

The Young People's Magazine

**Issued by the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland
Reformed in Doctrine, Worship and Practice**

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” Ecclesiastes 12:1



March 2008

Vol 73 • No 3

Contents

Not an Awful Lot You Can Do?	43
The Holy War:	
2. King Shaddai Sends His Army	46
Flee from Every Opportunity for Sin	48
Missionary to India:	
22. Standing Firm	50
For Junior Readers – Lessons from the Life of John G Paton:	
18. Kowia- the Christian Chief	53
For Younger Readers:	
“‘It Is a Bible!’”	55
A Message for the Unconverted	56
Looking Around Us	59
Youth Conference 2008	60

Cover Picture: *The River Great Ouse, in Bedford. On a bridge over this river was the town jail, where Bunyan wrote *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. See page 46.*

The Young People’s Magazine

Editor: Rev Kenneth D Macleod BSc, F P Manse, Ferry Road, Leverburgh, Isle of Harris, HS5 3UA; tel: 01859 520271; e-mail: leverburgh@lineone.net. All unsigned articles are by the editor.

Material for the magazine should reach the editor by the beginning of the previous month.

Subscriptions, Renewals, Changes of Address should be sent to the General Treasurer: Mr W Campbell, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE; e-mail: wc.fpchurch@btconnect.com; tel: 0141 332 9283. The subscription year ends in December, and subscriptions should be sent in January each year for the following 12 months. Subscription rates, including postage, are: F P Magazine £19.50 (£1.50 per copy); Y P Magazine £11 (70p per copy); both magazines £28.50. All queries should be directed to the General Treasurer, not to the printer.

Free Presbyterian Magazine: The Church’s main magazine is *The Free Presbyterian Magazine*. Send to the General Treasurer at the above address for a free sample copy. See above for subscription rates.

The Young People's Magazine

Vol 73

March 2008

No 3

Not an Awful Lot You Can Do?

Junior doctors have been warned that this year it is going to be more difficult than ever to secure a specialist training post in the British health service. This applies to those who, this summer, will have completed their first two years of work, mostly in hospitals, after their university studies. If they are to follow a career in medicine, either in hospital or as family doctors in the community, they need to be appointed to a post which will provide the training they need. Last year's recruitment system was highly unsatisfactory; it was seen to be unfair and was abandoned.

Many doctors failed to get the positions they were looking for in 2007 and will be applying again this year – but within a new and, hopefully, fairer system. Among those going through the process for a second time is Dr Will Chellam from Birkenhead. But he has no guarantee of success. For every training post, there will likely be three applicants. Last year, Dr Chellam did find a one-year training position in general surgery, but it was not the option he was really interested in and he feels it “didn't offer much training”. He finds it “very stressful” not knowing if he will get a suitable post. Yet “there's not an awful lot you can do. . . . You just hope it all works out.”

But there is something Dr Chellam should do; he should pray. And he should do so particularly because God is in control of everything. Things do not just happen; they happen according to God's plan, including everything that took place in the past and everything that will happen in the future, right down to the end of time.

When we want to refer to God's control of everything, we speak of His *providence*. *The Shorter Catechism* sums up the Bible's teaching on the subject in this way: “God's works of providence are His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures, and all their actions” (answer 11). This tells us that God's providence takes in the whole of creation – everything that He has made – and everything that these “creatures” do. That is so whether we think of living creatures, like birds and animals and, especially, human beings, or of lifeless things such as stars or

stones, or individual atoms. God knows all about them and He preserves them in existence; otherwise they would disappear. He also governs, or controls, them. In all this He acts according to His great power and He does so in a holy and wise way.

There is much we cannot understand about how God controls everything in providence. For instance, how does he control our sinful actions? One thing should be clear: He is not responsible for our sins; He is perfectly holy. Yet nothing happens but God has purposed that it will happen. Again, we are not robots; we make decisions; we come to conclusions and carry them out. Or maybe we are not able to put our decisions into effect, or we change our minds. But even these things are under God's control. We may not be able to carry out our purposes, but God always succeeds in His purposes; nothing can prevent Him doing as He pleases.

We must always bear in mind that we are trying to think about what we cannot fully understand. But God has revealed these truths to us in the Bible. For instance, we are told that "the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Proverbs 21:1). Let us think of the king of a country – or its president or prime minister – considering what to do in some situation. He may have to decide whether to begin a war or not, or how to react to a hostile move by another country, or what laws to pass for the good of his nation. He thinks the issues through, he takes advice and decides, but his mind "is in the hand of the Lord". In all his decisions, this ruler is fulfilling God's purposes. God can turn the ruler's mind and will in whatever direction He pleases.

When God allows something sinful to happen, He controls it and all the other events which flow from it, so that His purposes will be fulfilled. And sometimes that is eventually obvious. Think, for instance, of the wicked ways in which Joseph was treated by his brothers. In the end they sold him to travelling merchants who brought him into Egypt. They were completely heartless; they committed serious sin. But, as a result of their sinful actions, God preserved the whole family alive. When famine was about to strike the whole region, Joseph was already in Egypt and ready, in God's providence, to take control of the supplies of grain, so that large numbers of people – but especially his own family – would have enough to eat.

Similarly, the chief priests, Pilate, Herod, the soldiers, and the crowds in Jerusalem did and said much that was wicked and unbelieving. But God was in control of it all, ordering and limiting their activities to bring about the salvation of sinners – but in no way involved in their sin. Christ had to suffer and die as the substitute for sinners; He had to suffer and die in the way prophesied in the Old Testament. And God, in His providence, brought

everything about so that His purposes would be fulfilled. As a result, God is righteous when He saves ungodly sinners from a lost eternity.

God was in control of all events then and He is in control of all events now. In particular He is in control of the process of applying for jobs and the way positions are allocated – who will get what they want and who will not. This should not leave us feeling helpless – at least if we have a sense that the One who is in control is a good God, One who is willing to do good even to those who do not deserve it.

There is more than a hint of helplessness in Dr Chellam's comment: "You just have to keep your head down and hope it works out". But everything will in the end work out well *for God's children*. We are told that "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28). And one indication that we love God is that we want to commit everything to Him, realising that He knows, far better than we do, what is good for us. A junior doctor who loves God may be disappointed not to get the post he has set his heart on. But he will, sooner or later, realise that God was control of the whole appointment process and will trust Him to work everything out for the best. The same is true in every other kind of employment. God knows what is best for His children and they should be perfectly comfortable in trusting Him with every aspect of their careers.

Will they get a particular job? Will they get promotion? Will their employment remain secure? All these things are under God's control.

But do we have the right to believe that everything will work together for *our* good? In fact, we have no such right if we have never turned to God in sincere repentance. Our first duty is to turn from our sins and look to Christ for salvation. We are to seek "*first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness". That is the matter of first importance.

We should pray about everything, including our employment – what kind of work we should train for, what career we should pursue and what jobs we should apply for. We may pray that we would be accepted for particular courses or particular jobs, but we should always qualify our request to God with such words as these: "If this is Thy will". It is an acknowledgement that God knows best and that He is in control.

As you pray, you should ask yourself: What is the best career or the best job for me? That means asking: What will I enjoy? What is most suited to my talents? But more importantly: Is it right for me to do this work, or will it involve me in sin? Yet there is much about your future employment that you cannot yet see. All the more reason for committing everything to God in prayer. He knows everything, and He knows what is best for you. How many difficulties you will avoid if you commit all your ways to God!

The Holy War

2. King Shaddai Sends His Army

Rev Roderick MacLeod

The first article looked at John Bunyan's picture of the fall of man's soul in his book, *The Holy War*. Mansoul (pictured as a town) is the human soul, King Shaddai is God, Emmanuel is Jesus Christ, Diabolus is the devil, and Mr Will-be-will is the human will.

In spite of the fall of Mansoul, Shaddai published his eternal purpose to recover it by price and by power, or by redemption and regeneration. In chapter 3, Bunyan deals with the reaction of Diabolus to this. Shaddai proposed his gracious plan in the court of heaven and made it known in the Kingdom of Universe. The angels praised it for its astonishing love and kindness, but it caused a great panic in the hearts of Diabolus and his accomplices in the town of Mansoul.

So Diabolus resolved to do five things:

1. To keep Mansoul in the dark about Emmanuel's gracious purpose.
2. To impose a dreadful oath on Mansoul. Those who took the oath solemnly undertook to defy anyone who would lay claim to the town, and owned Diabolus as their rightful and only king, then and for ever. Thus they made a covenant with death, and with hell they were in agreement. Diabolus assumed that even Shaddai did not have the power to free them from this serious oath.
3. To deprave Mansoul further so that, having become such depraved sinners, they would find it difficult to believe the good tidings. Diabolus also hoped that the holy Emmanuel would repent of his plan to recover Mansoul when he saw their wickedness.
4. To persuade Mansoul that Shaddai was sending an army to destroy them, thus putting a horrid mask upon the merciful purpose of the Great Shaddai. He persuaded them that, in the heart of their former King, there was a purpose to slaughter them. "Whatever therefore he should say, believe not one syllable of it, for all such language is but to overcome us while we wallow in our blood, the trophies of his merciless victory. . . . Resist him to the last man and do not believe him on any terms, for our danger will come in at that door. Blood, blood – nothing but blood – is in every blast of Shaddai's trumpet against poor Mansoul now".
5. To provide Mansoul with armour. The pieces of that armour were: (1) a wrong view of salvation – to believe that they would do well at last, no matter how they lived; (2) a breastplate of iron: "a heart as hard as iron, as much past feeling as a stone". If they got this and kept it, Diabolus informed

them, “neither mercy would win them nor judgement frighten them”. (3) a sword – that is, the tongue furbished so as to glisten as one set on fire of hell; it was one that could speak evil of Shaddai, his son, his people and his ways. (4) a shield of unbelief, calling into question the truth of Shaddai’s sayings: “If he speak of mercy, care not for it; if he promises, if he swears” good to Mansoul on condition that it will return to him, “regard not what he says; question the truth of all – this is to wield the shield of unbelief aright”. (5) “a dumb and a prayerless spirit, a spirit that scorns to cry for mercy, let the danger be ever so great.” All these things Mansoul swallows, it seems, without resistance.

One could be excused for thinking that this chapter contains some of the most chilling sentences that ever could have been spoken in any language. Yet it is the secret language of every natural heart.

In the fourth chapter there is Shaddai’s great and gracious response; he sent four mighty captains to address Mansoul solemnly at Ear gate. They received a solemn commission: (1) to offer terms of peace there, commanding Mansoul to cast off the yoke of Diabolus and return to their rightful Prince and Lord and to cleanse themselves; (2) to engage in war to conquer Mansoul if the town defied the call. But when Diabolus heard of the arrival of this great army, every effort was made to make Ear gate secure against all intimations of mercy.

Good Captain Conviction (the first of the Great Shaddai’s commissioned officers) sought to convince the town of its sins against Shaddai, with seven strong points. And with 12 powerful arguments he sought to compel them to break their allegiance with Diabolus and open the town to Shaddai. Captain Judgement and Captain Execution (two more of King Shaddai’s officers) presented, between them, 30 strong reasons why Mansoul should accept the terms of reconciliation. Mansoul even refused 50 irresistible reasons to forsake Diabolus and live. Ear Gate was strengthened against this barrage, and Mr Prejudice was put in charge of it with 60 deaf men.

The fifth chapter describes how a military assault was prepared upon Ear gate by the King’s captains. Preparations were made for Mansoul’s defence. Two guns, High-mind and Heady, cast in the forge of Diabolus, were set over the gate. In this conflict, Diabolus suffered the loss of men whose names were: Swearing, Whoring, Fury, Stand-to-lies, Drunkenness and Cheating. The deceptive peace in the town was much disturbed by the loud trumpeters of the captains and by Mr Conscience’s roaring. Incredulity tried to calm the town by his speeches, but Mansoul came to feel great distress, just like the Prodigal son, in the far country. Incredulity proposed impossible and devilish terms of peace; they would have permitted Mansoul to continue in sin

without annoyance from King Shaddai. When these terms were announced, the captains quickly turned them down and demanded that Mansoul submit unconditionally to the terms of their Prince Shaddai. They were to trust Him to give them grace and glory.

When Lord Understanding and Mr Conscience declared that the terms proposed by the captains were good and just, there was uproar in Mansoul. A riot followed; some were for Shaddai and some were still against him. The conduct of Mr Will-be-will was observed with interest.

In these two chapters the hardness of our hearts is vividly represented. How often have mighty and compelling reasons been set before us why we must, on the one hand, forsake sin and, on the other, forsake salvation by our own deeds! Along with these reasons has come the plea to be reconciled to God. Yet most people have refused to submit. How often have they wrestled against convictions! Perhaps they have forsaken gross outward sins as a result of the solemn warnings of the Word of God; yet they still offered strong resistance to the gospel of God. They would not yield to be conquered by love or overcome by grace.

Flee from Every Opportunity for Sin

J C Ryle

Another piece, slightly edited, from this noted nineteenth-century English minister. It follows the article last month on the need to break off every known sin.

For another thing, resolve, by God's help, to avoid everything which may prove an occasion for sin.

It is an excellent saying of good Joseph Hall: "He that would be safe from the acts of evil, must widely avoid the occasions." (There is an old fable, that the butterfly once asked the owl how she should deal with the fire which had singed her wings; and the owl counselled her, in reply, not to so much as to look at its smoke.) It is not enough that we decide to commit no sin; we must carefully keep at a distance from all approaches to it. By this test we ought to try our ways of spending our time: the books we read, the families we visit, the company into which we go. We must not content ourselves with saying, "There is nothing positively wrong here"; we must go further and say, "Is there anything here which may prove an opportunity of sin to me?"

Remember that this is one great reason why *idleness* is so much to be avoided. It is not that doing nothing is of itself so positively wicked; it is the opportunity it gives to evil thoughts and vain imaginations; it is the wide door it opens for Satan to throw in the seeds of bad things. This is what is

mainly to be feared. If David had not given occasion to the devil by being idle on his housetop at Jerusalem, he would probably never have seen Bathsheba nor murdered Uriah.

This too is one great reason why *worldly amusements* are so objectionable. It may be difficult, in some instances, to show that they are, in themselves, positively unscriptural and wrong. But there is little difficulty in showing that the *tendency* of almost all of them is most injurious to the soul. They sow the seeds of an earthly and sensual frame of mind. They war against the life of faith. They promote an unhealthy and unnatural craving after excitement. They serve the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye and the pride of life. They dim the view of heaven and eternity, and give a false colour to the things of time. They make the heart unfit for private prayer, for reading the Bible, and for calm communion with God. The man who mingles in them is like someone who gives his enemy the advantage. He has a battle to fight, and he gives Satan the help of sun and wind and hill. It would be strange indeed if he did not find himself continually overcome.

Try, as much as possible, to keep clear of everything that may prove harmful to your soul. Never hold a candle for the devil. People may say you are over scrupulous, too particular – and ask, Where is the great harm of such and such things? But do not listen to them. It is dangerous to play tricks with sharp tools; it is far more dangerous to take liberties with your immortal soul. He that would be safe must not come near the brink of danger. He must look on his heart as a store of gunpowder, and be cautious not to handle one spark of temptation more than he can help.

What is the use of your praying, “Lead us not into temptation”, unless you are yourselves careful not to run into it; and of praying, “Deliver us from evil”, unless you show a desire to keep out of its way? Take your example from Joseph. Not merely did he refuse his mistress’s temptation to sin, but he showed his prudence in refusing to be “with her” at all (Genesis 39:10). Lay to heart the advice of Solomon, not merely, “Go not in the path of wickedness”, but “avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away” (Proverbs 4:15); not merely not to be drunken, but not even to “*look upon the wine when it is red*” (Proverbs 23:31). The man who took the vow of a Nazarite in Israel not only took no wine, but he even abstained from grapes in any shape whatever. “*Abhor that which is evil,*” says Paul to the Romans (Romans 12:9); not merely do not do it but, he writes to Timothy: “*Flee youthful lusts*”; get away from them as far as possible (2 Timothy 2:22). Alas, how needful are such cautions! Dinah must go out among the wicked Shechemites to see their ways, and she lost her character. Lot must pitch his tent near sinful Sodom, and he lost everything but his life.

Young people, be wise in time. Do not always be trying how near you can allow the enemy of souls to come and yet escape him. Hold him at arm's length. Try to keep clear of temptation as far as possible, and this will be one great help to keep clear of sin.

Missionary to India

22. Standing Firm

In last month's article we followed Alexander Duff back to his mission in Calcutta in 1857 for the last time. Soon after he arrived, the Indian Mutiny broke out. The Duffs were safe in Calcutta, but many were killed in other parts of India.

Gopeenath Nundi had been converted back in 1832 through Duff's efforts in Calcutta. Since then he had become a minister and was now preaching in a place called Futtehpore, where he was helped by Robert Tucker, the local judge.

News reached the district in June that soldiers in Allahabad, 70 miles away, had risen against their officers and had killed most of them. In Futtehpore, a mob began burning the houses of Christians, most of whom fled. Tucker sent for his deputy, Hikmut Oollah Khan, who was a Muslim, so that they could make arrangements together to protect government property. The mocking answer came back: "Tell the Sahib to make himself happy and, when I come in the evening, I will give him eternal rest". Clearly Tucker had to prepare to die; he read the Bible and committed himself to God in prayer before getting guns ready so that he could defend himself. As Khan advanced towards Tucker's home, he called on the judge to turn from Christ and accept Muhammad. Tucker refused firmly, though to do so meant almost certain death. He held out as long as he could before he was shot and went to his eternal rest.

A magistrate directed Gopeenath to take all the Christian women from Futtehpore to Allahabad. He did so, only to find that they had put themselves in even greater danger. The other women returned to their husbands, while Gopeenath, his wife and children set off for a mission station at Mizrapore. After walking for 14 miles they reached a village and were invited into one of the houses, but before long they could see that they were not safe there. Everything they had was taken from them – even their one Bible and their shoes. But they managed to flee while the local people quarrelled over what they had stolen.

Gopeenath and his family walked on till 9 o'clock the next morning; they were completely exhausted, and the children – two six-year-olds and another

of just one year – were so hungry that they were crying bitterly. Gopeenath and his wife prayed, and God heard them. In the distance they saw a marriage procession coming towards them. Some people in the procession gave Gopeenath a little money, which he used to buy a small amount of flour and sugar for the children.

The family then walked on under the hot sun, but by 11 am the children were suffering from sunstroke. There was nowhere they could take shelter except under a bridge. Their father gathered some sand for them to lie down on; they seemed to be dying. But he knew where to go for help. “We raised our hearts in prayer”, Gopeenath said, “to our great Physician, who is always more ready to hear than we are to apply to Him. He heard our supplications. We saw a small green mango hanging on a tree, though the season was nearly over. I brought it down, and having procured a little fire from a gang of robbers who were proceeding to Allahabad to plunder, I roasted it and made some sherbet and gave it to the children to drink.” Poor people in India used this as a medicine and, with God’s blessing, it certainly worked for Gopeenath’s children. The family spent the next night in a house in a nearby village and, obviously, they slept very soundly after going three days and nights without sleep.

The next day they reached Allahabad, where they found the mission bungalow had been burnt down. Soon they were threatened by crowds of hostile Muslims, but they could see that God was working for them when a Hindu goldsmith took them into his house and kept them safe till sunset. Then they moved on, but they now found themselves in danger from a crowd of other Muslims. They were afraid for their lives and there was no way of escape. So they pleaded with the crowd to take them to the local imam, who was exercising authority over the town.

They found him sitting on a chair surrounded by men with drawn swords. He ordered Gopeenath and his family to sit down. “Who are you?” He asked.

“Christians”, they answered.

“What place do you come from?”

“Futtehpore.”

“What was your occupation?”

“Preaching and teaching the Christian religion.”

“Are you a minister?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Was it not you who used to go about reading and distributing tracts in the streets and villages?”

“Yes, sir; it was I and my catechists.”

“How many Christians have you made?”

“I did not make any Christians, for no human being can change the heart of another. But God, through my instrumentality, brought to the belief of His true religion about a couple of dozens.”

The imam then exclaimed in a great rage: “Repent, repent. What downright blasphemy! God never makes anyone a Christian, but you pervert the people. He always makes people Muslims, for the religion which we follow is the only true one. How many Muslims have you perverted to your religion?”

Gopeenath still stood firm and answered, “I have not perverted anyone but, by the grace of God, ten were turned from darkness to the glorious light of the gospel.”

The imam now became even angrier. “You are a great traitor,” he exclaimed; “you have given up your forefathers’ faith and become a child of Satan and now you use your every effort to bring others into the same road of destruction. You deserve a cruel death. Your nose, ears and hands should be cut off at different times, so as to make your sufferings continue for some time; and your children ought to be taken into slavery.”

When she heard this, Mrs Nundi told the imam: “You will do us a very great favour by ordering us all to be killed at once and not to be tortured by a lingering death”.

The imam was silent for a while and then told Gopeenath: “You appear to be a respectable man. I pity you and your family. And, as a friend, I advise you to become Muslims. By doing so, you will not only save your lives but will be raised to a high rank.”

Others might have been influenced by what might have seemed an attractive offer, but not Gopeenath. He answered, “We prefer death to any inducement you can hold out”.

The imam then asked Gopeenath’s wife what she would do. She replied that she was ready to submit to any punishment, but she could not give up her faith.

The imam then asked Gopeenath if he had read the Qur’an.

“Yes, sir.”

“You could not have read it with a view to being profited,” the imam accused, “but simply to pick out passages in order to argue with Muslims.” Then he went on: “I will allow you three days to consider, and then I will send for you and read a portion of the Qur’an to you. If you believe and become Muslims, well and good. But if not, your noses shall be cut off.” It sounded like the beginning of a terrifying process.

Yet the Nundis held firm. They assured the imam that, for as long as God continued to give them grace, they would never change their faith. The imam then ordered his men to take them to the prison.

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

18. Kowia- the Christian Chief

Life continued to be difficult and sad for Paton, but there were times of encouragement as well. Kowia was a chief of the highest rank on Tanna. He had gone to live on the neighbouring island of Aneityum. While living there, he was converted. He married a Christian lady from Aneityum and they had two lovely children.

Kowia wanted to serve the Lord and so he came back to his own island, Tanna, to help spread the gospel there. He returned just a short while before the traders came to the island with the dreaded plague of measles.

He was a good example of a Christian man. He was very dignified and worked hard. His own people tried everything to get him to give up his Christianity and return to their pagan worship. First they tried to bribe him, offering to give him things which were very attractive, if only he would give up Christianity. But Kowia refused. Then the people turned nasty and threatened him and his family. They also threatened to take away his position as chief, but he only replied: “Take all! I shall still stand by Missi and the worship of Jehovah.”

They did not take away his position but they continued to threaten and insult him. He put up with it patiently, bearing it all for Jesus’ sake. But one day, when one particular man was mocking Kowia, he took some action. While the man was taunting him, Kowia rose up and with flashing eyes declared: “Missi, they think that, because I am now a Christian, I have become a coward! A woman! To bear every abuse and insult they can heap upon me. But I will show for once that I am no coward, that I am still their Chief, and that Christianity does not take away, but gives us, courage and nerve.”

With that, he leapt towards a man and grabbed from him the club he was holding. Swinging the club high above his head, he cried: “Come any of you, come all against your Chief! My Jehovah God makes my heart and arms strong. He will help me in this battle as He helps me in other things, for He inspires me to show you that Christians are no cowards, though they are men of peace. Come on, and you will yet know that I am Kowia your Chief.”

As he advanced on the different warriors, challenging them to fight him, they just backed off and ran away into the bushes. With no one left to fight him, he handed the club back to its owner and asked, “Where are the cowards now?” After this no one dared mock or insult Kowia again.

Kowia was a great help to Paton with the mission work. He was able to

go amongst the people freely and, of course, he spoke their language. But the measles came and Kowia, along with many others, became sick.

Paton himself was sick and had been lying in his bed with fever for several days. Kowia came to him and woke him up as he lay sick in bed, saying: "Missi, I am very weak; I am dying. I come to bid you farewell and go away to die. I am nearing death now and I will soon see Jesus."

Paton was distressed on hearing this and tried to encourage Kowia, but Kowia answered him: "Missi, since you became ill, my dear wife and children are dead and buried. Most of our Aneityumese are dead, and I am dying. If I remain on the hill and die here at the mission house, there is no one left to help Abraham to carry me down to the grave where my wife and children are laid. I wish to lie beside them, so that we may rise together in the great day when Jesus comes.

"I am happy looking unto Jesus! Only one thing deeply grieves me now: I fear God is taking us all away from Tanna and will leave my poor people dark and benighted as before, for they hate Jesus and the worship of Jehovah. O Missi, pray for them, and pray for me once more before I go!"

Paton prayed with Kowia and urged him to stay at the mission house but Kowia told him that he knew he was very near death. With many tears he dragged himself away. Leaning on Abraham, he tottered down the hill to the graves of his wife and children. Once there, he lay down and immediately died. And there the faithful Abraham buried him beside his family.

So died a man who had been a cannibal chief, but who was changed by the grace of God. Paton's heart was heavy. He had lost one of his best friends and most courageous helpers. But he took comfort from the fact that he knew that at least one soul from Tanna was singing the glories of Jesus in heaven.

We can learn a lot from the life of Kowia. He was a man who had Christ as his Saviour. He wanted to serve Christ and did so, asking Him for help in everything. His main wish was to see others brought to Christ. What saddened him most was not his own approaching death or the death of his dear wife and children; it was this: the people of Tanna were rejecting Christ.

Who do you want to be like: Kowia the chief who gave up everything to serve Christ, or the stubborn warriors of Tanna who thought their old ways were best? The words which Joshua spoke in his last speech to the Children of Israel suit Chief Kowia's situation very well: "Now if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). It would be good if each one of us could say these words: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord".

S M Campbell

*For Younger Readers***“It Is a Bible!”**

One day long ago, Robert Knox sailed away from England on a long voyage. His father was the captain of the ship.

They were on their way home when a big storm arose. They were in danger. They sailed into a harbour on a large island, where they thought they would be safe. Then they went ashore. But the King was angry. Nobody was allowed to come into his country unless the King himself said they could come ashore. Robert and his father were kept apart from most of the other men from the ship. They had no Bible but they enjoyed reading their one book about the Bible.

Robert and his father became ill. Yet God was good to them. They read in their book: “God is most sweet when the world is most bitter”. And they were finding that this is true. They were finding that God was showing them most of His love when everything around them was most difficult.

One day the father told Robert he was dying. God was going to deliver him from all his troubles and bring him to heaven.

Robert was now on his own with a servant. He enjoyed praying to God and thinking about what he could remember from the Bible. But he felt very sad because he had no Bible. Perhaps they left their Bibles on the ship and could not go back to get them.

One day an old man came along. He asked Robert’s servant if his master could read. He had a book to sell. He wondered if Robert would want to buy it.

How happy Robert was when he saw the book. “It is a Bible!” he cried out. And it was in English, not in some other language. So he could read it.

He had very little money left and he would have given it all to buy the Bible. But his servant exchanged it for a woollen cap. How happy Robert was now! He was again able to read the Bible.

It was good of God to give Robert a Bible. Perhaps you cannot read the Bible yet, but it is good of God to give you parents who can read this wonderful Book, and who tell you some things about it. Thank God for the Bible and ask Him to help you understand it.

A Message for the Unconverted

C H Spurgeon

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

Young men and women, we plead with you to remember that you are acting unjustly and unkindly towards your God. He made you, and you do not serve Him. He has kept you alive, and you are not obedient to Him. He has sent His gospel to you, and you have not received it. He has sent His only begotten Son, and you have despised Him. This injustice is a thing of the present; and we appeal to you to bring such conduct to an end. May God's Holy Spirit help you!

If I feel that I have done anyone an injustice, I am eager to set it right; I would not wait till tomorrow, I wish to make amends to him at once. Even when I have forgotten to help some needy widow, I feel uneasy till I have attended to the matter. Do you not feel the same? Would you wilfully neglect anyone? I feel sure you would not. How then can you be content to be unjust to God and oppose the loving pleadings of the Holy Spirit?

How striking is the first chapter of Isaiah! If your hearts were at all tender, it would break them. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth . . . I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know; My people doth not consider." It is the wail of God Himself over man's unkindness to his Maker!

Young man or woman of integrity, does nothing speak to your conscience in this? "Will a man rob God?" You would not rob your employer. You would not like to be thought unfaithful or dishonest to man. Yet is God to be treated so basely in spite of all His goodness? Jesus said, "For which of these works do you stone Me?" So God says, "I have made you; I have kept the breath in your nostrils; I have fed you all your life long. For which of all these good things do you neglect Me, perhaps curse My name, and sin with a high hand against My holy law?" Can you think it right to remain in so unjust a course of life? Can it be right to continue to wrong your God? Do not provoke Him any more. Come to Him for forgiveness and a change of heart.

Our message has to do with the present, for we would affectionately remind you that you are now at enmity with your best Friend – the Friend to whose kindness you owe everything. You have grieved Him. Without cause, you are His enemy. Can you bear this thought?

I know a little child who had done something wrong. At last, as a punishment, her kind father said to her in a very sad voice: "I cannot kiss you tonight, for you have grieved me very much". That broke her little heart.

Though not a stroke had been laid upon her, she saw sorrow in her dear father's face, and she could not endure it. She pleaded and wept, and pleaded again to be forgiven. It was thought wise to keep back the kiss, and she was sent to bed, for she had done very wrong. But there was no sleep for those weeping eyes. And when her mother went up to the little one's bedroom, she heard frequent sobs and sighs, and a sorrowful little voice said, "I was very, very naughty, but please forgive me. And ask Father to give me a kiss." She loved her father, and she could not bear that he should be grieved.

"Would God forgive *me*?" you ask. What makes you ask the question? Is it because you do not know how good He is? Has He not pictured Himself as meeting His prodigal son, falling upon his neck and kissing him? Before the child reached the father, the father had reached the child. The father was eager to forgive; so, when the son was yet far away, his father saw him and ran and had compassion. Do not say we are talking of a far-off time. I am speaking of what I pray may be true now – that you may not remain enemies to God for even one hour, but may now become repenting children of God.

But I have to remind you of much more than this – you are in danger. Because you remain an enemy to God, He will surely punish you for your sins. He is a just God, and every sin is noted in His book. And there it is recorded against His judgement day. The danger is that you may go down into the pit this moment. You may die and appear before your Maker in an instant, to receive the just reward of your sins.

There is immediate pardon for all the sins of those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Your sins, which are many, will all be forgiven if you will believe in Him. Do you not know what you have heard many a time – that the Lord Jesus took upon Himself the sins of all who will trust Him. In their place He suffered the penalty due to their sins? As their substitute, He died, the just for the unjust, to bring them to God. He laid down His life so that "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life".

Will you refuse the salvation so dearly purchased but so freely presented? Will you not accept it here and now? Or can you bear the burden of your sins? Are you content to abide for one hour in peril of eternal punishment? Can you bear to be slipping down, as you now are, into the open jaws of hell? Remember, God's patience will not last for ever. You have provoked Him long enough. It is a wonder you do not sink to destruction at once. So we would have you pardoned *now*, made free from divine wrath *now*. The peril is immediate. The Lord grant that the rescue may be so also!

Do I hear you say, "But may pardon be had at once? Is Jesus Christ a present Saviour? We thought that we might perhaps find Him near the time of death, or might obtain a hope of mercy after a long life of seeking." It is

not so. Free grace proclaims immediate salvation from sin and misery. Who-soever looks to Jesus at this very moment shall have his sins forgiven. At the instant he believes in the Lord Jesus, the sinner shall cease to be in danger of the fires of hell. The moment he turns the eye of faith to Jesus Christ he is saved from the wrath to come. It is present salvation that we preach to you, and the present comfort of that present salvation too.

Many other reasons make this weighty matter very pressing. One is this: there is the disease of sin in your heart, and it needs immediate cure. When people discover the early stages of a disease in their bodies, I do not hear them say that they will wait a while, till the illness is more fully developed, before they resort to a doctor. Most of us have enough sense to try to check a disease at once. Young man, you have a leprosy. Young woman, you have a dreadful illness in your heart. Do you not desire to be healed now? Jesus can give you immediate healing, but you must believe in Him. Do you hesitate? Do you love your fatal illness? Is hideous sin so dear to you? O that you would cry to be saved immediately. Then Jesus will hear you. His Spirit will descend on you and cleanse you, give you a new heart and a right spirit – yes, and make you whole for ever; can you wish to have so great a blessing postponed? Surely a sick man can never be cured too soon?

The gospel will bring you present blessings. In addition to present pardon and justification, it will give you present regeneration, adoption, sanctification, access to God, peace through believing, and help in time of trouble; it will make you doubly happy even in this life. It will be wisdom for your way, strength for your conflict, and comfort for your sorrow. If I had to die like a dog, I would still wish to be a Christian. If there were no hereafter – though the idea is not to be tolerated – yet let me live for Jesus, my beloved Lord.

Balaam chose the righteous man's death. I choose it too. But, just as much, I choose his life. It is a present joy and comfort, worth more than many worlds, to have the love of God in my heart and peace with Him, to be able to look up to heaven with confidence and talk to Him in childlike trust. Young men and women, we preach what is good for this life as well as for the life to come. If you believe in Jesus, you will be saved this moment, and you will enjoy the unchanging favour of God. So you will no longer live as others, but as the chosen of God, beloved with special love, enriched with special blessings – every day till you are taken up to dwell where Jesus is. Present salvation is the burden of the Lord's message to you. So it is completely false to say that the vision is for many days to come, and the prophecy for times that are far off. Is there not reason in my pleadings? If so, yield to them. Can you answer these arguments? If not, I pray you, cease delaying. Again I would implore the Holy Spirit to lead you to immediate trust in Christ!

Looking Around Us

“There Are no Shops in the Cemetery”

Stephen Smith, a 58-year-old man from Hemel Hempstead became nearly £19 million richer last January. Perhaps you wish it was you. But before you let your wishes run away with you, you should ask how he got the money.

Mr Smith won the money on a lottery. And no form of gambling is right before God. It is an example of the sin of covetousness; all gambling is a sin against the Tenth Commandment. The tiny possibility of winning huge sums of money is dangled before those who might buy tickets, and enough people buy them to make the system profitable. But many of those who buy lottery tickets cannot really afford to do so. They are making themselves even poorer to make a few people rich.

Remember that God controls all of providence, including who will win the big prizes, and who will just lose their money. The Bible tells us: “The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord” (Proverbs 16:33). Casting a lot was something random, like tossing a coin. You toss the coin, but it is God who in the end controls whether it comes up heads or tails – the whole disposing of the matter is His. So He is also in control of whatever process is used to choose lottery winners. It is a mocking of God to use such a process to gain money. Even a raffle, which is gambling on a small scale, perhaps for what might be called a good cause, is wrong. The principle is the same.

But Mr Smith says that he would willingly exchange all his winnings for good health, as he is suffering from an aortic aneurism. That means there is a bulge on the main artery taking blood away from his heart. And that bulge could burst at any time. Then blood would pour quickly out and, unless the artery was repaired very soon in a hospital operation, he would die.

But he wants to live. He wants to be with his wife and he wants to see his grandchildren grow up. In any case, what use will his money be to him if he dies? His own way of expressing this is to state: “There are no shops in the cemetery”. Of course, any reasonable person should find it very difficult to spend £19 million. But Mr Smith cannot even use his money to buy medical treatment for his condition. That operation would itself be risky; so doctors will not touch the aneurism until it is a certain size – until the risk of it bursting has become too great for it to be left any longer.

Jesus asked, “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). That is the most serious question for everyone, especially for those who would get rich quickly. In the end, what use will anything be unless our soul is safe, in Christ?

Youth Conference 2008

Arrangements

Venue: Scottish Agricultural College, Auchincruive near Ayr.

Dates: Tuesday, April 1, to Thursday, April 3.

Chairman: Rev D A Ross.

Lower Age Limit: 16 years old.

Applications: To Rev D A Ross, F P Manse, Laide, Ross-shire, IV22 2NB, *as soon as possible* (the closing date is March 21). See the February issue for an application form. The fee will be £36 for applicants in full-time employment and £18 for others. Cheques are payable to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

Programme

Tuesday, April 1

2.30 pm

The Church of Rome

A Different Religion From Biblical Christianity

Rev D W B Somerset

7.00 pm

Effectual Calling

The Holy Spirit Drawing Sinners to Christ

by Rev John MacLeod

Wednesday, April 2

9.30 am

From Genesis to Revelation

An Overview of the Bible

by Rev K D Macleod

1.30 pm

Some Ayrshire Covenanters

A Historical Tour, conducted by

by Rev Roderick MacLeod

7.00 pm

The Mission in Zimbabwe

How Has It Developed?

by Mr Hugh Mackenzie

Thursday, April 3

9.30 am

Samson

A Dedicated Life

by Rev J B Jardine

Further information will be sent to each applicant about a week before the conference. If you have any queries, do not hesitate to phone Mr Ross (tel: 01445 731340). But please do *not* delay sending in your application.

Price 70p