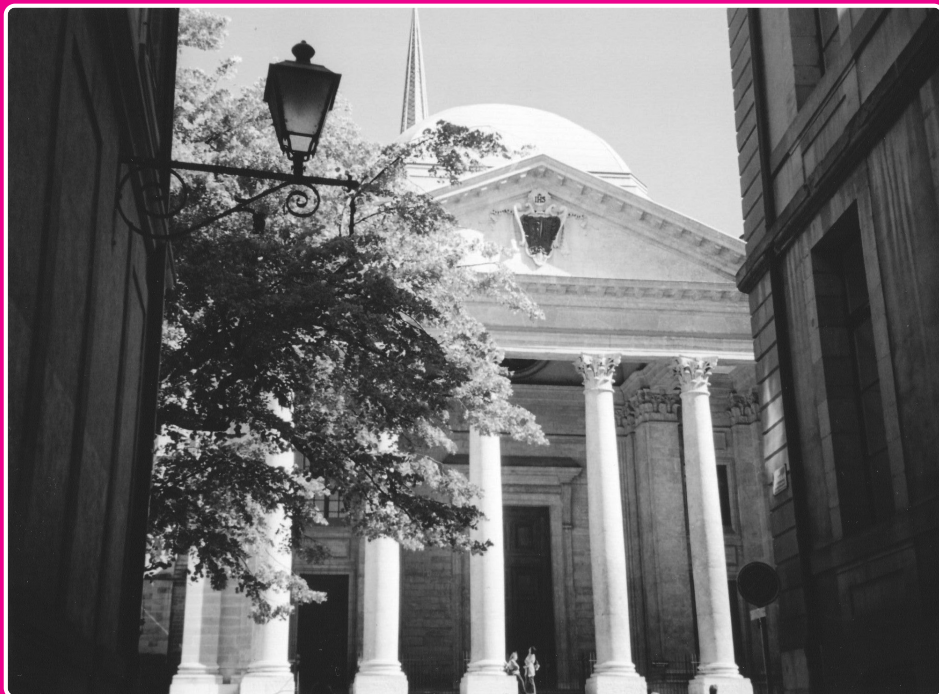


The Young People's Magazine

**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



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Cover Picture: *The main entrance to St Peter's Cathedral, John Calvin's church in Geneva.* See page 146.

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Directions for a King

Samuel was a godly man. God raised him up to be a godly ruler over His people Israel. Samuel was not a king, just a judge, but he gave solid leadership to Israel. After many years of handing down honest judgements to those who came before him, Samuel became old and made his sons judges after him. Sadly, they took bribes; so when people came to them to judge in some dispute, Samuel's sons did not decide according to the evidence, but in favour of those who paid them money. Obviously this was a most unsatisfactory state of affairs, and the leaders of the people came to Samuel asking for a king to be set over them instead of these corrupt judges.

This request may have come as a complete surprise to Samuel. But for God nothing is unexpected; He had given directions for Israel's kings long before then, when He gave laws to Moses for His people. (You can find these particular directions in Deuteronomy 17.)

These instructions set out how the king should live as he ran the affairs of his country. It is clear that he had to be an example to all his people. When the people of Israel saw godly kings like David and Josiah, for instance, going about their duties in a right way, they should have said to themselves: This is the way that I should live. Obviously the responsibilities of an ordinary Israelite were different from those of the king, but when he showed a good example to his people it was a clear encouragement for them to live in a right way.

Now we do not have the advantage of being able to watch the good example of a godly king of Israel. But there is much told us about such kings as David and Josiah which should help us to live to the glory of God. And most of these directions in Deuteronomy 17 point out to us the way that we should take, thousands of years later, as we make our way through this world. We will look at some of them.

Let us notice first that the king was "to fear the Lord his God". The point was not that he was to be afraid that God would come against him in judgement, to punish him, if he sinned by breaking God's commandments. It is not good in a family if the children are terrified of their father or mother,

but it is good if the children do not want to disobey their parents because it will make them unhappy – if the children are afraid of doing what is wrong because it will upset their parents. This shows that they love their parents. If they love their parents, they will want to obey them.

All God's children fear Him. This does not mean that they are terrified of Him punishing them for their sins. What it means is that they are afraid of offending Him – because they love Him. They want to do what pleases God; so they want to keep His commandments. And this is how the kings of Israel were to live. They were to keep God's commandments, but they were to do this out of love to Him. And so they were to hate sin.

David was the first godly king who ruled over Israel. He feared God. In other words, he loved God and His commandments. So David wanted *not* to sin; he wanted God to keep him from sinning. That was why he prayed: "Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me" (Psalm 19:13). And as the people of Israel heard the Psalm which their king had written, they should have said to themselves: That is a good prayer for us to use too.

It is a good prayer for us today also, wherever we live. We are to keep God's commandments – all of them. But we can only do so properly if we have true love to God, if we have His fear in our hearts. Yes, we need new hearts; we need to be born again. How earnestly we should ask God to give us new hearts, to bring us through the new birth! Only then can we live in His fear, keeping His commandments, desiring His glory.

The fear of God is something which will, more or less, influence our whole lives. And when many in a community or a nation fear God, many others will be influenced to live decent, honest lives. A historian has asked why nineteenth-century British merchants "earned the reputation of being the most honest in the world" – pointing out that this was "a very real factor" in Great Britain's huge involvement in world trade during that century. His answer was that "hell and heaven seemed as certain to them as tomorrow's sunrise, and the last judgement as real as the week's balance sheet". He may have exaggerated the number of merchants who were affected to that extent, but the Bible did have enough influence at that time in Britain to make his answer sound reasonable. But however seriously the influence of the Bible has declined since then, let each of *us* seek to carry out our responsibilities with a consciousness of the reality of hell and heaven, of the last judgement – and particularly of God Himself and His commandments.

Second, the king of Israel was given some specific directions. You could sum them all up by saying that he was not to focus on the things of this world. He was forbidden to "multiply to himself silver and gold". He could

very easily become selfish and tax the people heavily, making himself very rich while making his people poor. That would indeed be selfish; it would be to forget God; it would certainly not be appropriate for someone who feared Him. Yes, the king could use his God-given authority to tax the people so that he would have an appropriate income, but he was not to live as if silver and gold were all that mattered.

Nor are we. We need to earn money, but we are not to treat it as if the only important things in life were money and what money can buy. We should remember the words of Jesus: “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal” (Matthew 6:19,20). God may make it possible for us to earn a lot of money, but that is not what we are to set our heart on. Something made of iron may rust so badly that it becomes worthless; moths may eat holes in our clothes and leave them useless; and thieves may break into our home and steal the things we value most. And even if we do not lose our property because of wear and tear, or rust and moths, or a robbery, or anything else of that nature, we will have to leave everything behind when we die – however precious it is to us.

So we should not live for these things, as if they were all that matter to us. We are to set our heart, not on them, but on “treasures in heaven” – spiritual blessings which we will never lose, even when death comes. But what are “treasures in heaven”? They are the blessings which Christ died to obtain for sinners – every good thing laid up in heaven for those who believe in Him. These good things include eternal life, forgiveness and holiness, which silver and gold cannot buy. And these blessings are so complete that Paul could assure the believers of his time: “My God shall supply *all your need* according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).

John Brown, a minister in Haddington, near Edinburgh, was one of the best-known ministers of the eighteenth century. One day when he was unwell, a friend asked if he had any appetite for his supper. He answered, “Yes,” but he went on to express the wish: “O if I had but as good an appetite for the fullness of God as I have for earthly food!” Here was a man who had absorbed the principles God has revealed in the Bible and, in particular, these directions for the kings of Israel. He lived in the fear of God and did not focus on the things of this world. Instead he had, by God grace, set his heart on “treasures in heaven”. In doing so, he is an example for us today. Next month, God willing, we will try to learn some more lessons from the directions for the kings of Israel.

John Calvin's Life in Brief (2)

Rev D Campbell

John Calvin was born in 1509 in northern France and studied in Paris. After his conversion he had to flee from persecution in France and settled as a minister in Geneva in 1536.

A*city of refuge.* From 1554 Geneva became the centre for Reformed thinking and activity. Many refugees, including those from Scotland and England, found protection in the city and flourished under the preaching of the Word there. John Knox spent some time in Geneva and he learnt Hebrew there. He looked to Calvin for guidance and support at various points in his ministry and it was Calvin who persuaded him to accept a call to be a minister in Frankfurt. They wrote to each other on many important subjects and, while they were in harmony on the great subjects of the gospel, they did not always agree on other matters. Importantly Knox and Calvin were fully agreed on the biblical form of Church government. It was the Presbyterianism of Scotland which achieved what Calvin had been longing to establish in Europe all his life. While it is difficult to summarise briefly the results of Calvin's ministry in Geneva, perhaps Knox's description of the city under Calvin is best: "the most perfect school of Christ since the days of the Apostles."

Calvin's writings. It may be worthwhile at this stage to mention Calvin's contribution to religious literature during his lifetime. Besides his incomparable *Institutes*, he produced commentaries or expositions on nearly every book of the Bible. These are still consulted for their weighty, accurate and careful interpretation of Scripture nearly 500 years later. They were produced throughout his life and have been reprinted in several editions since then; in English they are bound in 22 large 800-900 page volumes. He also produced Catechisms, Confessions of Faith and Books of Order for the Churches; he edited versions of the Bible and is famous for promoting a metrical version of the Psalms. Besides this he wrote and saw published numerous tracts and essays on a great variety of subjects. The time spent in this must have been very considerable.

But Calvin was not just an academic; he was a true pastor. He constantly wrote long and detailed letters to kings, princes and other rulers, to his fellow Reformers in foreign lands and to his supporters all over Europe. He wrote pastoral letters, warning letters, and letters of advice, encouragement and consolation. (There is a nineteenth-century edition of Calvin's letters in four volumes, which has been reprinted recently by The Banner of Truth.) He wrote to Luther, to Knox, to Cranmer; he wrote to gentlemen, to prisoners, to King Edward VI, to the Queen of Navarre. The list is very long.

He also produced many detailed treatises, notably on the subject of the Lord's Supper, disputing with heretics within and without the Church. He responded in detail to the decrees of the (Roman Catholic) Council of Trent and on top of all that he preached up to five sermons every week – very many of which were prepared for publishing – besides his numerous theological lectures and discourses. Anabaptists were a constant trouble to the Reformed Churches and he exposed their errors and extremes in many of his writings. Calvin's writings amount to hundreds of separate works; books and articles about him and his writings probably amount to hundreds of thousands more. ***Myth and reality.*** Many myths are associated with Calvin's Geneva. It is quite untrue that he suppressed laughter and sport. Nor was it Calvin who introduced censorship of morals into Geneva; the system was already in place under the civil authorities, Calvin improved it, made it work, and fashioned it according to biblical morality – but he never took any part in enforcing it, because he had no civil office.

The morals of the people were very closely watched over by ministers and elders. The Lord's Supper was sacred and the outwardly ungodly were forbidden to partake of it. The young were carefully taught from an early age, and the laws of marriage were strictly regulated. In many ways Calvin's Geneva was and is a model of what the Church of Christ should be in any city. That is the way many in his time viewed it and it is how we should view it too. Calvin is, as Benjamin Warfield says, "not only in a true sense the creator of the Protestant Church, but the author of all the freedom it exercises in its spiritual sphere".

Education. Geneva under Calvin was also to become a very famous city for learning. Together with Theodore Beza, he established his Academy in 1559 and during his lifetime more than a thousand students from all parts of Europe sat under their lectures. Very many effective and influential ministers and missionaries went from this Academy to all parts of Europe, into Russia and even to South America. Calvin's Academy became the first Protestant University. His contribution to education in general was immense, and the change of attitudes in education which the Reformation advanced can be traced to John Calvin as much as to any other individual. He was largely responsible also for what is known as the Protestant work ethic, which taught that every man had a calling in life. Many have viewed this as the very foundation of capitalism and enterprise. One modern author traces western liberty itself to the teaching of John Calvin.

Personal life and character. Beza, his colleague and biographer, gives us some details of what Calvin was like as a man. He was modest, temperate and thin. He usually ate only one meal a day because of stomach complaints.

Indeed he had very many physical ailments throughout life and suffered much from them. He possessed an astonishing memory, was unusually attentive and had a clear judgement. He despised mere eloquence and was sparing in his use of words. Although naturally grave, Beza says, there was no man more pleasant. Again, naturally timid, he was very bold in facing kings and emperors in defence of truth. He was, above all, a man of great faith and conviction. Far from being dull or cheerless, Calvin taught that "laughter is the gift of God", and he held it to be "the right, or rather the duty, of the Christian man to practice it in due season". He frequently joked with friends in his letters and eagerly joined them in all the joys of life. One writer says that he enjoyed a joke hugely, with that open-mouthed laugh which belonged to the men of the sixteenth century.

Marriage. On the subject of marriage, Calvin was not romantic. He had a practical view of married life. He once said, "If I take a wife it will be because, being better freed from numerous worries, I can devote myself to the Lord". His friends tried to match him with a woman of a noble family but his response was severe. He could never marry her "unless the Lord had entirely bereft me of my wits". He eventually married a widow, Idelette de Bure, in 1540 with whom he had one son Jacques. Tragically his son died within a few days in July 1542. Calvin wrote to a friend, "The Lord has certainly inflicted a severe and bitter wound in the death of our baby son, but he is Himself a Father and knows what is good for His children". Calvin's marriage was a happy one and his house was often the meeting place of ministers and friends, who were generously entertained. His wife died after a long illness in 1549 leaving him heartbroken. He wrote of her: "I have been bereaved of the best companion of my life. . . . While she lived she was the faithful helper of my ministry. From her I never experienced the slightest hindrance." He continued to be the sole carer for Idelette's two daughters from her previous marriage for the rest of his life.

His death. Up until very near his death, Calvin pursued his studies and writings as avidly and unrelentingly as ever. He prepared himself for death in every sense, confessing in his will to numerous failings. He pleads his unworthiness: "Woe is me; my ardour and zeal have been so careless and languid". But he was willing to be a debtor to God's mercy. He gave parting counsel to the city rulers and exhorted them to be steadfast and faithful. He died on 27 May 1564 and Geneva mourned the loss of its "wisest citizen . . . a common parent". His grave is not marked, but he was greatly lamented at the time of his death. His memory was kept alive by his many friends. It is our privilege to preserve it among ourselves 500 years after his birth and we hope that his life will always prove interesting.

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

35. Youwili – The Converted Chief

Last month we learned about Youwili, a chief on Aniwa, where Paton was a missionary. Youwili had signalled his opposition to Paton by cutting down part of the fence round the mission house. But how was the chief to be punished? Paton suggested to the islanders that he be made to repair the fence.

The punishment for young chief Youwili's threatening behaviour to Paton was given out by the other chiefs and villagers. Youwili was surprised by the judgement. He, like all the other islanders, thought Paton's suggestion an unusual punishment but he agreed to follow it through the next day.

The following morning's dawn found Youwili diligently mending the section of Paton's fence which he had cut down. By evening it was fully repaired, and it was now in an even better state than it had been before. Throughout the day, as people walked past, they taunted and mocked Youwili, but he did not answer them back. A group of young men loitered nearby. They made jokes to each other about Youwili, and laughed loudly, making sure he could hear them. "Youwili," they told him, "you found it easier to cut down Missi's fence than to repair it again. You will not repeat that in a hurry!" But he continued to ignore them.

Paton felt that Youwili's attitude had changed a little and that he did not hate the Christian religion like he did before. But Youwili still did not speak to Paton, and Paton felt it best not to say anything to him at this time. He decided the best approach was to pray for him and ask the Holy Spirit to work in his heart.

Quite some time had passed, and still there was no sign of Youwili coming to church or becoming friendlier towards Paton. Paton was beginning to wonder if God was going to answer his prayers for Youwili. But one day Paton was pulling a handcart from the shore loaded with coral; two young boys were helping him. They were approaching Youwili's house when Youwili came rushing out and said to Paton: "Missi, that is too hard work for you. Let me be your helper!" And without waiting for an answer he ordered the two boys to grab one rope, while he seized the other. He threw it over his shoulder and started off, pulling the cart behind him with the strength of a horse.

As Paton followed behind, he was praising and thanking God in his heart. He felt sure that this was a sign that Youwili had had a change of heart. He changed from being sullen and angry to being bright and cheerful. His wife came to Paton for a book and a dress and she told him: "Youwili sent me. His opposition to the worship is over now. I am to attend church and school. He

is coming too. He wants to learn how to be strong, like you, for Jehovah and Jesus.” From that day on, Youwili became a close friend of Paton and attended church regularly.

When Paton started membership classes at the church for those who would like to take the Lord's Supper, Youwili and his wife attended them. They eventually became members and sat at the Lord's table.

After his first communion service, Youwili came to Paton. He was troubled by something: “Missi, I've given up everything for Jesus, except one. I want to know if it is bad, if it will make Jesus angry; for if so, I am willing to give it up. I want to live so as to please Jesus.”

Paton was alarmed, wondering what heathen habit Youwili was still involved with. Youwili continued to explain his problem: “Missi, I have not yet given up my pipe and tobacco! O Missi, I have used it so long, and I do like it so well. But if you say that it makes Jesus angry with me, I will smash my pipe now and never smoke again!”

Paton admired Youwili's enthusiasm to live for Jesus and he tried to encourage him to do the right thing. He explained to Youwili that he himself did not smoke because he thought it was a waste of time and money and probably not good for his health (in the 1800s people did not know what we know now about the dangers of smoking). But he admitted to Youwili that other Christians did smoke; so he left it to Youwili to make up his own mind. After some hard thinking, Youwili explained his decision to Paton: “Missi, I give up everything else. If it won't make Jesus angry, I will keep the pipe. I have used it so long, and O, I do like it!”

Nowadays there are much stronger reasons for not smoking, as much more is known about its damaging effects on our health, which Paton only suspected. Smoking and other forms of drug-taking are addictive and can have serious effects on our health. We should try to make sure that we are not tempted into trying these things, even just once, for fun, or to impress our friends.

But other things we do in our free time may not actually be harmful or bad in themselves. It is how long we spend doing them, or the importance we attach to them that can turn them into a bad habit. For some people it might be spending too much time playing and thinking about football. For other people it might be spending too much time on their computer. What Paton said about the habit of smoking could be applied to a lot of our activities: “I regard it as a foolish and wasteful indulgence, a bad habit, and though you may serve and please Jesus with it, you might serve and please Jesus very much better without it”.

So each one of us has to look at ourselves and try to make sure that our

interests, hobbies and leisure activities do not take up too much of our time or interest. The devil likes us to spend lots of time doing such things and thinking about them, because then we have less time and interest for thinking seriously about our soul and eternity. “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Philippians 4:8).
S M Campbell

Romanism: Another Religion?

5. What Does it Teach About Morality?

Rev D W B Somerset

Previous articles in this series have discussed what Romanism teaches about God, about man and about death.

Another question that one can ask about any religion is, What kind of morality does it teach? What does it say about right and wrong?

The answer will depend very much on what the religion teaches about God, because obviously He is the One who must, in the end, determine the things which are right and the things which are wrong. In biblical Christianity the standards of morality come from the law of God, which is a reflection of His holy nature. Things are right or wrong according as they conform to the nature of God or not. To love our neighbour is good because it agrees with the nature of God; to hate our neighbour is evil because it is contrary to the nature of God.

God’s law is summarised in a convenient and practical way in the Ten Commandments. Every human duty and every Christian duty can be placed under one or more of the Commandments. An even more concise summary is given in the Two Commandments: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind”, and “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:37,39). Often the Two Commandments give the Christian a clearer light than the Ten Commandments as to what his duty is, but they just give a different perspective rather than a different law.

One important distinction is between *moral* duties and *ceremonial* duties. Some things are right simply because God has commanded them – for wise and holy reasons. An example would be baptism. In itself it is nothing, but it becomes important because God commands it. Such duties are ceremonial, and can be changed by God at different times, as circumcision

was abolished and replaced by baptism. Other duties are moral; these are things which are right, not simply because God has commanded them but because they conform to His nature. These are things that can never be changed, and these are the most important things. It is these that we were thinking of in the previous paragraph when we spoke about "God's law". In this sense God's law is a holy law: "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom 7:12). God loves the things that He has commanded, and hates the things that He has forbidden.

Once we have a law, we have a doctrine of sin, because "sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). If there were no law, there would be no sin: "where there is no law, there is no transgression" (Romans 4:15). God's law gives us a means of deciding whether our natures, thoughts, words and actions are right or wrong – whether they are sinful or acceptable to Him.

If we look at Islam, we find that the doctrine of sin is minimal. Sin is mentioned in the Koran, but it is not given any prominence. The reason for this is that there is no "law" in Islam. Allah has no nature – he is not holy – so there can be no reflection of his nature. His nature does not require Muslims to behave in a certain way: there are no Ten Commandments. Still less does Islam have the Two Commandments, because Allah is most certainly not love (see 1 John 4:16).

There are obligations in Islam, such as becoming a Muslim, going to Mecca, washing your hands before you pray, and not taking usury; and there are some obligations that Christians would call "moral", such as obeying one's parents, and not murdering. But these duties are required, not because they accord with Allah's nature, but simply because in his power and will he has decided to command them. He could have commanded the direct opposite if he wanted to. Islam therefore makes no distinction between ceremonial and moral duties, and generally what Christians would call ceremonial duties are regarded as far more important than moral ones. According to Samuel Zwemer, who was a missionary in Arabia and Egypt for 40 years, things like lying, deception, anger and lust are regarded as trivial sins and easily "forgiven" or forgotten by Allah. There is no conscience for these things. The result is that Muslim morality is abysmal.

When we come to Romanism it seems, at first sight, that the morality is much better than that of Islam, but we soon find that it falls far short of the morality of the Bible. On the surface, the Church of Rome accepts the Bible's teaching about the moral law of God, but in practice she undermines it. In a previous article we spoke about original sin and we saw how Romanism "evaporates" the sinfulness of our natures. Something rather similar happens with outward sins as well.

The main problem is the distinction that Rome makes between venial and mortal sins. A mortal sin is defined as one of a serious nature; it must be committed with full knowledge, both of the sin and of the seriousness of the offence; and it must be committed with deliberate and complete consent. There is no full list of mortal sins but examples include perjury, adultery, lust, murder, abortion, heresy, and despair. Several of these sins are clearly irrelevant to most people's daily life. They live for years without committing perjury (giving false evidence under oath), and without physically murdering anybody, and without falling into despair. Further, if you look at the definition of a mortal sin, you can see that even with a serious sin such as lying, it could always be argued that it was not committed with full consent, and was not therefore mortal. The result is that few sins are regarded as mortal. It may be possible to live for days and weeks without committing a mortal sin.

The effect of a mortal sin, in Roman Catholic teaching, is to kill the spiritual life in your soul – if indeed you had spiritual life. Mortal sins have to be confessed to a priest or you will go to hell. Venial sins (that is, all sins which are not mortal) mar your relationship with God and add to the amount of penance you must do in time or in purgatory, but they do not have to be confessed. They can virtually be ignored because, whatever you do, there will probably be some left to pay for at the end of your life. The consequence of all this is to reduce sin to something rather rare: it becomes possible, for instance, to confess your significant sins of the week to a priest in a short amount of time on a Saturday evening.

How different this is from biblical Christianity. Every breach of God's law, according to the Bible, is deadly and deserves hell: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10); "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Galatians 3:10). The unbeliever is in danger of God's wrath against him for every sin. The believer is not under condemnation, because Christ has died for his sins. He is not in danger of hell. But every sin that he commits incurs God's fatherly displeasure, and must be repented of when he realises that he has sinned, and it must be taken to the blood of Christ – "the fountain opened . . . for sin and for uncleanness" (Zechariah 13:1).

So the mentality of Roman Catholicism is to minimise most sins, and this obviously will have an effect on general standards of morality in society. In principle certain things are said to be wrong, but in practice you do not have to worry about them. The biblical mentality, on the other hand, is that every sin must be cast away as soon one becomes aware of it; there can be no place for sheltering sin. God insists on a holy people: "Thou desirest truth in the

inward parts” (Psalm 51:6). His people are to be “holy and without blame before him in love” (Ephesians 1:4). Once again we see that Romanism and biblical Christianity look superficially similar but turn out to be totally different in practice.

For Younger Readers

The Glass Eye

A man once went to a far-away place as a missionary. That means he went to tell the people about Jesus, and how they could be saved from their sins through Him.

The missionary also needed to build houses and grow vegetables and probably do lots of other things. But he did not have nearly enough time to do all these jobs himself. So he got some of the local men to work for him.

While the missionary was standing near the men watching them, they worked hard. When he went away to do other things, like reading the Bible and praying, the men did not work well. Sometimes they sat down under a tree and went to sleep.

One day the missionary had to go away to some other place. He knew that the workmen would not do much work when he was not there to watch them. What could he do?

The missionary had lost one of his eyes. In its place, doctors had given him a glass eye. So he decided to take out his glass eye and put it on top of a post where the men could see it. He told them: “I am going to leave my eye here to watch you all, to see if you work while I am away.”

Do you think that was a good idea? No, it was not, because he was not really being honest with the men. His glass eye could see nothing at all.

After the missionary went away, the men worked hard, but only for a while. Then one man had an idea. He did not want the glass eye to see them.

He took a hat and crept round behind the post where the glass eye was. He placed the hat over the eye. Then the eye could not see the

men. They felt they could safely stop work and sit under the tree.

What should the missionary have said? He should have told the men that God's eye can see them always. No one can cover that eye. No one can hide from it. You cannot do so. Nor can I.

God can see everything we do. He can see everything even when it is dark. We can hide nothing from Him. You should remember that, when you want to do something you know to be wrong. It may be something you would not do if your father or mother was around.

But you should not do it even when your parents are somewhere else. It is wrong and God sees everything. He sees everything you do. He sees you always. He sees you when you are doing something wrong – even when no one else sees you.

True Peace with God

A young woman, a Protestant, went to work as a servant for a Roman Catholic lady. As time went on, the lady began to suggest to her servant that she would find Roman Catholic services interesting. At last the servant gave in and went, partly out of curiosity and partly to please the lady. Later she stopped attending her own church and became a Roman Catholic.

Everything seemed fine until the servant became unwell. She was afraid she might die; and no priest, no penance, no ceremonies could give her any peace. A doctor told her she should try a change of air, and she decided to go home. As her mother watched her, she felt that a struggle was going on for her daughter – between Christ on the one side of the bed and the devil on the other. The daughter was crying out again and again that she had no peace. That she had been a good-living Protestant and then a faithful Roman Catholic was of no help to her now. But she did know she was a sinner and she wanted pardon and peace from God.

The lady for whom she had worked travelled over 100 miles to see her. The servant told her how miserable she felt. The lady's response was: "We must send for a priest at once and you will soon be all right".

"Never, never," said the young woman, "I'll have no priest here. I tried all that. A priest can do me no good. I want Christ, and it is Christ I must have or perish". The lady was shocked and went away.

A few days later, the woman called her mother to her bedside. "I have found Christ," she said; "I have got peace; the Lord has told me I am saved; I am quite happy." She had found true peace.

The Attack

C H Spurgeon

This is another chapter abridged from the book, *Advice to a Young Christian*. It is directed to those who have truly begun to follow Christ.

“Ye are strong . . . and ye have overcome the wicked one.” Young men who are strong must expect to be attacked. Whenever God lays up stores it is because there will be need of them. When Egypt's granaries were full from seven years of plenty, one might have expected seven years of famine. If you are weak you shall have no trial but such as is common to men; but if you are strong, rest assured that trials many and heavy await you. Every sinew in the arm of faith has to be tested. Every single weapon given out of the armoury of God will be needed in the conflict. Christian soldiering is no military pastime; it means hard fighting from the day of enlistment to the day of reward. The strong young man may rest assured that he has no energy to spare for display and vainglory. There is a heavy burden for the strong shoulder and a fierce fight for the trained hand.

Why does Satan attack this class most? I reckon, first, because Satan is not always sure that the babes in grace are actually in grace. So he does not always attack beginners. But when they are sufficiently developed to make him see what they are, he arouses his wrath. To the utmost of his power he will worry and weary those who have escaped from him completely.

Does Satan know our thoughts? Of course he does not, as God does. Satan pretty shrewdly guesses at them from our actions and our words; he is an old hand at studying human nature; so he is full of cunning. Yet he does not know everything; so he may think someone has so little grace that perhaps he is not in grace at all and lets him alone. But as soon as he is certain that the man has grace, then the devil is at him. The moment Jesus was baptized and the Spirit of God came upon Him, He was taken into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. If you become a confessed servant of God, do not think the conflict is over; it is then the battle begins. You will have to go into such a wilderness and such a conflict as you never knew before. Satan knows that young men in grace can do his kingdom great harm; so he wants to slay them early. You are strong to overthrow his kingdom; so you need not marvel that he desires to overthrow you.

It is right that young men should endure hardship; otherwise they might become proud. It is hard to hide pride from them. Full of strength, courage, patience and zeal, they are ready enough to believe the wicked one when he whispers that they are perfect; so trial is sent to keep them out of that dangerous snare. The devil tempts the saint, and the saint sees his inward

depravity and can no longer boast. The devil thinks he is going to destroy the man of God, but God makes the temptation work for his eternal good.

If this young man was untried, he would certainly not bring such glory to God as when he overcomes temptation. Read the story of Job before he was tempted. You say, There is no story, just that his flocks and herds continued to multiply, another child was born, and so on. A nation has no history when all goes well; and it is so with a believer. But when trial comes, and the man is valiant for God against the arch-enemy, I hear a voice from heaven saying, Now you shall have history – history that will glorify God. It is right for young men in Christ to endure conflicts, so that they may bring honour to their Father, their Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit who dwells in them.

It also prepares them for future usefulness. When I first came to Christ, I often wondered why I had such a hard time of it, why I was so long and so wearied in finding the Saviour. After that, I wondered why I experienced so many spiritual conflicts while others were in peace. I did not know that I was destined to minister to thousands of distressed spirits, storm-tossed and ready to perish. But when the afflicted mention their experience I can usually reply, “I have been there”. It is good that young men should bear the yoke in their youth – that while they are strong they should gain experience so that, later in life, they may be able to help the little ones of the family.

Take your tribulation gratefully; you will never be a warrior if you never enter the dust clouds where garments are rolled in blood. May your Captain save you from the cancer of inglorious ease! You must fight in order to acquire the character which inspires others with confidence in you, and to fit you to lead your comrades to the fray. May we have many young men of the heavenly family to defend the Church against worldliness and error and guard the weaker ones against the many deceivers that waylay the Church of God! I charge those of you who love the Lord to grow in grace and be strong. May the Lord teach your hands to war and your fingers to fight!

“I have written unto you young men because ye are strong.” They must be strong, for a man who will overcome Satan cannot be feeble. Wicked ones abound, but there is one crafty being who deserves the name of *the wicked one* – he is the arch-leader of rebellion, the chief of sinners, the tempter of sinners. In what sense have these young men overcome him? They have broken right away from his power. They were once his slaves; now they are not. They once slept under his roof in perfect peace, but conscience raised an uproar, the Spirit of God troubled them and they escaped his power. Once Satan never troubled them. Why should he? They were good friends together. Now he tempts and worries them because they have left his service, engaged themselves to a new Master, and become his enemies.

I speak to many who gladly confess that not a bit of them now belongs to the devil, for Christ has bought them with His precious blood. They feel they are not their own, and certainly not the devil's; for they belong to Him who purchased them. The strong man armed has been turned out by a stronger than he; Jesus has taken the fortress of the heart by storm, and driven out the foe. Satan entered into Judas, but he cannot enter into us; for our soul is filled by another who is well able to hold His own.

These young men have also overcome the wicked one through opposing him. Satan's empire succeeds when we yield our will to his; but when our will revolts, we have already begun to overcome him. Yet sometimes we are much better at willing than we are at doing, as the Apostle Paul was; he said, "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not". Still, the hearty will to be clean from sin is a victory over sin, and as that will grows more determined to resist temptation, we have in that degree overcome sin and Satan. What a blessed thing this is! Remember that Satan has no weapons of defence; so he must flee when we resist him. A Christian has a shield as well as a sword, but Satan has fiery darts and nothing else. I never read that he has a shield; so he must run away when we resist him.

Besides, some of us young men in Christ have won many a victory over Satan. Have we not been tempted, fearfully tempted? But the mighty grace of God has come to the rescue and we have not yielded. Can you not look back, without the boasting of a Pharisee, over many an evil habit which once controlled you but does so no longer? It was a hard conflict. How you bit your lip sometimes and feared that you must yield! Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Hear what the Spirit says to you because you have overcome the wicked one: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world".

In Christ Jesus we have entirely overcome the wicked one already, for he has already been conquered – our Lord and Master met him and destroyed him. He now lacks his boasted battle-axe, that terrible weapon which has made the bravest men quail. "What weapon is that?" you ask. It is death. Our Lord overthrew him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and so Satan does not have that power any longer. The keys of death and of hell are at Christ's girdle. Those who believe in Jesus shall defeat him, for *He* has defeated him! The bruise on his head cannot be hidden! His crown is dashed in pieces. The deadly wound cannot be healed! We believe our Lord's promise to bruise Satan under our feet shortly, to his complete overthrow. Let us take courage and abide steadfast in the faith, for we have overcome the wicked one in our Lord Jesus. We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Looking Around Us

Therese Martin's Bones

Therese Martin was born in the French town of Lisieux in 1873. She became a nun at the age of 15 and died of tuberculosis in 1897, when she was just 24.

During her lifetime she created a great impression as a very religious young woman. Indeed Pope Pius X described her as “the greatest saint of modern times”, and Pope Pius XI recognised her as a Saint in 1925. That means, according to Roman Catholic teaching, that people can use her, like other saints, as a channel for sending up their prayers to heaven. An official *Catechism* declares that “we can and should ask them to intercede for us and for the whole world”.

But we do not need such channels to get our prayers into heaven. There is a far better intercessor than St Therese of Lisieux, “for”, the Bible tells us, “there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, *the man Christ Jesus*” (1 Timothy 2:5). And “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25). It is through Christ Jesus, the One whom God has *appointed* to be the Intercessor between human beings and Himself, that our prayers can be heard and our needs supplied – especially our spiritual needs.

A church in Therese’s home town of Lisieux has become a centre for pilgrims from all over the world. It is the second-most-popular pilgrimage site in France, with over 2 million visitors a year, many of whom will look to Therese to intercede for them so that they may be delivered from all kinds of illnesses and disabilities – and perhaps even from sin. But her intercession is purely imaginary; God never appointed her. If He had, we can be sure that the Bible would tell us of a special class of saints – like Therese Martin – who are holier than the ordinary men and women who have followed Christ faithfully in this life, serving Him as He directs. But the Bible gives us no such information; so we can be sure that saints, in the Roman Catholic sense, are an invention of popes and others, who are not prepared to submit to God’s revelation alone.

Yet it seems it is not enough to have pilgrims make their way to Lisieux to benefit from Therese’s bones. These bones have already been taken to more than 40 countries outside France, and this year they are to come to England and Wales. Among those who would find it rather difficult to travel to Lisieux are the prisoners in Wormwood Scrubs, a high-security jail in London. In October a casket containing some of her bones is to spend three and a half hours in the jail. The organiser of the tour to England and Wales, Monsignor Keith Baltrop, said the presence of St Therese’s bones would give

prisoners the chance to pray for her help. He claimed that “many people have experienced healing or a sense of putting things right after praying before the relics”. No doubt, most prisoners have much need for spiritual healing and there are many things they need to have put right. But Therese is dead and can do nothing for them. What they need – and what we all need – is to seek the blessing of Jesus Christ, who died for sinners but is no longer dead. He rose again and His merits are freely offered to sinners, no matter how many and great their sins, no matter how serious their other needs.

But no one can claim that Therese’s bones can be relied on to work wonders. In December 2002, they were taken to Baghdad in the hope of preventing the Iraq War. They did no such thing. No one should have expected it. We are to listen to what the Bible tells us: “Let us . . . come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). If we do so, we will find that Jesus Christ’s intercession is absolutely effective.

The Fountain of Siloam

These verses were written at the foot of Mount Carmel in June 1839, while M’Cheyne was on a missionary tour of Palestine. As he wrote, he was thinking of the words of Isaiah 8:6: “The waters of Shiloah that go softly”.

Beneath Moriah’s rocky side
a gentle fountain springs;
Silent and soft its waters glide,
like the peace the Spirit brings.

The thirsty Arab stoops to drink
of the cool and quiet wave;
And the thirsty spirit stops to think
of Him who came to save.

Siloam is the fountain’s name;
it means “One sent from God”;
And thus the holy Saviour’s fame
it gently spreads abroad.

O grant that I, like this sweet well,
may Jesus’ image bear,
And spend my life, my all, to tell
how full His mercies are.

R M M’Cheyne

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