

# The Young People's Magazine

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## Learning from History (3)

For the last two months, under this heading, we have begun with a quotation: "Those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it." We saw that those who do not know their history are likely to make mistakes they might otherwise avoid. In March we looked at some examples from the Bible, and in April we took some examples from the time of the Reformation, in the sixteenth century. Let us now take one more instance of the need to remember our history by looking at how the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland emerged as a separate body in the late nineteenth century.

First we must go back beyond 1843, when the Free Church of Scotland was formed because of how the courts were interfering in the running of the Church of Scotland. In particular, ministers were placed over congregations who did not want them. One of the most famous cases was in Auchterarder, in Perthshire, in 1837. The new minister proposed for the parish was Robert Young. Only two men in the congregation were prepared to sign his call, the formal document asking the local presbytery to set him over the parish. But as many as 287, out of the 300 who had the right to do so, objected to him being appointed. Yet, in spite of how unpopular he was in Auchterarder, most of the judges who ruled on the case in Edinburgh decided that Young did have the right to become minister of the parish.

This was just one in a whole series of incidents when the courts interfered with the spiritual affairs of the Church. And when it became clear that the Government was unwilling to change the law, most of the best ministers and large numbers of people left in 1843 to become the Free Church. Why should we remember 1843? Because we must always keep sight of the principle that no government or court has any right to interfere with the spiritual affairs of the Church of Christ.

All seemed well in the Free Church for quite some time. But gradually concerns arose in the minds of those who most clearly understood what was going on. Perhaps most serious was a new attitude to the Bible. Faithful ministers had always looked on the Bible as a perfect revelation from God. Yes, men from Moses to John had been used to write it, but they did so as

they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. Now, step by step, unbelieving attitudes took over in a large part of the Free Church.

It was an age of change everywhere. Particularly from 1859, when Charles Darwin published his famous book promoting evolution, the idea seemed to take hold that everything, mankind included, had evolved from the simple to the complex. This idea was applied even to the Bible. Of course, many in the Free Church opposed this, but as the years passed, more and more ministers – and most seriously, professors teaching students for the ministry – came on the scene who supported the new teachings. Men like William Robertson Smith, a young professor in Aberdeen, taught that, for instance, the first five books of the Bible were not written by Moses. These books, such men claimed, were put together, using various earlier writings, long after the time of Moses.

It was obviously very difficult for these men to claim that the Westminster Confession of Faith stated what *they* believed – although, to become ministers, they had to vow that they did believe its teachings. But obviously they did not so believe. The question was: How to sit more easily in their manses as they drifted further and further away from the teaching of the Bible? The answer was for the Free Church to pass what was called a Declaratory Act, which allowed men to become ministers provided they could say that they held to what was described as “the substance” of the true faith.

After some years of discussion, this Act was passed by a huge majority in 1892. Now only a small number of ministers were disturbed, but they were right. As the years went by, departures from the faith became more and more serious. Ministers continued in their pulpits although they believed almost nothing in the Bible, and it was impossible to do anything about them.

An attempt was made in the General Assembly of 1893 to get rid of the Declaratory Act. Not surprisingly, it failed. One minister, Rev Donald Macfarlane of Raasay, then got up and presented a protest. By doing so he was separating from the Free Church and becoming truly free from the unscriptural restrictions imposed by the Declaratory Act on holding to proper church discipline. He was soon joined by Rev Donald Macdonald of Shieldaig, who had not been a member of that Assembly. Backed by many elders and thousands of other people, they formed the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Its witness to the truth is still needed today.

Free Presbyterians forget their history at their peril. We must stay faithful to the Bible and to *all* that it teaches. When people lose confidence in the Scriptures, history shows that they will soon drift further and further away from the true faith. Let us not repeat the mistakes of the past. Rather let us value the heritage from the past which God has given us for our spiritual good.

## Missionary to India

### 12. Return to Calcutta

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 touring the country to promote interest in the work in India.

Duff's efforts in Scotland were having an effect. He could write in June 1836 to his colleague David Ewart in India: "I cannot possibly describe to you that intenseness of interest which our mission now excites in our native land. The eyes of all Scotland are now upon you." Duff's mind at once went out to India; the great hope behind his efforts in Scotland was that there would be spiritual fruit in the mission he had founded. He expressed the desire that "God in His mercy would pour out His Spirit and seal home the truth to the hearts of . . . thousands of the perishing heathen".

It had been Duff's hope that he would have been on his way back to India by that summer. But his health made it impossible for him to leave Scotland. He felt completely exhausted. He had not recovered from his malaria, and he found all his travelling and speaking very tiring. Just one thing reconciled him to stay a little longer: the Church of Scotland had been stirred up to a much greater interest in mission work, which encouraged him to hope that, with the Lord's blessing, he could do yet more in that direction. "Thanks be to God", he exclaimed, "for all His undeserved mercies." And he went on: "I now understand the mystery of providence in sending me from India". At first, he explained, he could scarcely get a patient hearing from anyone anywhere. Now, it was completely different. He believed that, if he had a thousand tongues, he might use them in a thousand pulpits at once. One measure of his success was that, compared with 1834, the Church of Scotland collected 14 times as much money for its missions in 1839.

Later that year Duff set out again for India. He and his wife travelled through France and then sailed along the Mediterranean to the port of Alexandria in Egypt. He expected to travel overland to the Red Sea, and from there to sail to India. But when he reached Cairo, he found that 60 passengers wished to go on board a small ship which had only 12 berths, and there would be no other sailing for a month. Duff spent the month exploring part of Egypt, including Mount Sinai. From there he wrote to his 12-year-old daughter, whom he had left behind in Edinburgh. (It may seem very strange that the Duffs left their children in Scotland, but obviously they believed that it was better to do so than take them to India.) He told her that he had just finished reading chapters 19 and 20 of Exodus, which contain the Ten

Commandments, given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. Then he had knelt down on the bare stone to pray that God's law would lead him to Christ. He had prayed too for his children. And he added: "May the Lord lead and guide you, in grace and in truth, to know and to do His holy will!"

At last the ship arrived back in Egypt. The crew member responsible for taking bookings happened to meet Duff before any of the other passengers and told him to go at once to the office and pay for his passage. But Duff refused; it was a Sabbath, and he would not break the Fourth Commandment. He would obey it even if he must stay another month in Egypt – even if he must delay his return to the work God had given him in India. But the man respected Duff's concern for the Sabbath and kept a cabin for him and his wife; thus the Lord takes care of those who keep His commands. The Duffs reached India in February 1840, ready to take up again the work of teaching and preaching. His priorities are shown by a principle he had expressed in Scotland: "Without useful knowledge man might not live so comfortably in *time*; without divine knowledge *eternity* must be lost". Education was important, but much more important was to know God through Jesus Christ.

Back in Calcutta, Duff pushed on with various projects to make the Christian faith better known. For instance, he started a Bible class on Sabbaths for those who were working from Monday to Saturday every week but were showing an interest in Christianity. At the end of three years, most of them were convinced that the religion of the Bible is true. But were they converted? Duff stated: "So far as I could judge, the grace of God's Spirit operated effectually on only one soul, to whom it brought home with power the whole truth of gospel salvation through Jesus Christ".

During that time he baptized the oldest boy of his third convert, Gopeenath Nundi. As the father held his infant son in his arms, his wife – herself also now a Christian – held by the hand their firstborn child, a little girl three years old. It must have made the missionary hopeful for the future.

But sadness entered the Duffs' hearts when they heard of the death of one of their children thousands of miles away in Edinburgh. Though he was saddened by the loss of his little Anne, Duff could say that his tears were not those "of murmuring or complaint against the will and act of my heavenly Father". He went on: "Every thought of my departed darling child is associated with the thought of heaven, the home of the weary pilgrim of Zion, and with the remembrance of Him who has gone before to prepare mansions of glory for all His faithful followers [see John 14:2]. I have felt more in the communion of the Divine Redeemer and in fellowship with the redeemed in glory than what I have experienced for some time past. Still may I say, It was good for me to have been thus afflicted."

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# David – Son of Jesse

## 1. The Man After God's Own Heart

*Rev John MacLeod*

This article is the first section of a paper given at the Youth Conference in 2005. Mr MacLeod wishes to state that he has leaned heavily on Matthew Henry's *Commentary* in writing his paper.

The New Testament tells us that God bore this testimony to David: "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after Mine own heart, which shall fulfil all My will". This must surely describe a unique man, one cast in a very rare mould. But, as J A Alexander points out, the description does not mean that he was "personally free from fault, or even crime, but as merely blameless in his character and conduct as" a king.

The expression is found in 1 Samuel 13:13,14: "And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which He commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over His people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee." As the context shows, the meaning is that David would make the will of God the great rule of his reign. Saul was different, who as a king had disobeyed God and proved himself to be rebellious. The words then refer to the public character of David, rather than to the private; they refer to his character as a king. At the same time, in spite of the faults and infirmities which marred his character, it is clear from the divine record, and especially from the Book of Psalms, that David's life was, on the whole, pious, humble and devoted. In that sense he was also a man after God's own heart. It has been well said that "he was the man after God's own heart, not in his sins, but in his repentance and in his earnest effort after a higher and purer life".

Enemies of the gospel have emphasised his faults, especially his great sin against the Seventh Commandment and his shameless actions afterwards as he tried to cover it up. David's repentance, we know, was as famous as his sin was notorious. But those who point the finger at him and then sneer at the gospel are not disposed to take account of that repentance. It may be painful to think of his fall and to the fact that it gave occasion, even to this day, to the Lord's enemies to blaspheme when writing about David; yet these woeful events cannot be passed by. It is one of the remarkable features of the Bible that there is no glossing over the sins and faults of even the greatest of saints.

William M Taylor puts it in this way: "The sacred writers draw no veil over the errors and imperfections of those whom they describe. They tell of the falsehood of Abraham; the cunning selfishness of Jacob; the hastiness of Moses; the weakness of Aaron; the wavering of Peter; and the sharp contention between Paul and Barnabas, with the same unvarnished truthfulness as they describe the excellences for which these great men were remarkable. And the same historian who records that David was called the man after God's own heart, relates also this terrible story of wickedness; while at the same time there is no attempt at excuse.

"What is placed on record in regard to the sins of these saints of God is written for our learning and we cannot be at a loss to discover the moral of such a history as that of David's fall. It bids us to be continually on our guard lest we enter into temptation; for if even a David fell so fearfully, who among us can be secure? Who can afford to be complacent? Here was a man of pre-eminent ability, of great piety, and of extensive usefulness, and yet he was guilty of most revolting sin. Surely the practical inference is, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall'. Our vigilance must be continued for as long as life on earth shall last."

David's case brings to mind that there is no perfection this side of heaven and that, since the fall of Adam, the only perfect man to tread this earth was the God-man, who was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. Living as we do in the midst of an evil and adulterous generation, it is vital that we bear in mind what is plainly left on record in the Bible: that "the thing which David had done displeased the Lord"; or, as it is expressed in the margin, "was evil in the eyes of the Lord". Although his sin was pardoned, it is notable and instructive that throughout the remainder of his life he was to be constantly reminded of its seriousness. So if ever a sinner discovered that it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against the Lord, that sinner was surely David the son of Jesse. His iniquities returned upon his own head and, as predicted, the sword did not depart from his house.

Someone has said that in David "we have one of the most renowned names in sacred history, and one that has perhaps more interesting and endearing associations connected with it than any other in Old Testament times"; and by another that "there is scarcely a person in Scripture history on whom our thoughts and love centre so much as on David, whose strains of inspired song intertwine with all the devotional and joyful feelings of God's people in every age." Accordingly we shall now try to draw attention to these praiseworthy traits in David's character which set him apart as one in whom that godliness was shown "without which no man shall see the Lord". We find his name among the great cloud of witnesses who are spoken of in Hebrews

chapter 11 as compassing us about, if we also are found running with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith.

It is not possible, within the limits of this paper, to study David's life in any detailed way. We can only draw attention to him as he appears before us in some of these situations which brought him to prominence: (1.) As a humble shepherd. (2.) As a valiant soldier. (3.) As a faithful friend. (4.) As a dutiful son. (5.) As a righteous king. (6.) As a man of God.

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## The Sabbath Day

### 4. Why We Should Keep It

*Rev Donald Macdonald*

The earlier parts of this paper from the 2006 Youth Conference dealt with some of the Bible's teaching about the Sabbath. This is the final article in the series.

**W**e now look at the second branch of our subject, which deals more with the practical aspects of the Sabbath. Why should we keep the Sabbath? We give four answers:

(1) *Because it is the law of creation.* The weekly cycle of six days of work, and one day of rest, shows that man was made in the image of God. This is the pattern of the Creator. We emphasise again that God did not need this for Himself; it was all put in place for man, who is the high point of God's creation. "What is man that Thou are mindful of him?" (Psalm 8). All God did in these first six days was leading up to His creation of man.

(2) *Because God sanctified the seventh day.* We read in Genesis 2 about God sanctifying the Sabbath. The word *sanctify* means to separate. It is important to state that we are referring to the pattern of *every* seventh day as the day of rest to the Lord. John Murray, a twentieth-century writer, points out that this is connected with "the sanctity of six days of labour, therefore the sanctity of the institution of labour. But the main emphasis rests upon the sanctity of every seventh day. 'Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy.' It is not simply the sanctity of the seventh part of our time; that can be done in a variety of ways; it is the sanctity of every seventh *day*. And so the sanctity of the cycle and the sequence implied in the division of time into weeks is recognised and confirmed." This ordinance rests on God's example.

(3) *Because God commanded it.* The whole law of God is summed up in the Ten Commandments. Underlying each is a sanctity. The sanctity of the being of God underlies the First Commandment; the sanctity of His worship the Second; the sanctity of His name the Third. The sanctity of the parental

relation underlies the Fifth; the sanctity of life the Sixth; the sanctity of the source of life the Seventh; the sanctity of property the Eighth; the sanctity of truth the Ninth; sanctity of individual possession the Tenth. All these form a permanent law, given to man as a sinner for all time. (See 1 Timothy 1: 9-11). So the Sabbath day stands at the heart of the Ten Commandments and is in no sense relaxed or abolished.

(4) *Because it is a day of rest.* There remaineth a rest [or Sabbath-keeping] for the people of God (Hebrews 4:9). Although various interpretations are given of this text, it does suggest that the Sabbath is to continue. Although by the law is the knowledge of sin, and no one keeps it perfectly – but daily breaks it in thought word and in deed – yet it has a further use. To the Church and the Christian, the law is a means of grace; it is a pattern of life. The gospel does not abolish the law but magnifies it. Because Christ rose on the first day of the week, it is this first day in the weekly cycle that is to be set apart to God as the Christian Sabbath. Wherever God has a church and a people, small or large, to serve Him in this world – in whatever locality – there remains a Sabbath of rest in the world, a day sanctified to the Lord, a preparation for the eternal Sabbath to be enjoyed in heaven.

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## Separations

To part from someone we love is often sad. This is especially so when we separate for a long time and do not know when we will see each other again.

Some time ago, I went on a trip abroad with my family. In the airport, my family and I had to part, to go through immigration control. I got through quite quickly, but the others had to wait in a long winding queue. I felt sad as we went in separate directions and soon they disappeared out of my sight. It took over an hour before they were allowed through and, by the end of my wait, I was feeling quite concerned about the delay. As I sat waiting for them I started to think about the different separations we may experience in this life. When they finally appeared I was so glad to see them again and together we went to our flight. But how unspeakably sad it would have been if we had never seen each other again!

I thought of the separation that is made in a congregation at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. After the first part of the service has finished there is the fencing of the table, when the minister shows from the Bible who has a right to go to the Lord's table and who must not go. Then those who are the Lord's people get up and walk to the table to take the bread and wine, the

symbols of Christ's death. Every one in the congregation sees the separation between those that come to the Lord's table and those that stay behind in their pews. Parents long for their children to be able to come with them at this special occasion. What unspeakable joy there is when their grown-up children do accompany them!

Another type of separation happens when someone dies. Those who have experienced the death of a loved one know how sad this is. Death should make us think of the holy God's hatred to sin. We should think more often of the weight of those awesome words that God spoke to Adam: "In the day that thou eatest [of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil], thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17).

God made man in His own image but now, because of sin, His holiness requires Him to punish man, not only physically but also spiritually. This separation, of the unsaved sinner from God, is the final one and is certainly the most serious. It is most solemn because it involves the destiny of our souls and cannot be reversed; it is for eternity. In other separations we hope to meet again sometime in the future.

The separation at the Lord's table leaves us with the hope that God will one day receive those beloved ones into His family, for we know that He is a merciful God. But those who die without Christ will find that the doors of mercy are shut for ever at death. There will be no more kind invitations to come to the Saviour, no more patient reasoning with the offender. The long-suffering, pardoning, merciful and loving God will pronounce these most awful words: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

But how different it will be for those who have loved the Lord Jesus and lived a life of faith in Him! They will hear the most comforting invitation: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34).

Since you are reading this Magazine, you have probably heard the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It probably means you have heard the tender invitations He issues to sinners, such as: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). But how long do you intend to wait before you come to Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and for eternal life? This is the most urgent and most important matter in this life! The holy Son of God became man, lived a life of grief and poverty, and died a humiliating and painful death on the cross, so that the holy God may pardon sinners. This is indeed a wonder!

If you have heard or read this precious truth and are still unsaved, are you

not acting like the Roman governor Felix? He heard about the life to come and of the day of judgement, and then said to the Apostle Paul, "When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25). We never read that he did find a convenient season. The Word of God does not invite sinners to come to Jesus whenever it suits them; it tells them that "*now* is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Consider seriously this weighty matter and run to Christ for the salvation of your soul. Only there will you find a safe refuge from God's judgement against sinners and, like Mary, find the "one thing [that] is needful . . . which shall not be taken away" (Luke 10:42). *C Johnson*

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

## **8. First Months on Tanna**

**A**t last the houses on the island of Tanna were ready for the missionaries and their wives. On 5 November 1858, Paton and his young wife Mary Ann arrived on Tanna ready to make their home in Port Resolution. They were both fit and healthy and looking forward to serving the Lord through spreading the gospel among the heathen people.

They had much to do. There was still plenty of work to be done to the house and they had to spend a lot of time trying to learn the language. This was very difficult because they knew absolutely nothing about it and none of it was written down.

The local people would come and watch them and touch all their things. One day Paton noticed a man lifting up one of their belongings and saying to his friend in a questioning way: "Nunski nari enu?" Paton realised the man was asking his friend, "What is this?" Paton at once picked up a piece of wood and asked the men the same question. They smiled and looked at each other as if to say, "He can speak our language now!" and then they said the word for the piece of wood Paton was holding. From then on, Paton could ask the name of anything he wanted. When he was told the name of something, he would write it down – just as it sounded.

Three months after landing on Tanna, Paton and his wife welcomed a baby son into the world. They called him Peter, after Mary Ann's father. But then something very sad happened. Mary Ann became ill with a fever, probably malaria, and, just three weeks after the birth of her son, she died. It was less than a year since she had married Paton and taken the brave step of leaving her family and friends to go with Paton to this far-away land.

Paton was heartbroken. Mary Ann was a wonderful Christian lady, and

they had both enjoyed their short time of living together as husband and wife. Things became even more difficult for Paton when his little son died a week later. Now Paton was left in a strange land, with a difficult work; and those who were nearest and dearest to him in this world had died.

Paton himself became seriously ill with the malaria that had taken his wife and son away. He thought he would go mad through sorrow and sickness. He dug the grave for his loved ones himself, near the end of the house. But God in mercy spared Paton and he gradually recovered his strength.

Others tried to persuade Paton to leave Tanna and to go to Aneityum to get some rest and have the company of other missionaries. But Paton refused. He felt he was in the place where God meant him to be. He was determined to stay there, even although he was still weak from the fever.

Mary Ann was only 19 years old when she died, yet she had done much in her short life. She was full of missionary zeal and was not afraid of hard work. She was well educated and used her talents to serve the Lord. In the three months she had been on Tanna she had managed to gather a class of local ladies who came to her regularly so that she could teach them.

When Mary Ann was very sick, she said aloud to herself, "O that my dear mother were here!" She then realised that another missionary was near her and she said to him: "O Mr Copeland, I did not know you were there! You must not think that I regret coming here and leaving my mother. If I had the same to do over again, I would do it with far more pleasure, yes, with all my heart."

Paton found it difficult to come to terms with the loss of his loved ones; especially his wife whom he had loved dearly and who would have been such a help and encouragement in the work of the Lord. He says: "But for Jesus . . . I must have gone mad and died beside that lonely grave".

Sometimes when difficult and sad things occur in our lives, we cannot understand why God has allowed them to happen to us. It might be the death of someone we love very much, or we might be struck with some illness, or maybe something happens in our family or in school that is very hard to cope with. Some of these things are harder to deal with than others. When overcome with a difficult situation, it is best to follow Paton's example. He said, "I looked up to the Lord for help". We have to ask God to help us accept that it is true of Him: "He doeth all things well". We must believe this even although at the time we cannot see how it can be well.

The one thing Paton was sure of was this: It is our duty "to love and serve our blessed Lord Jesus so that we may be ready, at His call, for death and eternity". It is a fact which we cannot avoid: that one day you and I will die. Would it not be good if we all were prepared to meet God, knowing that we

have Christ as our Saviour? Mary Ann's last words were, "Not lost, only gone before to be for ever with the Lord".

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*For Younger Readers*

## **White as Wool**

**J**ust now there are lots of little lambs around my house. They run around and jump, in their lovely white coats. Their wool is as clean as can be.

But look at a lamb walking along with its mother. The lamb's coat is nice and white and clean. But the mother's coat is not pure white now, as it was when she was a little lamb. Her coat is no longer nice and clean; it is dirty.

Yes, I am sure you could clean it, but what a lot of work it would be! You would need much soap and much time. Even then, the sheep's coat would probably not be nearly so clean and white as the little lamb's.

Have you noticed how the Bible speaks about sin as what makes our souls filthy? To sin is to do wrong; we sin when we do what God tells us not to do. We all sin; we all do what is wrong. So we all need to be made clean from our sin.

How can you do that? How can you make yourself clean from your sins? Yes, you must try to stop sinning, to stop doing what is wrong. But it is only God who can really make you clean; it is only God who can turn you from your sins.

This is what He says: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow". What can be whiter than snow? Nothing. But however red your sins might be – as red as scarlet – God can make you just as white as snow.

Again God says about your sins: "Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool". This means the same thing. Although your sins may be as red as crimson, He can make them as white as the pure white wool on the backs of little lambs.

Remember always to ask God to take away your sins. Ask Him to make you as white as snow, as white as wool can be.

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## Looking Around Us

### A Distinction Between Male and Female

The town council of Fuenlabrada on the outskirts of Madrid, the Spanish capital, is changing the town's traffic signals. Half of the walking stick-figures on signs at pedestrian crossings and the little green men that flash inside traffic lights are being given skirts.

The council wants people to see that it is giving women as much of a place as men. But how do they make the distinction between men and women? By their clothes. The lights show men wearing trousers and women wearing skirts. That is the way European society has shown this distinction for centuries.

And there should be such a distinction. God has said so: "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God" (Deuteronomy 22:5). And because the word *abomination* is used, it should be obvious that God treats the matter very seriously.

It is God who made mankind; He made them male and female. He made them the same – but different. And that difference, He tells us, is to be highlighted by the clothes we wear – the man is not to wear clothes which are distinctively female, and the woman is not to wear clothes which are distinctively male. This distinction may be shown in different ways in different societies, but there always ought to be some clear distinction that everyone accepts. That used to be the case almost everywhere, but throughout much of the world today, the distinction between man and woman is being blurred in many ways. It ought not to be. But, because this distinction is blurred, some serious sins are being brazenly promoted today.

We should all resist the blurring of this distinction. There seems little danger of a fashion developing that would lead men to wear skirts, though it could happen. But women have made trousers, a distinctively male garment, their own. No doubt some will argue that women's trousers are different to men's. That may be so in detail, but it does not affect the argument. Because women's trousers are so similar to men's, the result is that the distinction between male and female has become blurred.

No one should think that this is to oppose fairness for women. For instance, if a woman and a man are doing the same work, they should be paid the same amount.

Of course, it is very difficult for women and girls always to wear skirts when everyone else at school or at work wears trousers. But we cannot

ignore the Word of God. And just as He has given us direction as to what we should wear, so we may ask Him to help us in our difficulties. He has said, "Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Samuel 2:30).

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## Do not Despair

This is another in 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 5 August 1846 and has been edited.

**I**t is only too obvious that there is a great gulf fixed between the soul of a sinner and the knowledge of God, and that this gulf cannot be crossed by created power. But what then? Is there no hope? To say there is none would be to contradict the plainest declarations of divine truth and to deny the very existence of divine revelation. To yield to despair is devilish; to place our hope in the foundation laid in Zion is at least to look in the direction of Christianity.

I do not care how dark and painful your thoughts are about your state, so far as either your heart or head is concerned. You may think as little and as despairingly as you please of yourself. But, on the other hand, you cannot think too highly and too trustingly of Him whom you have offended, whom you hate, and yet whom you do not know. For it is from the very Being you have rebelled against that your salvation is to flow. He has kindness enough to pity you, for He is love. He has wisdom enough to instruct you, for He is light. He has strength enough to save you, for He is all-powerful.

In the deepest darkness look for Him, even as a traveller in the darkest night would look for the rising sun. When farthest off cry to Him, for out of the lowest depths He hears the cry of the needy. Let the glory of His being be that on which your soul casts anchor. And though all else prove like the shifting sands, leaving you to drift at the mercy of every wave, keep near to the truth, more stable than the universe, that God lives; and the day may come when you shall sing, "Blessed be the God of my salvation".

I try to pray for you but, alas, I make a poor hand at this work. This is not – I am quite conscious of it – from any cause but the strength of sin in myself. We should tremble to think of having access to such an instrument as prayer, yet neglecting to wield it for our own and others' salvation. O if we had a more vivid sense of the wrath to come, if we looked more intensely into the misery of a lost soul, if we had a firmer conviction of the outstanding beauty of salvation, surely we would feel obliged to pray without

ceasing – and to pray especially when most opposed to it and when we least feel our need of it.

Yours most sincerely,  
*Jonathan Ranken Anderson*

## Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2006-07

### Exercise 3

All answers from overseas should be sent to *Mrs N M Ross, F P Manse, 10 Achany Road, Dingwall, Ross-shire, IV15 9JB, Scotland*. The correctors should have your answers before the end of June. These exercises are based on Genesis 24 to Exodus 34 and Matthew 12 to Mark 16.

#### Senior Section (15 years old and over)

UK answers to *Miss C MacQueen, 32 Fraser Crescent, Portree, Isle of Skye, IV51 9DR*.

##### Old Testament

1. Say briefly what we associate with these places in the contexts given:
 

(a) Bethel (Genesis 28:19)	(b) Mizpah (Genesis 31:49)	(c) Mahanaim (Genesis 32:2)	
(d) Penuel (Genesis 32:30)	(e) Dothan (Genesis 37:17)	(f) Elim (Exodus 15:27)	
(g) Horeb (Exodus 17:6)	(h) Sinai (Exodus 19:20).		(16)
2. Read Exodus chapter 12.
 

(a) Describe the lamb which was to be chosen for the passover.	(2)
(b) Choose a few words from verse 13, showing the value of being under the shelter of the blood.	(1)
(c) How was this deliverance to be remembered in Israel?	(1)
(d) What has replaced this ordinance in the New Testament Church?	(1)

##### New Testament

1. Read Matthew chapter 18.
 

(a) Write briefly about Jesus teaching His disciples humility. (verses 1-4)	(3)
(b) Quote a verse which is an encouragement to His people when His cause is low.	(2)
(c) How does the Saviour teach Peter about a forgiving spirit?	(3)
(d) Explain briefly how the parable of the unjust steward teaches us to be willing to forgive.	(4)
2. Read Mark chapter 1.
 

(a) Describe the appearance and activities of Jesus' forerunner, John the Baptist.	(5)						
(b) Quote the verse which says how he directed his hearers to the Saviour.	(2)						
(c) What was the witness from heaven that Jesus was the Son of God?	(2)						
(d) How was Jesus cared for during His forty days alone in the wilderness?	(1)						
(e) Write briefly about the background to these words, spoken by Jesus. <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>(1) "Come ye after Me and I will make you to become fishers of men."</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>(2) "Hold thy peace and come out of him."</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>(3) "I will, be thou clean."</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(6)</td> </tr> </table>	(1) "Come ye after Me and I will make you to become fishers of men."		(2) "Hold thy peace and come out of him."		(3) "I will, be thou clean."	(6)	
(1) "Come ye after Me and I will make you to become fishers of men."							
(2) "Hold thy peace and come out of him."							
(3) "I will, be thou clean."	(6)						

##### Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to question 97 in the Shorter Catechism: What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper? (3)

#### Intermediate Section (13 and 14 years old)

UK answers to *Mrs E Couper, 17 Duncan Street, Thurso, Caithness, KW14 7HU*.

##### Old Testament

1. From your reading of Genesis.

- (a) Give reasons for Esau being greatly distressed. (chapter 27) (2)  
 (b) Which of the Ten Commandments did he plan to break? (chapter 27) (1)  
 (c) Why did Rebekah and Isaac want Jacob to leave home? (chapter 27) (4)  
 (d) Which of the Ten Commandments did Jacob keep? (chapter 28) (1)  
 (e) What made Jacob decide to return home? (chapter 31) (2)  
 (f) Which of the commandments did Laban accuse Jacob of breaking? (chapter 31) (1)  
 (g) Quote a verse which tells of the reunion of Esau and Jacob. (chapter 33) (2)
2. From your reading of Exodus:
- (a) Give reasons for Moses' mother wanting to hide him. (chapters 1 and 2) (2)  
 (b) What was unusual about the bush which Moses saw in the dessert? (chapter 3) (2)  
 (c) List the excuses Moses made for not wanting to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. (chapters 3 and 4) (3)  
 (d) Who was the "spokesman" on the journey? (chapter 4) (1)

#### New Testament

1. From your reading of Mark:
- (a) In what ways did Jesus show compassion  
 (1) towards His disciples? (chapter 6) (2)  
 (2) towards the multitudes? (chapter 6) (2)  
 (3) towards children? (chapter 10) (3)
- (b) What attitude did the disciples have  
 (1) towards the multitudes? (chapter 6) (2)  
 (2) towards children? (chapter 10) (2)
- (c) (1) On what day did Jesus heal the man with the withered hand? (chapter 3) (1)  
 (2) Which group of people were ready to find fault with this? (chapter 3) (2)  
 (3) Explain why this was lawful. (chapter 3) (2)
- (d) (1) What did the people say after the deaf man was cured? (chapter 7) (2)  
 (2) What did the leper say to Jesus when he wanted to be healed? (chapter 1) (2)  
 (3) What did Jesus say to heal the man with the unclean spirit? (chapter 1) (2)

#### Memory Exercise

- Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to question 42 in the Shorter Catechism:  
 What is the sum of the ten commandments? (3)

### Junior Section (11 and 12 years old)

UK answers to *Mrs C M Sutherland, Inchure, Saval Road, Lairg, Sutherland, IV27 4ED.*

#### Old Testament

1. Read Genesis chapters 24 and 25.
- (a) Give the names of the following people: (1) Rebekah's father (2) Rebekah's brother  
 (3) Rebekah's husband (4) Rebekah's twin sons. (5)
- (b) What was the sign Abraham's servant asked from God so that he would know the girl who was to be Isaac's wife? (1)
- (c) Who tried to hinder Rebekah from going with Abraham's servant? (2)
- (d) What was Isaac doing when he noticed the camels coming, carrying Rebekah and her companions? (1)
- (e) What two things did Rebekah do before she approached Isaac? (2)
2. Read Exodus chapters 11 and 12.
- (a) What was the tenth and last plague that God sent upon Egypt? (1)
- (b) The children of Israel were told to take a special lamb on the tenth day of the month. What had to be true of the lamb? (2)
- (c) How were they commanded to cook the lamb? (1)
- (d) What were they to do with any that was left till the morning? (1)
- (e) What were they told to do with the blood? (1)
- (f) What great benefit did they receive by using the blood as they were commanded? (1)

**New Testament**

1. Read Matthew 17:1-9.
  - (a) What did Peter, James and John see on the Mount of Transfiguration? (3)
  - (b) What did they hear there? (1)
  - (c) How did they feel when they saw and heard these things? (1)
  - (d) Write out what Jesus said to them. (1)
  - (e) When were they permitted to speak about the vision? (1)
2. Read the parable of the sower in Mark 4:3-8 and the meaning of it given by Jesus to His disciples in verses 14-20. (You will need to compare the parable with its meaning to answer some questions.)
  - (a) What is the seed? (1)
  - (b) What three things are thorns that choke the seed. (3)
  - (c) The seed that fell on stony ground sprang up quickly, but what important part of the plant was missing? (1)
  - (d) What effect did the lack of this important part have on the plant? (1)
  - (e) Use answer 90 in the Shorter Catechism, "How is the Word to be read and heard that it may become effectual to salvation?" to list four things we should do when reading or hearing God's Word. (4)

**Memory Exercise**

- Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to question 90 in the Shorter Catechism:  
How is the Word to be read and heard that it may become effectual to salvation? (3)

**Upper Primary Section (9 and 10 years old)**

UK answers to *Mrs Sheena Campbell, 2 Silverknowes Midway, Edinburgh, EH4 5PP.*

**Old Testament**

1. Read Genesis 28:10-22.
  - (a) What did Jacob see in his dream? (3)
  - (b) How did God describe Himself to Jacob? (2)
  - (c) Write down the great promise God gave Jacob. (verse 15) (1)
  - (d) What did Jacob say when he wakened? (1)
  - (e) What new name did Jacob give to this place? (1)
2. Read Exodus 20:1-17.
  - (a) Write down the First Commandment. (1)
  - (b) Write down the commandment which tells us to obey our parents. (1)
  - (c) Write down the first four words of the last commandment. (1)
  - (d) Explain in your own words what the last commandment is telling us not to do. (1)
  - (e) Look up Matthew 22:37-39, which is a summary of the Ten Commandments. Write down (a) our duty to God, and (b) our duty to man. (5)

**New Testament**

1. Last time you answered questions about the birth of Christ. But Christ was born to die. Read about His death in Matthew 27:24-38.
  - (a) What did Pilate do to Jesus before delivering Him to be crucified? (1)
  - (b) What did the soldiers give Christ to wear and put on His head and in His hand? (3)
  - (c) What was written above the cross? (1)
  - (d) Who were crucified on either side of Christ? (2)
2. Christ rose from the dead. The Saviour is alive. Read Mark 16:1-8.
  - (a) On which day of the week did the women go to the grave? (1)
  - (b) What were they worried about? (1)
  - (c) What did they see when they looked into the sepulchre? (2)
  - (d) What were they told about Jesus? (2)
  - (e) Where were the disciples told they would see Jesus? (1)

(f) How did the women feel? (1)

**Memory Exercise**

Learn by heart and write down the answer to question 21 in the Shorter Catechism:  
Who is the Redeemer of God's elect? (2)

**Lower Primary Section** (8 years old and under)

UK answers to *Mrs R J Dickie, 11 Churchill Drive, Stornoway, Lewis, HS1 2NP.*

**Old Testament**

1. Moses saw a bush that was burning but did not burn away. Who called to him out of the bush? (Exodus 3:4)
2. What was Moses told to take off? (Exodus 3:5)
3. What did Moses hide because he was afraid to look upon God? (Exodus 3:6)
4. God told Moses that he would bring the Children of Israel out of Egypt to a good land, a land flowing with \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. (Fill in the missing words.) (Exodus 3:8)
5. What did the children of Israel call the food that God gave them in the wilderness? (Exodus 16:15)
6. How many days did they gather it each week? (Exodus 16:26)
7. Was there any to gather on the seventh day, the Sabbath? (Exodus 16:27)
8. Who gave them twice as much on the sixth day so that they could rest on the Sabbath? (Exodus 16:29)

**New Testament**

1. The disciples were in a ship. Who went to them walking on the sea? (Matthew 14:25)
2. Who said "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water?" (Matthew 14:28)
3. What did Jesus say to him? (Matthew 14:29)
4. When he began to sink, what did he cry out? (Matthew 14:30)
5. Did Jesus save him? (Matthew 14:31)
6. The disciples in the ship worshipped Jesus. Who did they say he was? (Matthew 14:33)
7. When Jesus was transfigured, who did he take with him up the mountain as well as Peter and James? (Matthew 17:1)
8. Jesus' clothes became white like the light. What shone like the sun? (Matthew 17:2)
9. Who appeared and talked with him? (Matthew 17:3)
10. What did the voice from the bright cloud say? (Fill in the missing words.)  
This is my beloved \_\_\_\_, in whom I am well \_\_\_\_\_; hear ye \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Matthew 17:5)