

# The Young People's Magazine

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## Only One Way to God

**H**ow can we go to God? Many answers have been given to this question. Today you might well be told that you can answer it any way you like; you can choose any religion you want; you can select any spiritual ideas you choose – or none at all, if that is what you prefer. Nobody has any right to tell you what to believe, or so people claim. Going to God is like climbing a mountain, they say; no matter where you start, no matter which path you follow, you will get to the top in the end.

There is no doubt that this is what many people want to believe. But just as, on many mountains, some paths are extremely dangerous, so these ideas about religion will lead to disaster. People may assure you that there are many roads to God but, in fact, there is only one way.

Suppose a little child has wandered away from home. Obviously, no sane person will tell that child: It does not matter which way you go; you will get home safely whatever road you take. We are all like little children who have wandered away from God. We need someone to tell us – someone who really knows – how to return safely. That must be God Himself, or someone who treats seriously what God has revealed about the way back to Him.

But where has God revealed how to return to Him? Only in the Bible. Nowhere else can we find reliable directions about how to return to God.

We should realise how far we have wandered, and how impossible it is for us to find the way back. Our own ideas about returning to God are completely unsafe; if we follow them we will perish for ever. But the Bible shows us the one safe way back to God – through Jesus Christ.

What is it that keeps us away from God? It is our sin. As a just God, He cannot look favourably on any guilty sinner. Something must be done about the sinner's guilt before God can let him come near. The sinner's guilt, so to speak, is like an enormous barrier standing between him and God. But Jesus Christ went through this world bearing the guilt of a vast number of sinners – which meant that He had to die instead of them. And every sinner who looks to Jesus by faith will be forgiven, because He died in their place.

All who believe in Jesus have found the one way back to God. They know

that there is no other way; they are perfectly satisfied with what Peter said, after he had spoken about Jesus Christ as a perfect Saviour: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is *none other* name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Peter was emphasising that no one else has been revealed in this world as a saviour; indeed it is absolutely impossible for us to find anyone, apart from Christ, who can bring us to God. He is the one Mediator between sinners and God – the one Person through whom we can approach God.

This is the One whom God has appointed to be the Saviour. God has made known to the whole world who He has appointed. We have absolutely no authority to challenge that appointment. Yes, many people do, but they are among those described in the Bible as forsaking their own mercy (Jonah 2:8). Suppose, after the British Prime Minister has appointed a new Foreign Secretary, some Member of Parliament objects to his choice. And if that MP decides to appoint someone else as Foreign Secretary, will this appointment have any authority? Of course not, even if the MP takes out advertisements in all the national newspapers and tries, in all sorts of ways, to influence as many people as possible to accept his choice. So, for instance, no matter how often or how forcefully people point to the Virgin Mary or to other Roman Catholic saints as mediators between us and God, it does nothing to change the facts of the matter. God has appointed His own Son, Jesus Christ, as the Mediator. No one else has been appointed. Christianity, as described in the Bible – pointing to Jesus Christ as the one Mediator – is the only true religion. In no other can we find the way back to God.

Because many believe, or claim to believe, that there are lots of ways to God, services are held in which people from several religions take part. Often these services are connected with some important national event, with the Queen and Government ministers attending. But God does not accept such multi-faith worship. Every false religion worships a false god. And followers of false religions are rejecting the revelation which the true God has given in the Bible; they are putting forward human ideas instead.

If we are to find God, we must have better instructions than those that a mere human being can give us; we must use God's directions, as we find them in the Bible. And if we are to worship Him, we must also use directions we find in the Bible. All acceptable worship must be offered in the light of the First Commandment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me". And we must worship the true God in the further light of the Second Commandment, which forbids idolatry and implies that we must worship Him only in the way He has appointed. No one should think of using any other way. Here too God has reserved the right of appointment to Himself.

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## Running the Race

### 3. Continuing in the Christian Race (1)

*Rev Neil M Ross*

This is the third part of a Youth Conference talk, sub-titled, “some Bible teaching about the Christian life”. Last month we looked at two sections: the contestants in the race and the start to it. We now come to the fourth and longest section.

**A**cts 11:26 tells us that “the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch”. But, of course, they not only carried the name Christian; they also lived the life of a Christian. Those who are genuine Christians today are also disciples of Christ. Like the first disciples, they believe and follow the teachings of Christ. Their guide is the “word of Christ”, as Paul calls the Bible (Col 3:16). A physical race must be run according to rules. The runner who refuses to abide by the rules for the race will be disqualified. He will certainly fail to win, even although he may arrive first at the tape. The only rule to direct us how we must live the Christian life is the Bible.

The Bible directs us that, if we are to continue the race, we must constantly pursue holiness. Hebrews 12:14 tells us that we are to follow holiness, “without which no man shall see the Lord”. Holiness is not some kind of mystical thing. Yes, it is inward: the principle of holiness is within the Christian, and so he has holy desires and holy aims – but holiness is also outward and very practical. To follow holiness means, as Scripture says, following in the footsteps of Christ (1 Peter 2:21); following “after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Romans 14:19); following “after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness” (1 Timothy 6:11), and so on. So we must strive after holiness in our hearts and in all areas of our lives. It was the frequent prayer of Robert Murray M‘Cheyne: “Lord, make me as holy as a pardoned sinner can be made”).

We cannot run properly in the way of holiness if we do not study our Bible daily, pray to God, engage in family worship, attend public worship on Sabbath, and be in our place in the weekly prayer meeting. Only by using these means of grace are believers strengthened spiritually to go from strength to strength. Indeed, making proper use of the means of grace which God has appointed is part of running the race – it is an essential ingredient in the Christian life. It is deplorable when those who make no Christian profession neglect their Bibles, but especially deplorable when those who claim to be born again do so. Such neglect calls their profession in question. Those who neglect the means of grace will fail in running the race, just as the athlete who neglects his training will lose his race.

The runner in a physical race also removes unnecessary clothing in order

to be as free as possible while running. So Christians are exhorted: "Lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us" – an exhortation which, as some commentators state, indicates not only the indwelling sin of Christians but also the sins which they are especially prone to commit and which are likely to entangle them.

To live the Christian life involves not only watching and praying against such sins, but also forsaking them. In 2 Timothy 2:22 we read, "Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace," but the same verse also says, "Flee also youthful lusts". There are sins, as you know, to which young people are particularly prone. David spoke of his sins and faults of youth in Psalm 25, and the Book of Proverbs warns young people against sins which they especially are open to – sins which they may be tempted to commit. Samuel Rutherford wrote to a young man: "When youth is come to its fairest bloom, then the devil, and the lusts of the deceiving world, and sin, are upon horseback. If this were not so, Paul needeth not to have written to that sanctified and holy youth, Timothy (a faithful preacher of the gospel), to flee youthful lusts."

Again, Satan tries, by methods unknown to past generations, to keep his hold upon young unconverted people. He sets his sights on those who belong to Christian families, and especially on those who try to follow what is right, and more especially on those who are concerned about their souls and are seeking salvation.

I need hardly tell you that the devil operates very successfully through, for example, popular music in which the lyrics glorify and promote sin. How adept he is in using also such places of sinful pleasure as bars, nightclubs, theatres and cinemas. Also, in most homes in this country, Satan makes much use of what is sinful on television to stimulate thoughts that are quite contrary to those required by Philippians 4:8, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things".

Sad to say, some professing Christians watch and commend films which a past generation of serious Christians would have shunned, and which undermine "the doctrine which is according to godliness" (1 Timothy 6:3), even although these films may claim to convey moral lessons. The April 2006 issue of *The Young People's Magazine* carries an article entitled "Sin as Entertainment"; it states that, when television became common, people who would never have gone to a cinema were now able to watch films in their own homes. "More recently," the article goes on, "with films available as videos or DVDs, people can watch them just whenever they want to. While

some material on TV, and on videos and DVDs, is educational and instructive, much of it is dangerous. Sin is not a proper subject for entertainment. And most films, it would seem, are glorifying what is sinful.” It certainly is sinful to seek enjoyment from films which present sin for entertainment – including murder, violence, occult practices, deceit, fraud, hatred, jealousy, robbery, adultery, and certain transgressions of the Seventh Commandment which decent people scarcely want to mention.

One argument we have heard for watching films is that, if it is allowable to read a novel, it is all right to watch the film version of it. A pupil in school may be required to read some novel and view a dramatic presentation of it, as part of his studies in English Literature, but that does not translate into a general licence for him to watch films in cinemas or elsewhere.

In any case, as the late Mr Alasdair Gillies wrote in a past issue of *The Young People’s Magazine* (after teaching English Literature for many years): “Young people, teenagers especially, should be on the alert with regard to the overt and insidious influences to which they may be exposed in reading books and watching dramatic presentations. Matthew Henry’s words in connection with 1 Corinthians 15:33, ‘Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners,’ are applicable in this context: ‘Bad company and conversation are likely to make bad men. Those who would keep their innocence must keep good company. Error and vice are infectious; and, if we would avoid the contagion, we must keep clear of those who have it.’”

In the next instalment we hope to consider some other sins which young Christians of today have to guard against.

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## The Book of Ruth

### 93. Born to Serve

*Rev Keith M Watkins*

Ruth 4:17. “And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.”

The women of Bethlehem were delighted with the newborn son of Boaz and Ruth. They looked on the child as belonging especially to his grandmother Naomi. They said: “There is a son born to Naomi”. They called him Naomi’s child because he would prevent Naomi’s family going out of existence. Then these women who lived nearby gave the boy his name. They named him *Obed*. Why? *Obed* meant *one who serves*. The women wanted this child to be a servant. As far as they were concerned, he had been born

to serve. Boaz was one of Bethlehem's richest and most powerful men, but they wanted his son to be a servant. They were not wishing on the boy a life of misery. Far from it. They wanted him to be blessed. They were honouring him. They expected him to be great. These women understood what worldly people cannot understand. They knew that true blessing, honour and greatness come from serving, not from being served.

Greatness through serving! This turns the standards of the world upside down. In the world, the greatest person is the one who has most people serving him. But in the kingdom of God, the greatest person is the one who does most serving. When the disciples were arguing over which one of them was the greatest, Jesus taught that His greatest disciple would be the one who would do most in the way of serving. "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matthew 20:27). That soon stopped their arguing!

Would you be great in the kingdom of grace? Then serve! Give yourself to serving. Serve the Lord; serve other people, especially the people of God. Devote yourself to service. Seek a servant's heart. Be an Obed!

Obed was born in order to serve. As he grew up, he would begin to understand the meaning of his name, and the purpose of his life. He was born to serve. God's people are born again for the same purpose – to serve. It is as if every true convert receives the name Obed when he is born again. Every child of God is spiritually born to serve.

Zacharias knew this well. Why are we saved? So that we "might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74,75). Christians are saved from their sins in order to serve their Saviour. They leave their former life, in which they served sin, and they begin a new life of holiness, in which they serve Christ.

Like every other regenerated person, Saul of Tarsus knew this as soon as he was born again. He asked: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). In other words, "Lord, how can I serve Thee?" He knew that he had been born again in order to serve his new-found Lord.

Later in his life, that same man was reasoning with the Romans. Some were teaching that if you were saved by grace, it did not matter how you lived. Paul had no time for such wickedness. He explained the true nature of salvation: "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Romans 6:22). To be saved is to be set free from the dominion of sin, so that one can serve God by being fruitful in holiness.

Paul wrote his letter "to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints" (Romans 1:7). He was writing to all the Christians there, not just the ministers of the Word. He was writing to all who were loved by God and set

apart to be God's people. As far as the great apostle was concerned, every single one of them had the name Obed, servant. They had all "become servants to God".

Every Christian is to be "meet for the Master's use" (2 Timothy 2:21). If you are a Christian, you have one Master, and that is Christ. And He has redeemed you so that you will be *useful* to Him. All real Christians want to be used by their Lord and Saviour. Like Isaiah, they want to say, "Lord, here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8). What a privilege to be used by the Lord! What an honour to be a servant of Christ! If you have been born again, you know that you have been born to serve.

In fact, you must be born again before you will be able to serve the Lord. Many people think that it is easy to serve God, even without being truly converted. Some of the Israelites were like that in the days of Joshua. They were confident of their own strength. Joshua rebuked them: "Ye cannot serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:19). Remember you must be born to serve – born again, that is.

Jesus Himself came into the world to serve, not to be served. "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). The Son of God, equal with the Father from all eternity, became man in order to serve. Jesus was born to serve. He "made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:7). This was the mind that was in Christ Jesus. He told His disciples: "I am among you as He that serveth" (Luke 22:27). Jesus was the greatest Obed of all.

When Jesus washed His disciples' feet the night before He died, He gave us an example of how to serve one another. Washing people's feet was the task of the lowest servant. That was why Peter was so reluctant for Jesus to do it. How could the Lord of glory wash his dirty feet? Peter had to understand that the Saviour's greatness was shown by the extent to which He would serve His people. The Saviour's glory is seen in His becoming a servant. "Behold My Servant" (Isaiah 42:1) is ever the voice of the Father, pointing out the Lord Jesus in His glorious work of serving.

Washing feet was a small service compared to what Jesus would do next. He went lower than any servant had gone before. As a servant, He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8). He shed His blood for His people, to wash their souls from the filthiness of sin. As a Servant, He went to Calvary, carrying His people's sin. As a Servant, He took their place, and suffered the shame, pain and curse of the cross. As a Servant, He was forsaken by the Father, whose will He was doing so perfectly. As a Servant, He brought in everlasting salvation for all who put their trust

in Him. By faith, ask Him to do for you the greatest service possible – the work of saving your soul. Then you will become His servant – His Obed, serving Him in any way that He directs.

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## Missionary to India

### 6. Krishna Mohun Banerjea

Alexander Duff reached Calcutta from Scotland in 1830. He quickly set about establishing a school so that young Indians would come in contact with the Bible.

Change was in the air in Calcutta in 1831. Many were questioning Hinduism, which – then as now – was the main religion of India.

Krishna Mohun Banerjea had taken over as editor of a paper called the *Enquirer*, which opposed traditional Hindu thinking but was in no way Christian. One evening, when Banerjea was away from home, some of the supporters of the *Enquirer* held a meeting in his house. They had a meal of beef, which Hindus totally refuse to eat; they believe the cow is a sacred animal. After Banerjea returned home, some of the others recklessly threw bits of the left-over meat into the compound of the house next door, where a fanatical Hindu lived. “There is beef! There is beef!” they shouted. The man lost his temper, stormed into Banerjea’s house and hit out at him and his friends. They knew they had done wrong and they apologised, promising never again to act in that way.

Various articles in the *Enquirer* had long disturbed the Hindus in Calcutta and hundreds gathered round the house. They demanded that Banerjea’s parents put him out of the family, or else lose caste themselves – which meant that they would lose their standing in their religion. So the family called on Krishna Mohun to give up what they saw as his errors and proclaim that he believed the teachings of Hinduism, or else leave his home at once and lose for ever all the privileges of caste. He chose to leave, because he was honest enough to refuse to say what he did not believe to be true.

It was near midnight as he turned away from his house and family, and it was with some difficulty that he escaped from the enraged crowd and found shelter in a friend’s house. He had no regard for God, Banerjea later confessed, but God did not leave him to himself. “Though I neglected Him,” he wrote, “yet He had compassion on me.” And he was to see how God had created the circumstances through which he would be brought to seek Him.

Duff heard about Banerjea’s difficulties and sent an Indian friend to invite him to his house. Banerjea described how “Mr Duff received me with Christian kindness”. Yet the missionary was absolutely frank in stating his



views – it was part of his Christian kindness. He said he was glad that Banerjea and his friends were opposing what was wrong but was sincerely sorry they were neglecting the truth. Duff made plain that Banerjea was guilty of serious neglect in not *inquiring* into the doctrines of Christianity and the evidence that shows it is true. Probably Banerjea was reminded of the title of his paper, but he was certainly very impressed by the way Duff spoke the word *inquiring*. He considered his lonely situation, cut off from his family, and decided that the only way to find peace and comfort was to come to a settled decision about where truth lay in the matter of religion.

No Indian would take Banerjea into his home. Indeed he narrowly escaped being poisoned. He had to stay in a European boarding house. There Duff had a serious discussion with Banerjea and his friends. The outcome was a series of lectures and discussions led by Duff himself.

At first Banerjea declared in the *Enquirer* that the paper was not promoting any religious doctrines, only “let us have all a fair field and adopt what reason and judgement may dictate”. He had not yet learned the sinfulness of the fallen human mind, and that it needs to be taught from outside – through a revelation from God. But, only a month later, Banerjea was willing to state that Christianity deserves special inquiry because of how it had civilised the whole continent of Europe. And he was telling his readers that “a reverend gentleman of the Presbyterian sect has undertaken the task of unfolding to us the nature of this set of doctrines”.

Between 40 and 60 people came to listen to Duff’s lectures, staying on well into the night. Some of them were seeking to learn the truth. Others came to watch, even to argue, and a few of these were described as proud, rude and grossly insulting. But some derived lasting benefit from Duff’s efforts. Among them, though not the first, was Banerjea.

The time came for his baptism. He wanted it to take place in the lecture room in Duff’s house; he wished that “the scene of all my public opposition to the true religion should also be the scene of my public confession of it”. Some Hindu friends had been strengthened in their unbelief by his arguments and he wanted them to witness him turning his back publicly on all error, and embracing publicly “the truth, the whole truth, as revealed in the Bible”.

Immediately before baptizing the convert, Duff asked him a series of questions. The first was: “Do you renounce all idolatry, superstition and all the frivolous rites and practices of the Hindu religion?”

Banerjea answered, “I do, and I pray God that He may incline my countrymen to do so likewise”.

Then the minister asked, “Do you believe in God the Father and Creator of all, in Jesus Christ as your Redeemer, and in His sacrifice as the only

means whereby man may be saved, and in the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit?"

"I do, and I pray God to give me His grace to do His will".

Banerjea was setting out on a path of Christian profession which in the end led to him serving God as a minister of the gospel.

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## **How Did It all Begin?**

### **11. More about the Wonder of Man**

*S M Campbell*

This is the last article in the series and follows on from one which used the senses of sight and hearing to show that Evolution is impossible.

**A**s you are reading this article perhaps you are smelling something. Maybe someone is cooking in the kitchen or perhaps someone has walked past you who is wearing some perfume or after-shave. If so, some of the six million smelling cells inside your nose have been stimulated. Have you ever noticed that, when you have a cold, you cannot taste your food so well? That is because the sense of smell helps to identify the finer flavours. It is also why our noses are where they are; they help us make sure we are only putting good things in our mouths. There are tiny hairs on the smell-receptor cells inside our nose and they detect smells by their shape. Yes! I am sure you did not know smells had shapes. The different smell shapes fit into different hair sensors which then send electrical messages to the brain, where the smells are organised and analysed.

The average person can detect up to 10 000 separate smells. How could this ability to smell have evolved? How could the smell receptor hairs have evolved? Evolutionists might argue that a mutation produced a hair shape that matched the smell of a dangerous predator; so the animal survived because it could smell the predator and get away more quickly. All this might sound plausible, until you consider that this would have needed at least another 10 000 such positive random mutations. Remember, we still do not have evidence of even one positive random mutation!

As you read this, maybe you are sitting in a comfortable chair with a cushion on your lap, or perhaps you are sitting on a hard chair wishing you had a soft cushion to sit on. How do you know how to hold this magazine without letting it fall from your hands? How are you able to turn over the pages one by one without crushing them? All these sensations and actions come about because of your sense of touch.

We can detect four different types of sensation: heat, cold, pain and

pressure – and these combine to give lots of different feelings. Our skin surface is constantly monitoring our contact with the environment. There are different types of receptors all over our bodies constantly taking in information about the world around us and about what we are doing. All the different signals being sent to the brain are important for our protection, pleasure and well-being. Does this sound like the work of lots of random mutations or does it sound like an intended design feature?

Perhaps, while you are reading this article you are having a snack: maybe some coke or coffee; perhaps a bag of crisps; or, if you are trying to keep healthy, an apple. Maybe you have a sweet tooth, and you like chocolate and sugary things; or perhaps you prefer savoury snacks like crisps and nuts. Whatever our personal preferences, we all recognise different tastes in the same way.

On our tongue there are over 10 000 taste buds. As food passes through our mouth, the taste buds collect molecules from the food by their shape, size or electrical charge and then send that information to the brain to be interpreted. Meanwhile other sensors detect the texture, temperature and moistness of the food. As we chew and break up the food, our saliva glands are at work producing saliva to make the food easier to swallow and digest.

There is no evidence of primitive animals with partly-formed tongues, lips or mouths. What use would a partly-formed mouth have been? And what use would a mouth have been without the food pipe to connect it to the intestines? Clearly, all the parts of the eating system would need to be formed at the same time before a person or an animal could eat and get nourishment. Yet Evolutionists have to assume that many random mutations took place over a very long period of time, and that natural selection recognised these random mutations as useful. Their theory gives rise to more questions than answers. Creationists accept that God has given us the gift of taste and that this is how He designed and created us.

The brief overview of our five senses given here demonstrates how amazingly complex and intricate our bodies are. The different aspects we have been looking at are highly complex, but the fact that they all fit together and can work in harmony for the benefit of the individual is even more wonderful. It would be good if everyone could say as David did: “I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well” (Psalm 139:14).

If people who believe in evolution would really consider how complex is the world around them, they would have problems. They would have to conclude that, no matter how many random mutations occurred, human beings could not have been produced, nor could any of the wonderful

plants and animals in the world around us. The evidence from the past that is available for scientific analysis fits easily into a Creationist's view of the world; but it needs a lot of speculation to make it fit even partially into the evolutionary view. Evolution is the only branch of science where speculation is accepted as reliable evidence.

Although it is good and right to acknowledge God's wisdom and power as our Creator, He has given an even greater demonstration of His wisdom and power in His plan for saving sinners from their sins. So each one of us should ask God to "create a clean heart" within us (Psalm 51:10). Then we might know something of the experience which the Apostle Paul wrote about to the Corinthians: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

We hope these articles will encourage you to read more about the evidence for Creation and against Evolution – especially if you are likely to face questions on the subject during your education or in your workplace. There are many good books on the subject, and the quarterly magazines produced by Answers in Genesis are also an excellent source of information.

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## Deliverance

*Celia Johnson*

**D**r Virgilina went to visit a Christian friend after work one day in October last year. Her friend was an elderly, godly lady who lived in the suburbs of the city. Because it was getting dark when she was leaving, her friend decided to go with her to the car. As they said goodbye to each other, an armed man approached and ordered them into the car. When he demanded money, they told him they had very little on them. He then drove off in the direction of a bank, a long distance away.

On the way there, they saw a police roadblock ahead, but the police waved them through. This could have turned into a very dangerous situation because the police, who are always armed, would have asked for the driver's documents: identity card, driving licence and car insurance papers, and the man probably had none of them. Dr Virgilina could see the hand of the Lord protecting them, as normally no car is allowed through such roadblocks without being stopped and checked.

The two ladies were praying that the Lord would keep them safe. After driving for about an hour – it was a very big town – they reached the bank. The robber ordered Dr Virgilina out of the car and went with her, warning her not to do anything silly. He added: "I've been a robber all my life, and

as a robber I'll die". The bank had just closed, so they got back into the car. He then drove off again, telling her that he knew of a cash machine on the other side of town.

By this time Dr Virgilina and her friend were very frightened and they started to pray out loud. When the robber asked them if they were Christians, they told him that they were. He then told them that, in that case, he did not want the car any more, but he urgently needed some money in order to solve a serious problem. The ladies then started to talk to him about Christ and what He had done for sinners. He had never heard the gospel before and was quite amazed to hear of the hope there is for sinners who repent and who turn to Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. Apparently, he started to cry and said that there was no hope for him, a hardened criminal. The ladies, however, encouraged him by telling him about the sinners described in the Bible, just as hardened as he was. And they quoted some verses to him, to assure him that Christ is always willing to receive sinners.

They eventually arrived at the cash machine and Dr Virgilina withdrew some money to give him. He took it and then gave her back her car keys. She got into the car, reminding him of Christ's invitation to sinners. As she was about to leave, he came towards the car again, which made her a little afraid; she was beginning to wonder if he was to go to steal the car after all. But the reason he came back was that he was concerned the car was about to run out of petrol, because they had been driving for two hours when traffic was heaviest. He then offered her some of the money she had given him so that she could buy some petrol. She replied: "I've given you this money, and it is now yours. Go and sort out your problem. Take it and, when you get home, consider the things you have heard tonight. Go and steal no more!"

She then drove off and, after taking her friend home, they prayed together, praising the Lord for having kept them safe when their situation was so dangerous. They also prayed that the Lord would have mercy upon the poor man's soul and that He would bring him to a saving knowledge of His wonderful love for sinners.

God's care for His children is constant and His Word contains many promises assuring them of His protection, such as: "He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Psalm 91:12). Those two ladies were very much aware that it was the Lord who had delivered them that evening. These events are a remarkable testimony to the continuing work of the Lord in the lives of His children, proving yet again the truth of His promise: "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

We cannot but admire their courage and the concern they had for that

man's soul, faced as they were with such a dangerous situation. Yet they saw that man not only as a criminal, but also as someone who, like themselves, had a never-dying soul and would one day be called before the judgement seat of Christ. They saw that they had a unique opportunity of speaking to him about the Saviour and they wasted no time in doing so. They may never know what happened to the man but they did what was right and left everything else in God's hands.

But is it not sad that the robber had never before heard of the love of God for sinners? The holy God sent His only Son to the world to save sinners from the eternal torments of hell. He was sinless, and yet "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5). Is it not a wonder to you that the Lord Jesus paid for the sins of others? And He is still calling you to come to Him and have your sins forgiven! It is a most serious matter if we know about the mercy of God through Christ and do not respond to His sweet invitation: "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 45:22).

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*For Junior Readers – Lessons from the Life of John G Paton*

## **God Will Provide**

**J**ohn Paton's family was not rich; in fact they were so poor that they often had to wear old, thin clothes. And at times there was no food in the house and no obvious way to get more food. But although this was the case, they were always provided for.

When John was going to school, he was one of the poorer boys there and he did not have good warm clothes like the others. One evening, when the family were praying at family worship, the door of their house opened and shut quietly. Once worship was over, John rushed to the door, and there on the floor by the door was a parcel containing a new suit of fine, warm clothes which fitted him perfectly. How pleased he was! He could now go to school with warm clothes and look just as smart as the other boys.

John's Mum reminded him that it was God who had sent the clothes and that he should thank God for them, no matter who actually brought them to him. As it turned out, the clothes were from the teacher who was quite unkind to him at other times.

There was another incident which John remembered when he was grown up. It happened at a time when food was scarce. The crops had not been good that year, especially the potato crop. So the prices of other foods went up too, and many families were going hungry.

John's Dad had gone to find work in a town not far away. He was going to return home the next evening, hopefully with some food and some money. But after his father had left, the food in the house had completely run out. There was no bread and no flour to make bread, no cheese and no potatoes – there was absolutely nothing to eat. John's Mum did not like to ask any of her neighbours for help, so she had to persuade her 11 children to go to sleep although they had no food that day. She told her children not to worry, because "she had told God everything". And she said that He would send them plenty in the morning.

Perhaps the children were wishing that their Mum would go and beg for some food from other people instead of "just praying to God". Imagine how they all felt – their stomachs rumbling because they had no food that day, and no hope of food until their Dad came home the next night. Thankfully this is a feeling which most of us have never really had. Sometimes we might say, "O, I'm starving!" But what we really mean is that we are just a little bit hungry. And usually, when we do have that hungry feeling, we know we can get food quite easily and quickly. Imagine having that feeling going on and on and getting worse and worse, and not knowing when it will go away. Although we might not experience this, there are, sadly, many others who do have this feeling – usually in other countries, but sometimes even in Britain.

The next morning a delivery came to the Paton house. It was a present from John's Granddad, Mrs Paton's father. The present was a bag of potatoes, a large bag of flour and a delicious home-made cheese. Not only was this more than enough food to keep them from feeling hungry that day, but it also gave them many another tasty meal.

Imagine how surprised and amazed John and his brothers and sisters would have been at this wonderful present arriving when they had not expected it! How did John's Granddad know to send them this food just when they needed it? John's Mum had not written to him asking for food; she had not phoned him – because there were no phones then – and she certainly had not texted him!

John's Mum must have seen her children's surprise at this wonderful present. So she called them to her and told them to love God and "tell Him in faith and prayer all your needs, and He will supply all your needs so far as it shall be for your good and His glory".

What good advice Mrs Paton was giving her children! And it would be good if we all could follow it. No problem or worry is too small for us to tell to God. He wants us to tell Him everything. We are told in the Bible to "be careful for nothing" (which means, Do not worry about anything); "but in

every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6).

But we need to think about the difference between things we want and things we need. Sometimes we think we need various things, and actually we do not need them at all: we just want them. Did you notice the phrase at the end of Mrs Paton's advice: "for your good and His glory"? God will only say, Yes, to our prayers if the things we are asking for will be for our good and His honour. It might be hard for us to understand why God has not helped us in the way we have asked, but we should trust in Him. He knows best. But there is one thing we all need that God is always willing to give. He has promised: "A new heart also will I give you" (Ezekiel 36:26). This is the most important thing to ask God for.

*S M Campbell*

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*For Younger Readers*

## **The Ladder**

**D**o you want to get to heaven at last? I am sure your answer is, Yes. Everyone wants to get to heaven.

But, remember, you have done many wrong things. You can never go back to put them right. The Bible calls these wrong things sins. And sins will keep people out of heaven.

Let us stop for a moment and think about something else. What if your father wants to go up on the roof of your house (of course, I am not thinking of a building many storeys high)?

He will bring out a ladder so that he can climb up onto the roof. He cannot possibly jump onto the roof; he needs a ladder.

You cannot jump up to heaven. But can you find a ladder that will bring you up to heaven? Certainly you have no way of getting rid of the bad things you have done.

Do you remember Jacob's dream, and what he saw in his dream? It was a ladder, and the top of it reached up to heaven. And there were angels climbing up and down the ladder.

Now look up John 1:51. There you will find Jesus telling Nathanael about the Son of man (that was one of the names He used for Himself). Nathanael would yet see the angels going up and down on the Son of man. You see, Jesus is the ladder Jacob saw. It is Jesus who can bring you to heaven. Ask Him to do so.



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## Looking Around Us

### Watching Eyes

A team of researchers from Newcastle University kept track of how much money people put in a canteen “honesty box” at the University when buying a hot drink. None of the canteen staff supervised the sale of drinks; it was left to the individuals’ honesty to pay the correct amount.

Over a period of 10 weeks, a poster no bigger than a page of this Magazine was placed on the wall at eye-level, above the honesty box. It listed the prices of the hot drinks. On some weeks the notice showed a pair of eyes looking directly out at the person buying their tea or coffee, and other weeks there was a picture of flowers.

The team found that people put nearly three times as much money in the box when the poster showed a pair of eyes. Obviously they were somehow conscious of the eyes and much more likely to act honestly. The researchers speak of people having the feeling of being watched, which made them pay for their drink – although the team used nothing more elaborate than a photocopied black-and-white poster.

This experiment pointed to the fact that everyone has a conscience. Indeed it may not take much to bring conscience into action.

But what is conscience? It is something inside us speaking on behalf of God. And however little they may know about God, people know something about their duty to do what is right. But conscience often goes to sleep. It does not act as it should in speaking up on behalf of God.

There are various ways of helping conscience to act. The simple poster showing two eyes, as well as the prices of hot drinks, was one such way. Better is to remember that the eye of *God* always sees us; He is always watching. If we bear that in mind, our conscience is much more likely to protest when we are tempted to do something wrong.

Do you remember Hagar’s words when she realised that God had provided water for her? She said, “Thou God seest me”. Wherever we are, and whatever we do, and whatever we are tempted to do, let us always keep Hagar’s words before our minds. They will be a great help to our conscience, prompting it to speak up when we are tempted to do what is wrong.

Just as God sees everything we do, so surely will He use it on the Day of Judgement against those who do not repent. Someone might speak today about his “little dishonesties”, but how awful it will feel to have even these little dishonesties made public, before everyone, at the judgement seat of Christ! Nothing we have done will be out of sight then unless it has been

covered by the blood of Christ. But if our sins are forgiven, they will not be bought up against us on the last day.

What we need most of all, of course, is a new heart, so that we would always want to do what is right – so that we would always want to act honestly and pay the proper price for everything we buy. Remember these words: “Thou God seest me”. If you do, they will help your conscience to do its work when you are tempted to sin – in particular, if you are tempted to take something without paying for it.

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## The Believer's Song of Praise

O could we speak the matchless worth,  
O could we sound the glories forth,  
Which in our Saviour shine;  
We'd soar and touch the heavenly strings,  
And vie with Gabriel, while he sings  
In melody divine.

We'll sing the precious blood He spilt,  
The ransom that atones our guilt,  
And saves our souls from hell:  
We'll sing His glorious righteousness,  
In which all pure and spotless dress  
Our souls with Him shall dwell.

We'll sing the characters He bears,  
And all the forms of love He wears,  
Exalted on His throne:  
In loftiest songs of sweetest praise,  
We would to everlasting days  
Make all His glories known.

Well, the delightful day will come,  
When Christ our Lord shall bring us home,  
And we shall see His face:  
Then with our Saviour, Brother, Friend,  
A blessed eternity we'll spend,  
Triumphant in His grace!

*R M M'Cheyne*