loch cracking under their feet.

At last they were exhausted and sat down, but it was important not to sleep; otherwise death would be certain. They prayed for help, and particularly that they would stay awake. Suddenly they saw a bright light flash in the darkness but it soon disappeared. They moved towards where the light had been and walked into a garden wall. Beyond the garden was a cottage; it was now after midnight but the people in the house got up to warm and feed the two cold, hungry lads. But what light had they seen? It turned out to be the flare of men poaching salmon. And when, in later years, Duff would come face to face with difficult situations, he would remember the poachers' flare; it reminded him that God ruled over everything and could help him.

Duff went to St Andrews at a time when the Church in various parts of the world was awakening to the needs of heathen countries. He was one of the students who set up a society called "An Association among the students of the University of St Andrews for the Review and Support of Missions". Its purpose was to spread information about missionary work and to awaken enthusiasm for spreading the gospel. One of the first things the students did in their society was to set up a library of missionary books, with Duff as the first librarian. As one writer says, "in Duff's hands nothing would collect dust, particularly books". A fellow-student remarked later: "Though outrageously thoughtless, I was much impressed by Duff. There was a weight and a downright earnestness about him which everybody felt".

Among Duff's student friends at St Andrews was John Urquhart, who had a very strong desire to go to China as a missionary. But, not long out of university, at the age of just 18, Urquhart died. On his last Sabbath in life, Urquhart told his father and his minister: "My hope is fixed on the Rock of Ages. I know that nothing shall separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord".

A few months later, Duff returned home at the end of that session's studies. Normally, as they sat around the fireside exchanging the news of the months since they had last been together, Duff would have had something to say about his friend John. This time James Duff had to ask his son: "But what of your friend Urquhart?"

"Urquhart is no more", was the sad answer. Then he stopped and asked his father: "What if your son should take up his cloak?" (The reference was

to Elisha becoming a prophet instead of Elijah.) Then he went on: "You approved the motive that directed the choice of Urquhart; you commended his high purpose – the cloak is taken up". Clearly Duff too now felt it his duty to bear the good news of salvation to some distant part of the world.

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## Marriage: What the Bible Teaches

### 3. Some Principles

*Rev G G Hutton*

The last article dealt with the foundation for marriage – the Word of God.

The first principle we will consider is *sustained love*. When Jesus told His disciples of His love for them, He went on to say, "Continue ye in My love." It is so in marriage also: love must continue. Marriage is a delicate plant; it needs nourishment and careful cultivation. If true love does not nourish it, marriage will wilt and become sickly. Instead of bringing pleasure, it may become domestic imprisonment from which at least one of the parties will seek to escape. And the Apostle Paul warns us that one indication of a society that God has left to itself is that it lacks natural affection.

God requires each of us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and with all our strength; in addition, we must love our neighbour as ourselves. But the love required within marriage is described in a special way. In his Epistle to the Ephesians, Paul tells husbands to love their wives "even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it". The man who takes on the role of a husband is directed to study Christ's love for the Church. If he takes the matter seriously, it should be obvious to him that he can never love his wife too much. A husband cannot possibly love his wife to the extent that Christ loved the Church, but the love of the Saviour is set before him as the standard towards which he must strive.

We do not suggest for a moment that the love of an unconverted man is somehow inferior to that of a Christian husband. But we believe that a godly husband will want to learn more and more of the love of Christ, in order to nurture his personal relationship with his wife. The love of Christ is an eternal love and therefore is far above any merely human love, however genuine. Yet the love of Christ possesses features which a husband should cultivate. For example, the love of Christ is consistent; it is tender and compassionate; it is merciful and forgiving; it is self-denying and self-sacrificing.

The second principle is *Scriptural order*. God not only instituted marriage but He revealed the most appropriate order for the marriage relationship to function successfully. Since God is not the author of confusion but the God



of order, we would expect that He would lay down the ground rules for the parties within marriage. It is crystal clear from Scripture that God has appointed a head to exercise authority within a marriage. God has declared that the woman is to be willingly subject to her husband. “The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church.” In the same passage, God’s Word requires: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord”.

No one concerned to obey the Bible can possibly argue with such definite pronouncements. The Saviour taught that love for His commandments, and obedience to them, shows love for Himself. No one who professes to love Christ can ignore His holy and just commandments about the order God has appointed within marriage. Without a recognized head there can at best be domestic chaos and at worst the death of the marriage itself. There cannot be two heads; this would be to create a monster. Modern man may imagine that he can produce a better way of organising a family, but whatever he does, many more marriages are breaking down. God, who is from everlasting to everlasting – knowing the end from the beginning – wisely designed what suits the needs of His creatures in every generation. If men imagine they can produce a better society by improving on God’s plan for marriage, they must be considered fools.

The third principle is *sharing*. During His earthly ministry, the Saviour stressed the importance of what God said about marriage at the beginning of human history. He then quoted the words: “For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” It ought to be clear from this that God intended a husband and wife to be so close that their lives are completely bound up in each other; they become in reality part of each other. It is their shared experiences that bind husbands and wives together. They laugh together, they mourn together, they plan together, they suffer together. In fact they live and work together as a team. Each feels deeply the absence of the other; they miss each other’s support and companionship. Their lives are so entwined that one is not complete without the other.

Selfishness has no place in a marriage. Where it exists, it will inevitably lead to bickering, instability, lack of confidence and trust. If it is not dealt with, it may in the end bring about the breakdown of a marriage, as often happens. But when two people get married, they are not simply to concentrate on each other and their own interests, to the total exclusion of everyone and everything outside their own little world. Marriage should not just contribute to improving men as husbands, but men as men within the community.

Nor should marriage simply make the woman a better wife and mother, but it should develop her into a better woman, capable of making a more valuable contribution to society around her.

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*For Younger Readers*

## Looking at the Moon

Do you sometimes look up at the moon? Do you notice how it seems to change in size? When it was almost dark last night, I went outside. As I looked up at the moon, it was shining brightly down on me. It was almost a full circle. But it was not quite a full circle; there seemed to be a little of it missing on one side.

One night last week I noticed that the moon was much less like a circle. Much more of it seemed to be missing.

Soon it will be a perfect circle. But it will not stay long like that. As the days go by, it will seem to get smaller and smaller. And then it will become bigger and bigger again.

That is what seems to happen. But what is really happening? The moon does not change. What changes is how much we can see of it. Sometimes we can see more; sometimes we see less.

If you were older, perhaps you would be able to understand why this is happening. But although you do not know, God knows. He made the moon, and the sun, and this world, and everything else. So He knows everything about them.

But does it really matter if you or I do not understand these things? No, the moon will keep going round this world although we may not understand what is happening.

But there is something far more important that you should know about. You should know how to get to heaven. Some children just as young as you have gone to heaven. God showed them the way. And He can show you too. You may not understand everything about the way to heaven. But you can learn enough about it to get there safely. Other people may know more about it than you ever will, but you can learn enough to bring you safely to heaven.

How will you learn about the way to heaven? God must teach you. And how will He do so? Through the Bible. Whenever you hear somebody reading from the Bible, you should ask God to teach

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you something about the way to heaven. Or if you are old enough to read the Bible yourself, you should ask God to teach you more.

Jesus came into the world to die, so that sinners like you may get to heaven. Ask God to teach you what that means.

You should learn by heart these words of Jesus: "I am the way, the truth, and the life". Yes, Jesus is the only way to heaven. You must know about that. Nothing is more important.

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*For Junior Readers*

## A Very Precious Pearl

**D**o you know where pearls come from? They grow inside the shells of some molluscs, mostly mussels and oysters. Their value partly depends on their shape, their size and their colour. But because they are so rare, large mussel pearls of perfect shape are worth more than those from oysters. They can be very expensive.

Do you remember the merchant Jesus spoke about (in Matthew 13)? The man was looking for valuable pearls. He must have been an expert and knew exactly what to look out for. At last he found one very beautiful and expensive pearl. Because he realised how much it was worth, he sold everything he owned so that he could buy it. He valued it so much. He knew it was worth selling everything else.

That is how you should look at Christ. You should see that it is worth giving up everything else for Him. You should see that it is worth giving up worldly friends and popularity for Him, and that it is worth giving up the very temporary and shallow pleasures of this life for Him. Paul was like this merchant; he could say, "I count all things but loss . . . that I may win Christ and be found in Him". Paul knew what he must put first. He saw that Christ is like a very precious pearl. To have Him was enough to make him happy both in this life and throughout eternity.

Most people in this life are seeking for something. What "pearls" are you looking for? I hope it is not riches or honour or fame. Make sure you are searching for Jesus Christ, the "pearl of great price". Anything short of Christ will prove a cheat; it will deceive you for eternity.

A long time ago one of the largest and most valuable pearls ever found was bought by a Russian. It was a very large pearl indeed, as large as an egg and shaped like a pear. He was very careful with it and kept it safely locked inside a box that he hid inside a marble table in a private room of his big

house. The Emperor of Russia offered him an enormous price for it but he would not part with it. Later on he had to flee from Russia to France. All he took with him was his pearl, confident that he was rich enough with this pearl.

One day he unlocked the box to show it to an important visitor. His face turned pale. He looked deathly white. The pearl, which had been so perfect, had become clouded. It had been attacked by a sort of disease that can affect pearls. In the end it would crumble and turn to powder. It no longer had any value whatever. In a moment he was reduced from being a millionaire to being a very poor man.

There is only one pearl that can never become clouded, that will last right on throughout eternity. That is Jesus Christ. Do not trifle with other pearls. Jesus Himself says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:19-21). *J van Kralingen*

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## How Did It all Begin?

### 8. The Origin of Man

*S M Campbell*

**T**he Bible tells us how man came to exist. We are told clearly and simply that "God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them" (Genesis 1:27). God made man different from all the animals: man was created in God's image with a responsible and never-dying soul, and he was able to think. What a wonder!

Evolutionists reject the Genesis account of how man came to exist. They have to find some other theory to explain our amazing separate existence in this world, distinct from the animal kingdom. In many books about the history of mankind you are confronted with man's supposed animal ancestors, and you are told that apes and chimpanzees shared these same ancestors. You might find a series of drawings of ape-like creatures becoming progressively less hairy and more erect as they adapt to walking on two feet.

Evolutionists are looking for evidence to prove that we descended from some animal; that somehow, millions of years ago, a group of animals started to walk on two feet; and that natural selection caused some survival advantage in this. But, in fact, if we applied the theory of natural selection we might conclude that a weaker, less agile animal in the process of learning to walk on two feet would have a distinctly-smaller chance of survival from its

enemies. The sort of explanation put forward by some evolutionists involves back-to-front reasoning along these lines: our early ancestors who were good at walking on two legs were clearly at an advantage on dry land “because millions of years later, we walk on two legs instead of four”.

Much of the supposed evidence which is presented as support for the evolution of man from ape-like ancestors falls into one of the following three classes:

1. Hoaxes, where human and ape fossil bones have been combined and people have been led to believe the bones belonged to one individual. An example is the Piltdown Man, where the skull was from a modern human and the jawbone and teeth were from an orang-utan. Then there was the tale of Nebraska Man – an ape-man derived from one tooth, which turned out to be from a species of extinct pig.

2. Emphasis is placed on the ape-like qualities of fossilised human remains. The best known example is probably Neanderthal man who is depicted as a club-dragging, unintelligent, hairy ape-man, but was actually just a type of ordinary man. Some fossil evidence suggests that rickets and arthritis may have caused the rather unusual stance in some of these people.

3. Similarities between remains of ape-like creatures and human remains are exaggerated, with the aim of making the ape-like remains appear more like those of humans. “Lucy” is possibly the most famous of the fossil finds which fit into this category.

Lucy was found in 1973 in northern Ethiopia by a Professor Donald Johanson. She was considered to be an important find because those that found her appeared to be able to identify a knee joint which indicated that she had walked upright. In their desire to show the supposed progress from ape-like creatures to man, evolutionists latch on to any suggestion that a creature from the past walked upright. One commentator on the BBC website states that this form of movement, “known as ‘bipedalism’, is the single most important difference between humans and apes, placing Lucy firmly within the human family”.

However, there is further evidence which suggests that Lucy was actually a “knuckle-walking” creature, employing a specialised four-limbed walking method used by some living apes; it is quite different to walking upright. Further analysis of Lucy’s remains, and other remains similar to hers, also reveals that she belonged to a group of animals that had the long arms and curved fingers and toes of animals that swing through trees. Evolutionists dismiss these facts by saying they are just the evolutionary “left-overs” from previous generations.

Scientists who have studied Lucy’s remains doubt that she walked with

straight legs like humans; they think it more likely that she kept her hips and knees bent, like chimpanzees do when they walk. These scientists go on to say that “there was an even closer match between Lucy’s proportions and a type of bipedalism shown by orang-utans”. What does this lead you to conclude? That Lucy was probably just some type of ape, a relative of chimpanzees or orang-utans?

There is no definitive scientific proof that man, known to scientists as *homo sapiens*, descended from ape-like creatures. One leading scientist who believes in evolution stated: “The fossils that decorate our family tree are so scarce that there are still more scientists than specimens. The remarkable fact is that all the physical evidence we have for human evolution can still be placed, with room to spare, inside a single coffin.”

Not only do the evolutionists have a problem on their hands as they try to find physical evidence of our supposed amazing transformation into physically-inferior bipedal creatures, but they also have the much greater problem of trying to explain how the human mind “evolved” with the capacity and desire for spiritual activity, thought and language.

In our natural state, our hearts rebel against the fact that we are created by God and so are accountable to Him. Many people detest this thought and, in an attempt to dismiss God from their world, they prefer to believe that they are descended from apes. David, who lived thousands of years ago, had a far greater insight into the natural world around him than many of today’s scientists. Read the whole of Psalm 8 but especially verses 3 to 5:

“When I look up unto the heavens, which Thine own fingers framed,  
 Unto the moon, and to the stars, which were by Thee ordained;  
 Then say I, What is man, that he remembered is by Thee?  
 Or what the son of man, that Thou so kind to him shouldest be?  
 For Thou a little lower hast him than the angels made;  
 With glory and with dignity Thou crowned hast his head.”

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## The Danger in Loving Pleasure

*J C Ryle*

Another piece, slightly edited, from this noted nineteenth-century English minister. The second in a series on dangers to young people, it follows the article in February.

**Y**outh is the time when our passions are strongest. Then, like unruly children, they cry most loudly to be indulged. Youth is the time when we generally have most health and strength; death seems far away, and to enjoy ourselves in this life seems everything. Youth is the time when most

people have few earthly cares to take up their attention. All these things help to make young people think of nothing so much as pleasure. If asked, “Whose servant are you?” many a young person should give the answer: “I serve lusts and pleasures”.

Young people, time would fail me if I were to tell you all the fruits this love of pleasure produces, and all the ways in which it may do you harm. Why should I speak of revelling, feasting, drinking, gambling, theatre-going, dancing and the like? Many people know something of these things by bitter experience. And these are only a few instances. They give a feeling of excitement for a time; they drown thought and keep the mind in a constant whirl; they please the senses and gratify the flesh. These are the sorts of things that have mighty power at your time of life and they owe their power to the love of pleasure. Be on your guard. Do not be like those whom Paul describes as “lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:4).

Remember what I say, if you would cleave to earthly pleasures: these are the things which *murder souls*. There is no surer way to get a dried-up conscience and a hard heart – one that will not repent – than to give way to the desires of the flesh and mind. It seems nothing at first, but it tells in the long run.

Consider what Peter says: “Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:11). They destroy the soul’s peace, break down its strength, lead it into hard captivity and make it a slave.

Consider what Paul says: “Mortify your members which are upon the earth” (Colossians 3:5). “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts” (Galatians 5:24). “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection” (1 Corinthians 9:27). Once the body was a perfect mansion of the soul; now it is corrupt and disordered and needs constant watching. It is a burden to the soul, not a help; a hindrance, not an assistance. It may become a useful servant, but it is always a bad master.

Again consider the words of Paul: “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Romans 13:14). “These are the words,” says Robert Leighton, “the very reading of which so wrought on Augustine that, from an immoral young man, he became a faithful servant of Jesus Christ.” I wish this might be the case with all of you.

Remember also that earthly pleasures are all unsatisfying, empty and vain. Like the locusts of the vision in Revelation, they seem to have crowns on their heads; but you will find that, like the same locusts, they have stings – real stings – in their tails. All is not gold that glitters. All is not good that tastes sweet. All is not real pleasure that pleases for a time.

Go and take your fill of earthly pleasures if you will – you will never find

your heart satisfied with them. There will always be a voice within, crying, like the horseleech in the Proverbs, "Give, give!" There is an empty place there which nothing but God can fill. You will find, as Solomon did by experience, that earthly pleasures are but a vain show, vanity and vexation of spirit, whited sepulchres – fair to look at without but full of ashes and corruption within. Better be wise in time. Better write *poison* on all earthly pleasures. The most lawful of them must be used with moderation. All of them are soul-destroying if you give them your heart.

And here I will not shrink from warning all young people to remember the Seventh Commandment; to beware of adultery and fornication, of all impurity of every kind. I fear there is often a lack of plain speaking on this part of God's law. But I for one cannot, with a good conscience, hold my peace when I see how prophets and apostles have dealt with this subject, when I observe the open way in which the English Reformers denounced it, when I see the number of young men who walk in the footsteps of Reuben and Hophni and Phinehas and Amnon. For my own part, I feel it would be false and unscriptural delicacy, in addressing young people, not to speak of what is specially the young person's sin.

Breaking the Seventh Commandment is the sin above all others that, as Hosea says, "takes away the heart" (Hosea 4:11). It is the sin that leaves deeper scars on the soul than any sin that anyone can commit. It is a sin that slays its thousands in every age and has overthrown not a few of the saints of God in time past. Lot and Samson and David are fearful proofs of this. It is the sin that man dares to smile at. But it is the sin that the devil specially rejoices over, for he is the "unclean spirit"; and it is the sin that God peculiarly abhors and declares He "will judge" (Hebrews 13:4).

"Flee fornication" (1 Corinthians 5:18) if you love life. "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:6). Flee the company of those who might draw you into it and the places where you might be tempted to it. Read what our Lord says about it: "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). Be like holy Job: make a covenant with your eyes (Job 31:1). Flee *talking* of it. It is something that you ought not even to name. You cannot handle tar and not be defiled. Flee the *thoughts* of it; resist them, mortify them, pray against them; make any sacrifice rather than give way. Imagination is the hotbed where this sin is too often hatched. Guard your thoughts, and there is little fear about your deeds.

Consider the caution I have been giving. If you forget all else, do not let this be forgotten.



## Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2005-06

### Names for Exercise 2

**Senior Section:** *Bonar Bridge:* Rebecca Campbell. *Bracadale:* Neil Campbell. *Dingwall:* Kathryn Mackenzie, Neil MacLean. *Dunoon:* Esther Maley. *Farr:* Ruth MacQueen. *Glasgow:* Neil Freeke, Kenneth Gillies. *Inverness:* Mark Campbell, Lois H Fiddes, Jonathan Schouten. *Kyle:* Paul Whear. *London:* Josie van Kralingen. *North Uist:* John MacDonald. *South Harris:* Stewart MacLean, Sarah Smith. *Stornoway:* Anne R Dickie. *Tomatin:* Lois V Cameron-Mackintosh.

**Intermediate Section:** *Bonar Bridge:* Sandy Campbell. *Dingwall:* Beverly MacKenzie, Sarah MacLean. *Glasgow:* Laura Chisholm, Hugh Gillies, Donald MacLeod. *Inverness:* James E M Fraser, Natalie MacAskill, Catherine Schouten. *Kyle:* Daniel Whear. *London:* Elizabeth Munns, David Rowland, Alexander and Constance Turnbull, Jeremy and Justin van Kralingen. *Matfield:* Heidi Woodhams. *North Tolsta:* Mark Mackenzie. *North Uist:* John Cameron, Christina Macdonald. *Longcot:* Lucy Cooper, Emily Sayers. *Scaynes Hill:* Abigail and Martha Main. *Stornoway:* Karina Ferguson, Alasdair G Gillies. *Stratherrick:* David Fraser, John A Fraser. *Swavesey:* Helen and Rebecca Parish. *Swordale:* Murdo S Macleod. *Ullapool:* Susannah Mackenzie.

**Junior Section:** *Barnoldswick:* Philip J Martin, Robert Ross. *Bonar Bridge:* Elizabeth Campbell. *Crowborough:* Kelvin Woodhams. *Dingwall:* Alistair Mackenzie. *Dunoon:* Rachel Maley. *Edinburgh:* Eilidh Logan, Isla and Jonathon Macdonald. *Farr:* Alasdair MacQueen. *Glasgow:* Fiona Beaton, Donna Chisholm, Catherine Freeke, Kate and Neil Gillies, Rachel Macleod, Peter Macpherson. *Haywards Heath:* Hannah Woodhams. *Inverness:* Andrew Campbell, Anna Fraser, Thomas D Maton. *London:* Edward and William Munns, Rupert J Turnbull. *North Harris:* Donald R Macleod. *North Tolsta:* Sean Macleod. *North Uist:* John A Macdonald, Laura Macinnes. *Peasmarsch:* Alasdair Bailey. *Portree:* Rachel Mackinnon. *Scaynes Hill:* Philip Main. *South Harris:* Catherine Macleod, Joshua Smith. *Stornoway:* Lauren Macdonald, Andrew MacQuarrie. *Swavesey:* Sarah Parish. *Uig:* Murdo G Mackay. *Vatten:* Rebecca Fleming.

**Upper Primary Section:** *Barnoldswick:* David Martin. *Dingwall:* Alasdair Maclean, Andrew MacLeod, Ruth MacLeod. *Dunoon:* Elspeth Maley. *Edinburgh:* Catriona Logan, Daniel MacDonald. *Farr:* Finlay and Muriel Cramp. *Fortrose:* Katie Macleod. *Gairloch:* Rachel Mackenzie, Mairi Wyatt. *Glasgow:* Ewen Beaton, Ian Gillies, Ruairidh Macleod, Callum MacPherson. *Haywards Heath:* Edwin Woodhams. *Inverness:* Peter Schouten. *London:* Andrew Hickman, Jeremy and Lucy Turnbull, Amy van Kralingen. *Luton:* Stephen Kingham. *North Harris:* Tormod Mackinnon. *North Tolsta:* Shona Harrison, Sheena Mackenzie, Lucy MacLeod. *North Uist:* Iain Boyd, Margaret Cameron, Fraser Macdonald. *Longcot:* Ruth Cooper. *Portree:* Cameron Rose. *South Harris:* Anna Smith. *Stornoway:* Leah Beaton, Finlay Murray. *Stratherrick:* Ewen Fraser. *Trowbridge:* Joanna Broome. *Vatten:* Sabrina Annand.

**Lower Primary Section:** *Aberdeen:* Sarah Somerset. *Barnoldswick:* James and Rebecca Ross. *Croydon:* Marcus and Susanna Hickman. *Dingwall:* Jane Mackenzie, Laura and Sheena MacLean, Graham MacLeod. *Edinburgh:* Annabelle Macdonald. *Gairloch:* Andrew and Donald Mackenzie, Catherine Wyatt. *Glasgow:* Grant Beaton, Rebecca and Sarah Macleod, Kenneth Macpherson, Rachel Smith. *Haywards Heath:* Joseph, Kate and Lucy Woodhams. *Inverness:* Jonathan Fiddes, John and Rebekah Maton. *Kyle:* Nathan and Sarah Whear. *Laide:* Nikki MacLennan. *London:* Claudia, Edward, Miles and Oliver Martin, Andrew and Samuel Munns, Angus Pontin, Annabelle, Henry, Jemima and Joseph Turnbull. *Longcot:* Samuel Cooper. *Ness:* Johan MacInnes. *North Tolsta:* Mairi Campbell, Murrin Harrison, Isla Macdonald, Innes Mackenzie, Scott Macleod. *North Uist:* Eilidh Cameron, Angus Macinnes. *Perth:* Emma and Jonathan Norris, Calum Patterson. *South Harris:* Gerrit Smith. *Staffin:* Neil Angus Matheson, Carey Ross. *Stornoway:* Cirsty Gillies, Aimee and Cara Macleod, Eilidh Macleod, Ryan MacSween, Alasdair and Uilleam Murray. *Swavesey:* Priscilla and Robert Parish. *Vatten:* Jayne-Anne and John Fleming.

# Looking Around Us

## Providence or just “Events”?

When people from another country are found guilty of a serious crime, the judge often recommends that they be deported – sent out of the country – after they have served their prison sentence. The trouble is that for several years this has not been happening in Britain. And when this was discovered, there was a great row about it. At the centre of that row was Charles Clarke, who was then the Home Secretary.

Some weeks earlier there was a discussion about teaching creation in schools in England. Mr Clarke firmly declared that he was “totally opposed” to the idea that God was the Creator. Indeed he added that he did not believe in God anyway.

For weeks the issues involved – including Mr Clarke’s own future – were discussed endlessly in newspapers and other media. One journalist commented that the government (including Mr Clarke) were “to a huge extent, now in the hands of ‘events’”.

Maybe they were. But we should never forget that events are in the hand of the God whom Mr Clarke claims not to believe in. We use the word *providence* to describe God’s control of events. Providence includes every event that takes place, whether it is more or less important. It includes events which involve those who do not acknowledge God as well as those who do.

Events moved on. And just a week or two after the journalist made that remark about “events”, Mr Clarke was sacked from his position as Home Secretary, much to his disappointment.

This is a government which, perhaps more than any before in Britain, tries to act as if there is no God. It does not ask God’s help; it does not ask if the laws it produces are in line with His law – and often they are not. And many of these unsatisfactorily laws are promoted by the Home Office, where Mr Clarke was in charge.

Mr Clarke was publicly rejecting God, and events caught up with him in a way he did not like. But these events happened in God’s providence; they were under His control. People despise Him at their peril.

Let *us* remember that. If we reject God and His laws, if we despise Christ and His gospel, God will cast us away for ever. What an awful prospect!

We should acknowledge that God is in control of every event and that, at last, we must appear before Christ to answer for everything we have done in this life. Now is the time to submit to God and to respect His providence.