

The Young People's Magazine

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Learning from History (2)

Last month, under this heading, we began with a quotation: “Those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it.” So those who do not know their history are likely to make mistakes which they might avoid if they were more careful to learn from the past. We looked at the best kind of history, what God has revealed in the Bible. We noted some of the facts about men of very different characters: Noah, Moses and Pharaoh, Saul and David. And we saw some of the mistakes we will avoid if we follow what is good and shun what was wrong.

Of course there were many others whose lives, as told in the Bible, we could have considered in order to learn profitable lessons. But this month we will go beyond the Bible and focus on one important period in Church history to try to pick out some vital lessons for today.

By 1500 the Christian Church had drifted far from the Bible, and its teachings were a huge distance away from the doctrines of Christ and His Apostles. In most of the countries of Europe, the Church was under the control of the Pope, and his word was law everywhere. It was no longer a case of asking, What does the Bible teach? The question people were then expected to ask was, What does the Pope teach?

And the Pope was teaching many doctrines that no one can find in the Bible. For instance, the Bible teaches believers to remember Christ's death in the Lord's Supper, by taking bread and wine as the symbols of His death. The Roman Church, under the Pope, was teaching that, in the mass, the bread somehow changed into the body of Christ and the wine into His blood, so that “the whole Christ”, including His soul and divinity “is truly really and substantially contained” in the sacrament. Yet the bread and wine looked the same as before; they smelt the same as before; they felt the same as before; indeed they *were* exactly the same as before – yet the Pope and all his priests claimed what the Bible most certainly does not teach anywhere: that they were no longer bread and wine but Christ Himself.

What is even worse, the Pope was teaching that every priest celebrating Mass was offering Christ up all over again as a new sacrifice for sin, even

although the Bible makes plain that Christ's one sacrifice for sin was so complete that it never needs to be repeated. For instance, Paul speaks of "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*" (Hebrews 10:10).

The Pope was also teaching that there is not only a heaven and a hell beyond this life; there is a third place called purgatory, where people on their way to heaven suffer for sins which have not yet been forgiven. And by paying money to the church – by buying what were called indulgences – their friends and relations could bring them out of purgatory. Indeed a monk called Tetzel, selling indulgences in Germany in 1517, claimed that "the moment the money tinkles in my box, that moment the soul springs up out of purgatory". Again none of these teachings can be found in the Bible; there is no such place as purgatory, and sin can only be forgiven by looking to Christ Jesus, who offered Himself as a real, once-for-all sacrifice for sinners.

A young priest called Martin Luther was then teaching the Bible in a new university in the German town of Wittenberg. He was thoroughly upset when he heard of what Tetzel was up to. Hardly anyone then knew about Luther but, after he had posted his 95 theses on the door of the church in Wittenberg at noon on 31 October 1517, he very quickly became famous over much of Europe. He was concerned that sinners were being deceived as to how they could find forgiveness for their sins, and his theses were designed to provoke discussion on the subject.

Luther had discovered for himself how difficult it is to earn salvation. In a thunderstorm, he had fallen in terror on the ground. He cried out: "Help, Anna, beloved saint," and vowed, "I will become a monk". And he kept his word. If ever anyone was in earnest to find forgiveness for sin, it was Martin Luther. He sincerely tried to keep every detail of the rules of the monastery; he prayed; he fasted; he confessed his sins; he tortured himself – all in the hope of earning forgiveness. He could not understand what Paul had said about "the righteousness of God" in his Epistle to the Romans; Luther thought the words referred to the holiness of God. He knew that he could never reach God's standard; it put salvation so very far away from him. But still he struggled, until at last light dawned on his soul – from the Bible, of course. He saw by faith that this *righteousness* refers to Christ's perfect obedience to His Father in His life, and especially in His death on the cross.

So when the young university lecturer in Wittenberg heard how Tetzel was pulling in piles of money with his false promises of pardon, he was concerned that multitudes of sinners were being deceived for eternity. Luther knew, and he wanted everyone else to know, that there is only one way of salvation – through Jesus Christ who was crucified.

We too should be concerned to hold on to such basic doctrines as how sin

can be forgiven. Yes, every doctrine is important, but some doctrines are especially important, and this is one of them. If we think we can earn salvation, we are deceiving ourselves. It is perhaps unlikely that we will pay money to buy forgiveness; our danger is more subtle. It is natural to the unconverted sinner to try to buy forgiveness from God Himself, hoping to make payment with his good works. He may bring prayers, Bible reading, going to church, giving up various sins, or any number of other things – or all of them together. But let us not forget Luther's history; he found he could not earn forgiveness from God no matter how hard he tried; he had to come as a needy sinner with nothing whatever in his hand and receive salvation by faith in Christ Jesus – the One who has done everything for sinners.

We might think too of William Tyndale and the heroic efforts he made to translate the Bible into English. Convinced that even ploughboys should be able to read the Bible in their own language, he hoped at first to be able to translate the Scriptures in his native England. He was soon to learn that this was an impossible hope in the face of Roman Catholic opposition to ordinary people reading the Bible for themselves. After all, the Pope and his followers did not want people to find out that many important Roman doctrines were very different from the teachings of the Bible.

But Tyndale went on with the work God had given him, even although it meant leaving his country. For the rest of his life, whenever his position in one place became unsafe, he had to leave it for another. But he was able to translate the whole of the New Testament and a good part of the Old before he was arrested in Belgium and put to death. Clearly Tyndale valued the Bible; he gave his life to making it available in English, even at the risk of being captured and put to death. Let us learn from Tyndale the value of the Bible and the privilege of having it in our own tongue. And, since the Bible is such a precious book, let us make sure that *we* make good use of it.

We could also learn something from the lives of other great men of the Reformation, such as John Calvin of Geneva and John Knox of Scotland – godly men who preached the pure gospel, leaders whom God provided for His Church. But one great lesson is the tremendous value of the Reformation. How much we owe to God for delivering great parts of western Europe from the errors and the power of the Church of Rome! To many people, the Roman Catholic system appears perfectly harmless. It is not; its teachings are basically the same as they were at the time of the Reformation – indeed in some ways they are worse.

Let us never forget our history, in particular the history of the Reformation. If we wander back in the direction of Rome and its false doctrines, we are doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past. That would be a complete disaster.

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

Arrival at Last

On 16 April 1858, John Paton and his wife Mary set sail from Greenock. They were heading to the New Hebrides – islands in the South Pacific Ocean. The first part of their journey was to Melbourne in Australia. After a short stay in Melbourne they set sail for the New Hebrides in another ship.

Their first voyage was quite pleasant, if a little long and boring. But they had worship every day on the ship and the Captain of the ship used to lead the singing. Paton was also able to hold Bible classes with the crew and passengers. But for their second sailing, on the *F P Sage*, there was no worship for the crew. They were kept in order by a rough second mate who swore at them and beat them. The Patons were glad that this voyage only lasted 12 days.

The captain of the *F P Sage* was not very helpful. When they got near Aneityum, the island the Patons were going to, he would not let a boat from his ship take them and their stuff to the shore. They had to wait until the missionaries already on the island came out with a boat. When the Patons and their 50 boxes had been loaded onto this boat, there was very little space left. Paton and his wife had to perch among the boxes, holding on as best they could.

When the missionaries were pulling away, their boat got tangled up with the *F P Sage*. The main mast of the smaller boat snapped and crashed onto the deck. Paton managed to save his wife from being crushed to death by the falling mast; he pulled her away somehow. What a fright they must have got!

But now they were in trouble. They were ten miles from shore and had no sails to move them forward. Do you think the captain of the *F P Sage* helped them? No, he did not. Instead of helping them, he just sailed off leaving them struggling to get to land.

Their boat drifted towards another island called Tanna. There were very fierce cannibals on this island. If the boat had landed there, all their goods might have been taken and they might have been captured and eaten! Thankfully God made the wind blow them away from Tanna, and soon one of the other missionaries came out from Aneityum to help them.

At last, about six o'clock that evening, after a long hard struggle in the blazing sun, they arrived on the island of Aneityum. Four months and 14 days had passed since they left Greenock. They were warmly welcomed by the wives of the missionaries who had helped them ashore.

All the missionaries agreed together that the Patons with another missionary

couple, Mr and Mrs Mathieson, should go and work on the island of Tanna. The Mathiesons would live on the south side of the island and the Patons would settle a bit further north. Both places were near the coast.

These missionaries knew the islanders were fierce cannibals. What would they have been thinking as they made plans to settle on this new island? They would have been asking God to help them and guide them.

The missionaries managed to buy land from the islanders of Tanna and started to build a house and a church in both places. Men from the island of Aneityum helped them with the work. For the first while, Paton's wife Mary stayed on Aneityum to learn from the other missionaries' wives how she could live in these difficult conditions and how best to help her husband.

When Paton and the other missionaries had bought the land from the tribal chiefs they asked for protection for themselves and their families. No protection was promised; the chiefs could not, or would not, stop other tribes from harming them. But the chiefs said that they and their people would not harm them.

The experienced missionaries knew that this promise did not really mean anything. As long as they did not harm them with their own hands, the locals did not see anything wrong in hiring other people from another part of the island to attack the missionaries.

At the two places where they were trying to build mission stations, the local people were very restless. War was likely between two different tribes, and John's mission house was near the battle ground.

At last the battle began. Men with black, red and white painted faces rushed around in a state of excited terror, waving guns, knives and axes. Some of the women and children ran to hide but others did not seem concerned; they stayed at the shore chatting and laughing as if their dads, husbands and brothers were just playing a game.

Paton and the missionary who was helping him went to a house near them, where they could rest and pray. They heard later that six men had been killed and had been taken away to be cooked and eaten by those who won the battle. All this was happening less than a mile away from where John's house was being built!

The next night, as they were talking together, a wild wailing cry broke the quiet around them. Loud, sad cries went on and on; they were coming from the villages round about. The next day John found out that one of the men wounded in the battle had died and the people of the village had killed his wife. They did this because they believed her spirit would now go with her husband to the "other world".

Paton's heart sank as he realised how much these people had to learn. He

longed to speak to them about Jesus and the love of God. He set about trying to learn their language as quickly as he could.

You and I have much greater privileges than these cannibals in Tanna. You probably find it hard to believe that they would actually kill, cook and eat other people. What terrible things people can do, especially when they do not know the teachings of the Bible!

But it is not enough just to know in your head what is right; you need to know it in your heart. You can know lots of things about the Bible and be quite well-behaved but that will not get you to heaven when you die. You must have Christ as your Saviour: the Bible says, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15).

S M Campbell

The Book of Ruth¹

96. All Scripture Leads to Christ

Rev K M Watkins

Ruth 4:18-22. "Now these are the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron, and Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab, and Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon, and Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed, and Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David."

After the many interesting things we have seen in the Book of Ruth, it is perhaps surprising to find that it ends with just a list of names. But this is a special list – a *genealogy*. Beginning with Pharez the son of Judah, it proceeds through the long years of the judges, takes in Boaz and Obed, and eventually reaches David, the great king of Israel. This tells us that the lives of Ruth, her husband Boaz and son Obed, were all part of God's great plan to put godly David on the throne of Israel. After the confusion and ungodliness of the period of the judges, when every man did what was right in his own eyes, David arrived, and many in Israel sought to do what was right in God's eyes. The family trials and joys of Naomi and Ruth recorded in this Book were leading to the better days of David's reign of peace and prosperity. Ruth was special to the whole of Israel because she was in the line that led to David. She was at the heart of God's gracious plan for Israel.

But we must not leave this genealogy there. It reaches much farther than King David of Israel. It is repeated almost word for word in the two Gospels of Matthew and Luke, where it is part of a much longer one. The New Testament genealogy does not end with David, but with Jesus Christ.

¹This is the last article in the series.

Boaz and Obed – along with Pharez, Hezron, Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, Salmon, Jesse and David – were all ancestors of Jesus. And so was Ruth the Moabitess! Ruth should be special to everyone because of her connection to the Lord Jesus, the Saviour of the world. This is what makes the *Book* of Ruth so special also. Like all Scripture, it leads us to Christ.

So the great purpose of the Book of Ruth is not simply to show us the interesting lives of a family in Israel – however much their example may teach us. It is not just to show us how God controlled the chaotic days of the judges to lead on to the godly reign of King David – however reassuring that might be. Instead, the great purpose of the Book is to lead us to Christ, the great Son of David, and the only Saviour of sinners. When Jesus said, “Search the scriptures; for . . . they are they which testify of Me” (John 5:39), He was including the Book of Ruth. Every book of Scripture should lead us to Christ.

We have come a long way in our study of this precious book. Many things have been brought to our attention. This one book has verified the teaching of 2 Timothy 3:16, that “all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”. Some passages have taught us the great doctrines of the faith. Some have rebuked and corrected us for our sins. Others have directed us to the right way in which we should go. Every verse has been profitable in its own way. But most importantly, the Book of Ruth points us to Christ. Has it led you to Him and to His salvation?

When we study the Word of God, we must never be satisfied until it leads us to Jesus. We must keep searching each book, we must keep studying each passage, we must keep praying over each text, until we meet with the David of the gospel. Remember this! Let the texts of the Bible lead you – one way or another – to the Lord Jesus.

Some passages of the Bible speak directly of the Lord Jesus. Meditate on them. Do they reveal His Person, or His work, or His character? Do they speak of His offices, as Prophet, Priest or King? Or is it His relationship to His people that they describe, as their Bridegroom, Shepherd, Brother or Friend? Search for answers to these questions until you find the New Testament David revealing Himself to your soul.

Other passages speak of the Saviour less directly, but surely they all lead to Jesus. Some speak of Him in a symbolic way. Some people like Boaz and David were *types* of Him – meaning that in their lives they were, in some ways, similar to Jesus. For example, as Boaz redeemed Ruth out of trouble, so Jesus redeems His people from their sins. Look for these types! They are too precious to miss. Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Solomon, Jonah – all were

types of Jesus in different ways. Look for the similarities until you see the Person, work and character of Christ in fresh ways.

The sacrifices and feasts of the Old Testament are full of Christ. Think of the scapegoat, carrying upon itself the sins of the people into a land where no one lived, never to be seen again. Imagine being there on that great day of atonement, seeing the goat disappear out of sight bearing the people's iniquity. Think upon that until you behold by faith the gospel Lamb of God who takes away sin by the sacrifice of Himself at Calvary. Or think of the burnt offering. See the flames consuming the sacrifice until you get a view of Christ crucified, suffering the fiery wrath of God against sin on behalf of His people.

It is not only the history of Ruth, but all the historical events of the Bible that lead to the Messiah. Think how each event fits into God's wonderful scheme to bring the Seed of the woman into the world, to crush Satan and redeem man (see Genesis 3:15). Or think how history is leading to the Saviour's coming again at the end of time in great power and glory. Christ is the centre of history. History is like a wheel. All its spokes point to Jesus as the hub of all.

Some Bible passages can be understood properly only as one enjoys the presence of Christ. Spiritual things must be spiritually discerned. Such parts of God's Word give spiritual delight only when Jesus Himself draws near and makes your heart burn within you. Such a book as the Song of Solomon is like that. Words like "I am the Rose of Sharon" will become precious to you only when they lead you to Christ Himself. Then it will be as if you hear the Saviour Himself speaking. His sheep hear His voice.

Other texts show you your sins. Yes, be humbled. Yes, be ashamed. Yes, be grieved. Yes, feel all these things, and feel them more deeply than ever before. But do not stop there. The text wounds in order to send you for healing to the Saviour, who was wounded for the transgressions of sinners, and who can bind up every hurt your soul endures. Never rest satisfied with mere convictions. They are worth nothing until they lead you to faith in the gospel David and forgiveness through His blood.

Some texts direct you to duty. But perhaps you feel your inability. You despair of keeping any of God's laws faithfully. You are being stripped of all your own righteousness. Let it be. Do not resist the process. Realise that your own filthy rags are being removed only to replace them with the perfect robe of the Saviour's righteousness. Let the shame of your nakedness lead you to Him who obeyed every commandment you cannot obey. Go to Christ to clothe your soul with the garments of salvation.

So then, ask every Bible text: "Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?" Be

among those people who do not like leaving their Bible before it has led them to Jesus. Did the Book of Ruth lead you to Christ? That is its true value. Did it do that? Praise the Lord if it did. If not, then lay hold on God's promise: "Seek, and ye shall find". It is not too late. Return to this Book again and again, and to the rest of Scripture, always saying: "We would see Jesus".

The Sabbath Day

3. The Sabbath and the New Testament

Rev Donald Macdonald

The first part of this Youth Conference paper dealt with the Sabbath and Creation, and the second with the Sabbath and the Law of Moses.

The Larger Catechism sets out what the Fourth Commandment demands: it "requireth of all men the sanctifying or keeping holy to God such set times as He hath appointed in His Word, expressly one whole day in seven; which was the seventh from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week ever since, and so to continue to the end of the world; which is the Christian Sabbath, and in the New Testament called the Lord's day". "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24).

The Lord's day emerges from the Old Testament period brighter than ever. It has continued as God's testimony, among men and women, to His claim upon human life and conduct. (See Isaiah 56:3-5.)

The Jews were prone to idolatry and to bringing into God's worship what was forbidden. In these periods of decline, the Sabbath fell away; there are plenty references to such times in the Old Testament. It should be noted that declension from true religion begins with a falling off in Sabbath keeping.

When the Saviour appeared among men, observance of the Sabbath was obscured by man-made regulations which had nothing to do with the proper keeping of the Sabbath. (We should note that, when the Saviour came into the world, it was the Jewish Sabbath – the seventh day – that was observed.) Men at that time lost the true meaning of the Sabbath through the burdensome teachings of the Pharisees.

There are several places in the Gospels where we see the Lord working on the Sabbath to demonstrate that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. When He performed miracles of healing on the bodies and souls of men, Christ was showing His compassion on that day. Some people think, because of this compassion, that our Lord was abolishing or weakening the Fourth Commandment. But that was not in any sense true. In

fulfilling all righteousness, He was showing us how the Sabbath should be observed to the glory of God, and that it was given for the good of man. Someone has written: "Our Lord's words and actions on this day explain the true meaning of the Sabbath; they do not set the commandment aside. Works of compassion and mercy are works of which God always approves."

Next I will mention two incidents from the Gospels, from Matthew 12. The first of these took place when the disciples were led by their Master through the cornfields on the Jewish Sabbath. Being hungry, they took some of the grain in their hands and ate it. This was justified from the law of Moses: "When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hands" (Deuteronomy 23:25). But the Pharisees maintained that, while this could be done lawfully on a weekday, it was not allowed on the Sabbath, as it amounted to reaping, threshing and grinding.

The Jews found fault with the disciples and the Saviour defended them. A writer on the Sabbath rest justifies their action for the following reasons:

(1) On the ground of necessity – they were hungry and needed food, and had a right to take the food which the law and custom of the land permitted. Christ mentions David: when he and his men were hungry, they entered the temple and ate the shewbread, which belonged to the priests, who "profaned" the Sabbath by the necessary work of the sanctuary and were "blameless".

(2) Christ justified it on the ground of mercy. In effect, He emphasised to the Pharisees, Your ways are not like Mine. He did not want His creatures to suffer even when the law seemed to demand it. God had said, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice".

(3) Christ justified it by the Sabbath law itself – His disciples are His servants and they have a right to food on Sabbaths as well as on other days.

(4) He justified His disciples by His own authority – He is Lord of the Sabbath. He has the authority to interpret it – to say what is the proper way to observe it and what is not? The One who gave the Sabbath Law can best interpret it.

(5) He further justified His disciples by showing that they had *not* broken God's law. The Pharisees had; they broke the law of charity. He refers to Hosea 6:6: "Ye would not have condemned the guiltless". This would have caused their ears to tingle, for it demonstrated that, like their fathers of old, they did not understand even the first principles of the Word of God.

But we must not get caught up in any wrong ideas. We must carefully note what the Saviour did *not* say in this incident. (1) He did not say in defence of his disciples that the Sabbath had been abolished. (2) Nor did He say that the Sabbath was about to be abolished. Some people imply this and so fall into a gross error. We have to be careful that we do not attempt

to read into Christ's words what will undermine the law of the Sabbath.

As a matter of fact, these statements of Christ imply the exact opposite. (1) He spoke of the Sabbath as still in existence; He merely interpreted the laws of Sabbath. (2) He implied that the Sabbath was to continue, or else why did He go the trouble of putting it on a proper basis? (3) He implied that the true Sabbath law, as interpreted by Himself, was still binding. (4) So, in reality, the disciples had not broken the Sabbath law at all; there was no lowering of standards; they had obeyed its demands.

The other incident mentioned in the same chapter involved the man with the withered hand; we see His enemies pursuing His steps on the Sabbath issue. So that they might accuse Jesus, they asked: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days?" It might be suggested that they were watching to see if He would restrain His compassion for this man because it was the Sabbath. So miserable and narrow are the religious ideas of man.

In reply to the question Christ gave a threefold answer: (1) He pointed them to a similar situation: "What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?" (2) He lays down a great principle: "Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days". (3) He healed the man.

We will next notice the relation of the Sabbath to the death and resurrection of the Saviour. The crucifixion took place on the Friday, and the [Jewish] Sabbath drew on (Luke 23:54) – their Sabbath being the seventh day of the week. And the first was the day He rose. Jesus had stated that He was Lord also of the Sabbath Day (Mark 2:28). After His resurrection He marked the first day of the week, and not the seventh, by His resurrection. On the day that He arose, He appeared to His disciples on five different occasions. Then He withdrew during the next six days and appeared again on the first day of the following week. Also when the feast of Pentecost came round it fell that year on the first day of the week, which was when the Holy Spirit was poured out. It became the custom of the churches in the time of the Apostles and their successors to assemble on the first day of the week, which is the Christian Sabbath.

Someone has written of the resurrection: "Our Saturday, their Sabbath, was over. Their first day of the week had come, which was to be the Christian's most blessed day, reminding him not only of the old creation but of the new . . . not only of the rising of the world into being, but of the rising again of the World's Maker and Redeemer from the grave on the world's behalf."

Christ's resurrection points forward to the fact that the Lord is coming again. And when He comes, it will be to usher in an eternal Sabbath.

Missionary to India

11. Touring Britain

Alexander Duff had spent the years from 1830 to 1834 in India. There he taught the truths of the Bible, with real success, in his school in Calcutta. But ill-health forced him to return to Scotland. He spent much of his time going round the country to hold meetings to promote interest in the work in India.

Duff still hoped to return to India. But his health had not yet recovered; he was still troubled from time to time by bouts of malaria. So his doctors told him that he was not yet fit to take up his missionary work again. As yet Duff had only visited one third of Scotland on his speaking tours. He thought of getting round the remaining districts in the first half of 1836, but the doctors demanded a slower pace.

He began this part of his work with a visit to Perth and, no doubt, the local children valued the special school holiday that allowed them to go and hear the now-famous missionary in the town's East Church. A woman from Edinburgh visiting Perth told how she had been present when Duff conducted a communion service; she thought the minister looked so ill that he might have died as he broke the bread at the Lord's table. Such tales no doubt made people all the more anxious to hear this marvellous speaker.

Duff also preached on a Sabbath in another Perth church, St John's. It was so crowded that people were glad to find seats even behind the huge pillars, from where no one could see the pulpit. His text was: "Be not conformed to this world". He spoke forcefully about worldliness in the Church of God; he described too how men and women brought worldliness into church services – "they could be seen stepping down the aisle with a look so proud as might make an angel blush".

A few days later he spoke to the congregation about India. He described to them the dense forests and the high mountains with their snow-covered peaks. He told them too about the mighty River Ganges which he knew so well from his stay in Calcutta. And he spoke of the fearful idolatry of India's religions. But as he appealed for help to spread the true religion in that far-off country, he referred pointedly to the British businessmen who returned home rich from India without doing anything to help shine the light of the gospel into the darkness of India. When the address was over, Duff sat down exhausted; he even had to take a rest halfway down the pulpit stairs.

Some time later Duff visited Dunbar, where the local Presbytery had arranged for him to speak in the parish church. He was told that the local minister, a man called Jaffray, was bitterly opposed to foreign missions. Duff was not put off; he felt it was his duty to visit the man in whose church he

was to speak the next day, and he went along to the manse. A servant met him at the door and, after some hesitation, let him in. As she made her way to the study to tell about the visitor, Duff kept close behind her so that he would not be turned away before he had a chance to meet the minister. Jaffray stood up with an angry look. "Are you the fanatic Duff," he shouted, so loudly that people outside could hear, "who has been going about the country deceiving people by what they choose to call missions to the heathen? I don't want to see you, or any of your description. I want no Indian snake brought in among my people to poison their minds on such subjects. So, as I don't want to see you, the sooner you make off the better."

Duff was not in the least disturbed. He waited for a few moments before he explained that he had just called out of politeness, as Jaffray was minister of the parish. Of course, he added, Jaffray would know about the meeting the Presbytery had arranged for the next day. And Duff offered to explain why he had come to the town. But he did so very briefly as he could see by the expression on Jaffray's face that his anger had not really subsided.

Duff then said he would leave. "By all means," replied the minister of Dunbar, still in a very unfriendly tone, "the sooner the better. I never want to see your face again on earth. The Presbytery had a perfect right to fix on my church; but as for me, I had nothing to do with it. I shall not go near that meeting; I hate the subject, and might almost say the same thing of him who has been the means of calling such a meeting to disturb the feelings of my people and introduce what may be new strifes and divisions among us."

The missionary then expressed the hope that his meeting would not cause division; it was being held, he said, because the Saviour had said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" – and the Church of Scotland was, by its Indian mission, only trying to obey this command.

Afterwards Duff said little about his visit to the manse, but next day lots of people sympathised with him about the way the local minister had spoken to him – those who had heard Jaffray from outside had not kept quiet. They had not expected him to give a warm welcome to the missionary, but they were surprised that he was so rude. Jaffray may have been an extreme example of Church of Scotland ministers in the 1830s who had no interest in spreading the gospel and probably did not even care whether the people of their own congregations were ready to meet their Maker, but he was not alone. It was the existence of such ministers that made it so necessary for Duff, unwell though he still was, to spend his energy travelling round Scotland to encourage an interest in missions.

Duff's activities were not confined to Scotland. In May 1836 he was addressing a missionary meeting in London. There he met William Carus of

Cambridge, who made him promise to visit the University for a few days. This he did and spoke to the students.

Prominent among Cambridge ministers at that time was Charles Simeon, himself a great promoter of missions. But there was another connection between Duff and Simeon. Many years before, in 1796, Simeon had been on holiday in Scotland and had reached Pitlochry the day before the communion season began in nearby Moulin church. The young minister of the parish was Alexander Stewart, a kindly man and popular with the people. But he was unconverted. Yet he had begun to realise that there was something real in Christianity which he did not possess.

One Sabbath, just before he announced the text for his sermon, he looked sadly round the congregation and told them something like this: "I am bound in truth and faithfulness to tell you that I feel myself to be in great ignorance and much blindness on the subject of true religion. I feel like someone groping in the dark for light and as yet I have found none. But I think it right to tell you that, if God in mercy will give me any measure of the true light, I will joyfully pass this on to you. Therefore, all of you, pray to God earnestly that He may be pleased to give me the true light, or as much of it as He may think fit for me." One result of this announcement was that some of the most careless and ungodly people in the parish came regularly to church to see if the minister had found the "true light".

Simeon attended the English service in Moulin on the Thursday of the communion. Stewart invited him to the manse and, as they talked, the visitor noticed that something was going on in Stewart's soul. The visiting minister was invited to join them in the manse for the weekend and to preach on the Sabbath evening. That sermon was to be the means, in God's good hand, of true light entering Stewart's heart. It would seem that Simeon had the local minister in mind as he preached. Stewart later spoke of how a dense cloud had been hanging over his soul, which prevented him seeing God in Christ reconciling a guilty world to Himself. As Simeon preached, it was as if the cloud had parted and a stream of light had come down direct from heaven into his soul, displacing the darkness and filling his soul with light, so that he could rejoice with exceeding great joy.

The next Sabbath Stewart announced from his pulpit that the true light had indeed come; he would therefore, Sabbath by Sabbath, pass on as much of it as he could to the people who would gather. He began a series of sermons on the third chapter of John's Gospel which was greatly blessed to the conversion of sinners, not only from his own parish but from everywhere around. It was the beginning of a great revival, when many sinners were converted. Among those who received a blessing were Duff's parents.

For Younger Readers

Washing away Sin

The boy was just five. His mother was sick and he was sitting with her. To pass the time he was trying to write his name with a pencil on a piece of paper.

He stopped writing, because he made a mistake. He wanted to rub it out, just as he usually did when he wrote on a slate. He wet his finger and rubbed it on the letter he wanted to get rid of.

If he was rubbing his wet finger on his slate, he would have rubbed the letter away. But this was not a slate; it was a piece of paper. So he could not get rid of the wrong letter. Instead he was making a dirty mark on the paper.

His mother was watching. She wanted to teach him a lesson about himself. So she asked her boy: "Do you know that God writes all you do in a book?" She spoke to her son about the naughty words he said and the naughty things he did. But, more than anything else, she was thinking about his bad temper. He had a very bad temper.

The boy's face became very red, and then tears began to run down his cheeks. His mother said nothing more. You can see that his mother had been teaching him from the Bible, and very likely his father was doing so too.

After some time he came over where his mother was sitting. He came to ask her about the sin of being angry. He put his arms round her neck and whispered: "Can the blood of Jesus rub it out?"

Yes, it could, she told him. It could rub out all the bad things he had done. And it can rub out all the bad things you have done. It is the only thing that can rub out our sins. The Bible tells us that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses from all sin.

But what does it mean to speak about Jesus' blood? Well, when do you read that His blood flowed out? It was when He died on the cross at Calvary. Then the soldiers came along with a spear and pierced His side. And blood and water flowed out.

You see, the blood flowed out after Jesus died. So, when the Bible speaks about Jesus' blood washing away sin, or cleansing

from sin, it is telling us about His death. Jesus died instead of sinners; He took their punishment instead.

Should you not ask Jesus to wash away your sins?

Wise Words

This is one of a series of letters written by a godly minister in Glasgow to a young woman who had some serious thoughts about her soul. It is dated 17 April 1846 and has been slightly edited.

It is not how often appeals are made, but their power, that tells upon the conscience. It is well that you sometimes have misgivings about the nature of the pleasures, the only pleasures, which you can enjoy in your present state. And I entreat you to take care not to interfere with such convictions; for they are very delicate; if roughly handled, they may be destroyed. And why should you not tear your heart away from the things that are seen and temporal to fix it upon those things that are not seen and eternal?

Do you suppose that, by giving your heart to Him whose it is, you will be less able to study anything which it is lawful to study, or that you will enjoy anything less if it is fit to be enjoyed? This would be a great mistake. The pleasures you now have would all be mightily improved, and you would find that there would be added on to them something better than all of them put together. But if you continue in your present course of rebellion, if you despise the Saviour who is offered to you in the gospel, if you cast behind your back the word of salvation, then before long you will be shut out from all possibility of returning to God. And you will be torn for ever from the things you now love so dearly.

The knowledge you have acquired will descend into the pit with you, but it will be to torment you for ever. You will then be glad to get rid of the very thought of your books and pictures and such-like things, but it will be impossible. There will cleave to you the cutting and condemning conviction that for *these things* you sold your soul, despised the Saviour, and dishonoured the blessed God. I entreat you to pause before you again dismiss this subject from your mind without deciding in favour of Him who is the way, the truth and the life. Only make trial of Christ, and I am sure that if you once taste and see that He is gracious, you will only wonder that you could have lived so long without Him.

I pray the Lord to open your eyes, and turn you from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

Jonathan Ranken Anderson

Looking Around Us

When the Brain Stops

A recent edition of *Time* magazine has a series of interesting articles about the brain. They highlight such facts as these: there are 1 trillion cells in the brain, and there are 125 million points in the eye which receive light, to send information on to the brain.

But what happens when the brain's activity stops? According to *Time*, "as far as anyone can tell, the person's consciousness goes out of existence". In other words, that is the end of it for ever; the soul no longer exists.

The pity is that *Time's* writers do not believe in a creator. But there is a Creator who made everything, including the human brain, with all its wonderful complexity. He also made the soul. And those who believe that God has spoken in the Bible know what happens when the brain's activity stops. He has revealed what happens: "Then . . . the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). This is something no one can find out by conducting experiments or by watching people die.

Yet that is no reason why anyone should be ignorant of what happens at death. God has told us all we need to know. And, most importantly, He has told us how we sinners may be safe when we die – by believing in Jesus Christ before it is too late. Death is not the end. But let us make sure that it does not find us unprepared. Jesus said, "Be ye also ready".

How not to Worship

David was thinking of going to God's house to worship. In what spirit did he want to go? "In Thy fear will I worship", he said. He had a holy reverence for God; so he could not be flippant; he could not be silly. He wanted to glorify God in all that he said and did, and even in his thoughts.

Not so the ministers and congregation at Trinity Episcopal church on Wall Street, New York, at a service on a recent Sabbath. The congregation were encouraged to come dressed up as clowns. The ministers too wore clown outfits with huge shoes, red noses and painted faces. Obviously this is not how David would have dressed for a service. He would have seen clearly that such nonsense is quite out of keeping with the reverence due to God in a service which was supposedly arranged to worship Him.

But what was said at the service? In fact, no words were spoken. Everything was done in mime. So no one could be sure of anything the minister was trying to put across. How, one wonders, could the people in the congregation learn something for the good of their souls? They could not. A woman even tried to mime reading the Scriptures; at any rate, she turned the

pages of a Bible and discovered something which she found quite hilarious. One fears that no one there had any understanding of their need to get good for their souls through the Word of God.

How would David have reacted? He would have been clear about at least one thing: this was not worship. He would surely have walked out. It would have been obvious to him that such a service mocks God, and God will not be mocked. He would not have wanted to show any degree of approval of such a performance, even by being present.

We should go to a service to worship God – to glorify Him through praise, prayer, Bible-reading and preaching. In every part of the service we should have God-glorifying thoughts. And particularly through the reading and the preaching – by *hearing* the words spoken – we should learn something about ourselves as sinners, and about God and His grace. Beyond that, we must receive these truths from the Bible into our hearts; we must believe on Jesus Christ, who is there revealed as the Saviour of sinners. Only when we so believe will we begin truly to worship God.

The Sinner

Amazed I see my sinful state,
Fallen, impure and strayed and lost;
A stranger to the life of God
Not quickened by the Holy Ghost.

The angelic nature me has left,
And all my bones are full of sin;
My soul is covered o'er with shame,
My heart a cage of birds unclean.

The life of God through Adam lost,
In me must surely be renewed.
Before my soul can enter heaven,
It must be washed in Jesus' blood.

For this I sigh and groan and pray;
O let the Saviour make me whole;
Create again my ruined powers
And clothe in righteousness my soul.

John Cennick