

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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God Sees It All

Day after day since early May, the revelations have continued, and many of them have been hugely embarrassing. A British newspaper has been publishing details of the expenses various members of Parliament were claiming and these men and women appear to have been very greedy, if not downright dishonest – not all of them, but uncomfortably many. For instance, more than one MP was claiming for the interest on a loan to buy a house – after the loan had been paid off. When this was pointed out, they claimed it was a mistake. This may have been the case, but it suggests a very careless attitude to claiming money from Parliament, especially when the amount involved ran to many thousands of pounds.

Such claims were possible because MPs may need a home in the district which they represent in Parliament and they also need somewhere to live while they are in London attending the House of Commons; they can claim for various expenses in connection with their second home. There are many examples of extravagance. For instance, one MP claimed for an expensive flat-screen television and then claimed for a second just a year later. He also claimed for two DVD players within a month for his one-bedroom flat.

Yet one feels that there is an element of envy in some of the complaints about MPs' expenses. Why, people ask, should anyone else get more money than they do? And they do not take into account the extra responsibilities and difficulties which may be involved in the other person's job. Those whom the British electors choose to represent them in Parliament should be paid a proper salary and they should be able to claim reasonable expenses. The trouble is that the system which regulates MPs' expenses is far from satisfactory – and the MPs themselves are responsible for the system.

All this should be a reminder to everyone to be honest in all their dealings with others. They should not charge too much for their work or for their expenses, and they should pay a fair price of everything they buy.

But there is another lesson I would like to emphasise. Many of these MPs must have assumed that no one outside Parliament would ever hear about the claims they were making. So, they thought, they could easily get away with

being more generous to themselves than they should have been. But here is something we should never forget: “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good” (Proverbs 15:3). God sees everything – always. He misses nothing; He forgets nothing.

Eli Page as a young man used to sell corn. One day someone came to buy a bushel of oats (about 15 kg). The thought went through Page’s mind: “He trusts you. He will never check whether you have given him the full amount. You need not give him the full measure.” It was probably a temptation from Satan, and at once Page knew that this was a sinful idea. His next thought was: “The eye of God is upon me”. He made sure that the man received *more* than the bushel of oats he paid for. Clearly he wanted to keep as far away from sin as possible. It was a good beginning for someone who was later to become a minister.

A God-fearing man called Hogg was a butcher; he used to buy cows from various farmers so that he could sell the meat to his customers. Even the ungodly farmers trusted him; they knew that he was absolutely honest. They used to say to him: “Mr Hogg, we know that you will give us the value of our cattle. You are the best judge of the proper price; take them and pay us what you think them worth.” The ungodly farmers may not have been honest themselves; they may never have thought of God watching them when they bought and sold their cows. But we can be sure that Hogg remembered that the eyes of the Lord are in every place, and that these eyes were looking down on him all the time. So should we.

Sometimes God, in His providence, brings to everyone’s attention what only He could see happening – as with the MPs’ expenses. You may want to hide from your parents – or your teachers or lecturers, or your employer – what you have done. Yet in some totally unexpected way they find out. Why does this happen? There may be many reasons. Someone you trusted to keep the matter quiet may tell just one other person and eventually everyone knows – even your parents or whoever else you specially did *not* want to find out. But do you remember the warning given in the Bible: “Be sure your sin will find you out”? And why will your sin find you out? Because you “have sinned against the Lord” (Numbers 32:23). It is one way God uses to show the seriousness of sins of every kind. It is a reminder that no sin is hidden from Him and that He will yet deal with us for every sin that we have committed, if we do not repent.

The solemn fact is that “God shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:14). When this world has come to an end, we must all appear before Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who will then come forth as the all-powerful Judge.

Just as we cannot hide our sins from Him in this world, we will then not be able to prevent any of our sins from being made known to everyone – for everyone will be present to hear all the evidence made public that will condemn those who have not repented of their sins. This is something you should remember when you are tempted to do what is wrong and then hide it from your parents or anyone else to whom you are responsible – or when, like Adam and Eve, you even think you can hide your sins from God.

Of course you cannot hide anything from God, no more than those MPs who were manipulating the system could hide their dishonest expense claims from Him. “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” But although *you* cannot hide your own sins, God can hide them all away from every eye. So you must ask Him to forgive your sins for Jesus’ sake. Plead with Him to give you grace to trust in Jesus Christ and to lead a godly life. The eyes of God will still be upon you; He will see all that you do wrong. But He will see something else; He will see His grace in your heart, and also the holy thoughts that you think and the good deeds that you do. All these good things will be brought out on the day of judgement as evidence that you are one of God’s children and that you are fit for heaven.

Romanism: Another Religion?

4. What Does it Teach About Death?

Rev D W B Somerset

In last month’s article we considered what Romanism teaches about God.

Another question that one can ask about any religion is: What does it teach about death? The fact that we are going to die is one of the most important aspects of human existence, and every religion has to have some theory about what happens to us after death. Those religions which teach that people are “reincarnated” after death and come back to this world in another form, or which teach that some people are annihilated at death and cease to exist, are clearly different from those which teach that everyone continues to exist after death and will have to give an account of their life in this world at the Day of Judgement.

Romanism teaches that there will be a Day of Judgement, but it differs from biblical Christianity in two important respects. The first is about where the dividing line will be drawn at the Day of Judgement; and the second is about what happens to those who die before the Day of Judgement but are not sent to hell. On the first of these points, the Bible teaches that the dividing

line is between those that have faith and those that do not. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Those that have trusted in Christ will go to heaven, and those that did not trust in Christ will go to hell.

The Roman Catholic dividing line is very different. It is between those who died in "mortal sin" and those who did not. Anyone who dies after committing a mortal sin which he has not confessed to a priest, if there was one available, will go to hell, says the Roman Church, and anyone who dies free from unconfessed mortal sin will not go to hell. We hope to say something on the subject of "mortal sin" in a later article, but one particular mortal sin, according to the latest edition of *The Catholic Catechism*, is to remain deliberately outside the Roman Catholic Church. Putting these together, we see that Roman Catholicism assigns to hell virtually everybody that trusts in Christ. There may be a few people in the Church of Rome who are true believers but generally they leave the Church of Rome when they discover how unbiblical and evil it is. On the other hand, the Bible teaches that all who do not trust in Christ will go to hell. This includes the vast majority of those who live and die in the Roman Catholic Church.

So Biblical Christianity and Romanism are teaching very different things about who goes to hell. If you trust in Christ and follow the Word of God then, according to biblical Christianity, you will go to heaven, but according to Roman Catholicism you will go to hell. On the other hand, if you subject yourself to the Pope and confess your "mortal sins" to a priest before you die then, according to Roman Catholicism, you will not go to hell, but according to the Bible you will. Such contradictory teaching on such an important point is a further reason for maintaining that Romanism and Biblical Christianity are different religions.

The other difference about death that we mentioned concerns those that die before the Day of Judgement but are not sent to hell. This brings us to the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory. The teaching is that only a few notable Roman Catholics go straight to heaven; the vast majority go, for some time, to purgatory where they suffer the "temporal punishment" still remaining for their sins. Once this is completed, which may take a long time, even hundreds and perhaps thousands of years, they are admitted to heaven. At one Oxford College, High Church Anglicans (who are almost Roman Catholics) are still praying for King Edward III, who died in 1377, just in case he is still in purgatory.

Purgatory, according to Romanist teaching, is a place or state of pain and suffering. It is a place of fire, better than hell only because the sufferings do not go on for ever; so there is no despair. Clearly it would be a place to be

dreaded, if it existed. Anything in this life would be better than purgatory. Purgatory would be like a horrible operation that had to be endured at some point but which one would want to put off as long as possible. Death, for those that believe in purgatory, is an unpleasant subject because it leads inevitably to thoughts of almost endless misery and pain. For their happiness, they find it best to avoid thinking about death and about the next world and to keep their minds fixed firmly on this world.

How different all this is from the Bible. The biblical teaching, summarised in *The Shorter Catechism*, is that “the souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory”. Paul was “in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better” (Philippians 1:23). He taught that to be “absent from the body” is “to be present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8). Stephen’s prayer at his death was: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” (Acts 7:59). The thief on the cross went that very day to be with Christ in paradise (Luke 23:43). This is the glorious prospect that the Bible opens up. David addressed God: “In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Psalm 16:11). The tendency of such faith is to lift the soul up to heaven, and to encourage thoughts of the eternal world. “Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:1-2).

The tendency of the doctrine of purgatory, on the other hand, is to settle the soul on this life: “Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die” (1 Corinthians 15:32). Once again, we see the great difference in practice, and hence in reality, between the two religions: Romanism and biblical Christianity.

A Final Farewell

2. This Golden Opportunity

J H Thornwell

Thornwell was an American minister who spent some years as the head of South Carolina College. This is the second of two articles which give, in edited form, the last part of his address to the group of students who graduated in 1844.

Suffer the word of exhortation while I take up this last opportunity of **S**urging you, with affection, earnestness and solemnity, to seek the Lord while He may be found, to call upon Him while He is near. The point at which you have arrived is critical. You are now forming your plans for life. And if you now leave out religion, it is only too likely that you will never find the convenient season for attending to its claims. This is a solemn time, when

you so much need the blessing of the Almighty – an important point in your lives, which is to give shape and character to what you do afterwards. If you now rely on your own wisdom, and trust to your own understandings, there is too much ground to fear that you may be left to yourselves – abandoned to your self-sufficiency and folly.

Can there be a more favourable time than the present for attending to the interests of your souls? You are young, and special promises are made to youth. You have reached a critical position. One step now may decide your destiny for ever. How important that you should act wisely and take that step in the fear of God! The cares of life will soon leave little time for the claims of religion; and if you find a strong reluctance to consider them now, that reluctance will increase with the growing power of a worldly spirit and the increasing dominion of inbred depravity. You are now free from those outward annoyances which the business of life always brings upon us, and which just as effectively close the heart against the calls of God as the heavier calamities of our life.

In every way, then, your present situation is favourable – more so, perhaps, than it will ever be again. Do you mean to let this golden opportunity pass without taking advantage of it? Do you mean that grey hairs shall find you veteran sinners against God? Have you any excuse, any plausible pretext, which even your consciences will receive, for refusing to attend at once to the one thing needful? You surely cannot deny that, if Christianity is anything, it must be everything – if true at all, it is “tremendously true”. All other matters dwindle into nothing in comparison with the needs of the soul. What does the applause of the world signify, the distinctions of this life, the force of genius and the charm of literature, if, after all your short-lived honours, you are doomed at last to lie down in hell?

Finally, my ministry to you closes now; the result of my labours and of your attention will not be known till the day of judgement. Whatever may have been my imperfections – and I feel that they have been both many and great – I have always had, and shall always continue to have, the liveliest interest in your welfare. I have tried to lead you to the fountain of life; I have preached the gospel with whatever ability God has given me; and if any of you have been brought to reflect seriously on the subject of salvation, it is a matter of devout thanksgiving to God.

But it oppresses me to think that some of you, at least, will leave these walls as careless as you entered them. If now, at the eleventh hour, I could break your carnal slumber and rouse your attention to the things that belong to your peace, I would gladly use any lawful means to do so. But no voice but the voice of God can reach you. I tremble to see you entering life

unprepared for its end. But I have faithfully warned you. I call heaven and earth to record against you this day; and if you perish in your sins, your own consciences will tell you that life and death were set before you. You have died willfully. Would that I could utter, with as much hope as affection, the only word which remains to be pronounced: Farewell!

For Younger Readers

The Most Important Thing

There are lots of most important things you need to learn. But what is the most important thing you really need to know?

When you go to school you learn lots of things. You learn how to read and how to write. And you learn how to count and how to do sums. These are all very important. And you may learn lots of other interesting things too – like how people used to live long ago and how people live today in other parts of the world.

To know these things may prepare you to get a job when you grow up and to carry out the work you will be expected to do. Your teacher and your parents may tell you that you should work hard and learn well because these things are so important. And they are right.

When you are young, you can expect your parents to buy your food and your clothes and everything else that you need. But when you grow up, you will need to earn money to buy these things for yourself.

Yes, all the things I have mentioned can be important. But there is something far more important. We need to know about God. We need to know how He wants us to live. We need to know that we are sinners – that we do not live as God wants us to live. We are again and again doing what is wrong.

And there is something else. God has told us how our sin can be taken away. That was why Jesus came into the world. Remember that Jesus Christ is not just a man, a wonderful man. He is God, and He came into this world to die for sinners. That is the most important thing you need to know.

Let me put this in the words of the Bible: “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16). These words are so important that, even though you are young, you should learn them by heart. And later you can learn the whole verse: “For God so loved the

world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”.

One man said that the most important thing he ever found out was: “I am a great sinner and Jesus Christ is a great Saviour”. I hope you will not be much older before you find this out for yourself. Nothing can be more important for you to learn.

John Calvin's Life in Brief (1)

Rev D Campbell

Many biographies of the famous Reformer of Geneva have been written since his death and the more modern of these have been able to condense the older and longer studies. For those who wish to look more closely at this important life, a good starting place would be a short book by Robert L Reymond, entitled *John Calvin: His Life and Influence*, published by Christian Focus in 2004. This covers his whole life in a very readable manner. It has a chapter on Calvin and the burning of Michael Servetus which is well worth reading. There is also an extensive list of books. The following brief sketch of Calvin's life was part of a paper given to the Free Presbyterian Youth Conference in Inverness in 2009, which marks 500 years since Calvin's birth.

Birth and parentage. John Calvin was born on 10 July 1509 in Noyon in northern France. His parents were well to do and religious. His father Gerard was highly respected in church society, being the solicitor to the local bishop of Noyon and an administrator of church life in the area. His mother, Jeanne (Lefranc) was noted for her religious piety and motherly affection. But her piety was the Roman Catholic form of piety which Calvin did much to expose. Calvin would later recall being made to kiss a statue of the Virgin Mary when a little child. Other children were born to the family but several of them died in infancy. Besides John, two other sons survived – an older brother Charles and a younger brother, Antoine. Sadly the mother of the family died when John Calvin was still a little boy. His father's connections in the city and the Church meant that young John had an excellent education. He learnt the manners and the refinements of high society from his earliest years. This would stand him in good stead later in life as he corresponded freely and familiarly with many powerful emperors and princes and addressed himself to the highest levels of sixteenth-century society throughout Europe.

Studies in Paris. When Calvin turned 12, his father secured for him what was then called a benefice – part of the income of a chaplaincy in the Cathedral of Noyon. With this funding, he was sent to the best schools in Paris. He began his studies there in August 1521. His course of study was

intended to prepare him to be a priest. The grammar course (as it was called) included Latin and philosophy and some arithmetic. He was taught by the best Latin scholar of the time and excelled in his studies. After one year, Calvin's father transferred him to another College. Here he studied arts subjects. One famous teacher from Scotland was very probably his tutor here – a man called John Mair (or Major). The range of his studies in Paris was considerable and while he later described them as darkness and “puzzling himself and others with preposterous riddles”, his achievement in all branches of learning was very significant.

God's providence. Martin Luther's writings were argued over and condemned in Paris during Calvin's stay there and we can be in no doubt that Calvin had access to them. But he remained a Romanist and received his Arts degree in 1525 or 1526, and was given another benefice in 1527. Around this time his father, after a bitter dispute with the Church authorities in Noyon, decided that John should study law and sent him to Orleans for that purpose. This change in studies, under divine providence, was to bring changes to Calvin's life far beyond the broadening of his mind by these new disciplines and subjects. His study of Greek brought him into closer contact with Luther's writings through a sympathetic teacher. He also came under the influence of his own cousin who had become a Lutheran and who later translated the Bible into French. It is commonly thought that Calvin was converted and became a Protestant during his time in Orleans.

His resolve to study. His father died in 1531 and John was now free to decide for himself as to his course in life. God had been preparing him for special service in the Church through the studies which he was made to pursue. By the age of 23, in 1532, he was setting out in the world with an ambition to be a scholar. He returned to Paris and kept company with those scholars who were sympathetic to the new theology which was spreading like wild-fire through Europe. He speaks very little of his conversion, but in one place he describes it as “sudden” and says that by it God reduced his mind to a teachable frame. While scholarly subjects were still of interest to him, he says that “this taste of true godliness . . . set me on fire with such desire to progress” in it more than anything else.

Trouble. Those who followed the Protestant faith were at this time under much persecution. There were, however, those who tried to reply to the authorities. In Paris, the rector of the University, Nicolas Cop, with Calvin's assistance in writing it, delivered a pro-Protestant address in November 1533. Both he and Calvin were forced to flee the city as a result. Calvin wandered from place to place, assuming a false name to protect himself. But his learning had been recognised and his teaching was sought after by those who could

no longer endure the deathly theology of Rome. He probably began to work on *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, his most famous book, during this period. In 1534 Calvin returned to his native Noyon and resigned his church benefices and officially left the Roman Catholic Church

William Farel's curse. France, in spite of persecution, was being steadily won to the Protestant faith through the efforts of men whose labours were richly blessed by God. Other parts, including Switzerland, were coming under the evangelical doctrine too. Having published his *Institutes* in March 1536, and fleeing persecution himself, Calvin lingered overnight in the Swiss town of Geneva on his way to Strasbourg. He was only in Geneva because he was taking a long detour to avoid the scenes of war. It was to be one of the most significant visits in the history of Europe. William Farel, whose energy in the Reformation movement was extraordinary, had been in search of a suitable man to help in the town; he seized on the young scholar and threatened him with God's curse if he chose private study before the care of the Church in Geneva. Calvin said that he felt the arresting hand of God in this threatening and, gathering his belongings from nearby Basel, he returned to Geneva to become a pastor there. He was given the title of Reader in Holy Scripture. He was 27 years old.

His first ministry in Geneva. His ministry was to be very brief. Two matters need to be noted from Calvin's first period in Geneva. The first was an incident which contributed greatly to his reputation as an uncommonly-able theologian. A public disputation in nearby Lausanne in October 1536 on the subject of the Lord's Supper became an opportunity for him to defend the early Church Fathers, purely from memory and without any prior intention to speak. The effect of his argument was so profound that many Roman Catholic priests renounced their Church to become Protestants. Lausanne was from that point declared a Protestant city by the common vote of the people.

The other important matter from his first ministry in Geneva was the articles on Church order and government which he proposed to the city's rulers. The articles called for reform in various areas. The particular point of contention was the claim that the pastors should have the right to exercise Church discipline independently of the city council. The rulers rejected it. Calvin had personally derived this teaching from the New Testament and he was so convinced that it was necessary that he refused any other form of Church government imposed on Geneva by the rulers. For this refusal he was, along with Farel, expelled from the city in April 1538. He joined Martin Bucer, a prominent Reformer in Strasbourg, where Calvin ministered to the French-speaking congregation until 1541.

Return to Geneva. After Calvin left Geneva in 1538, the city descended into moral and spiritual corruption and lawlessness. The city rulers eventually recognised that Calvin was the one man who could restore order among the people and in 1540 they invited him back. He did not respond immediately. In Strasbourg he was heavily involved in public debates and in writing treatises on the subject of the Lord's Supper. Farel urged him to return to Geneva, writing a severe letter to him, but by late 1541 Calvin was himself fully resolved on going back. After a three-and-a-half-year absence, he returned to his pulpit and took his text from the exact place in the Bible where he had left off in 1538.

He was to continue in his functions for 23 more years, until his death in 1564. Between 1541 and 1555 he endured much trouble from his political enemies and at one point offered to resign from his ministry. But when his opponents were expelled for stirring up riots in the town, his influence in Geneva was such that he could now work more easily with the system. Yet he was never content with the degree of reform in the Genevan Church. Michael Servetus, the infamous Spanish heretic, arrived in Geneva in 1553 and after a long trial was burnt to death by the city authorities. Many consider Calvin's consent to his death to be the one great stain on his legacy.

Shelomith's Son

Do you remember, from the Old Testament, who Shelomith was? Or what her son is remembered for? You will find his story in Leviticus 24. Sadly, he was the boy who blasphemed God's name and cursed. He took the name of the Lord our God in vain. He broke the Third Commandment.

The people who heard him were obviously so shocked that they locked him up until the Lord would make clear how he should be punished. And what was his punishment to be? The Lord told Moses that anyone who blasphemed His name should be put to death. The congregation of the children of Israel stoned Shelomith's son until he died. How solemn!

I wonder if you feel shocked and sad when you hear people take God's name in vain? Sadly it is such a common sin today that you can hardly go out of your house without hearing it. And we are in danger of getting so used to it and of being hardened by hearing it that it doesn't offend us anymore. We may even forget that it is a sin specifically forbidden by God, just as the sins of idolatry and murder are specifically forbidden.

I hope none of you would actually take God's name in vain in this way. But if you look up *The Shorter Catechism* and read the answers to questions

54 and 55 – which say what is required and what is forbidden in the Third Commandment – you will see it covers a wide number of sins. It requires “the holy and reverent use of God’s names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word and works”. It then forbids the wrong use of any of these, using them irreverently or flippantly.

Those of you who are older may find it helpful to look up the corresponding answers in *The Larger Catechism*; they are much more detailed. You would also find in Thomas Watson’s book *The Ten Commandments* a most clear and helpful explanation of the different ways in which we may break this commandment – perhaps without even being aware that we are doing so.

How careful we should then be always to honour God’s holy name. We should also be careful always to use the Scriptures reverently and never quote them flippantly or in jest. We should never complain about God’s providences, as this is to reproach God, and so to take His name in vain. This commandment also extends to heart sins, as do all the other commandments. So, for example, to worship God with our lips but not with our hearts is to take His name in vain.

How much we need to pray for God’s help to keep this commandment, and all His commandments! Should we not pray with the psalmist:

“Give understanding unto me,
so keep Thy law shall I;
Yea, even with my whole heart I shall
observe it carefully” (Ps 119:34)? *J van Kralingen*

Separation from the World

7. Real Victory over the World

J C Ryle

This is another section, slightly edited, of a chapter from the book, *Practical Religion*. The last two articles explained what true separation really is.

To come out from the world is, of course, not an easy thing. It cannot be easy so long as human nature is what it is and a busy devil is always near us. It requires an endless struggle and constant exertion; it involves endless conflict and self-denial; it often places us in opposition to members of our own families, to relations and neighbours; it sometimes obliges us to do things which give great offence and bring on us ridicule and petty persecution. This is precisely what makes many hang back and shrink from decided religion. They know they are not right; they know that they are not so thorough in Christ’s service as they ought to be and they feel uncomfortable and ill at

ease. But the fear of man keeps them back. And so they linger on through life with aching, dissatisfied hearts – with too much religion to be happy in the world, and too much of the world to be happy in their religion. I fear this is a very common case, if the truth were known.

Yet there are some in every age who seem to get the victory over the world. They come out decidedly from its ways, and are unmistakably separate. They are independent of its opinions, and unshaken by its opposition. They move on like planets in an orbit of their own, and seem to rise equally above the world's smiles and frowns. And what are the secrets of their victory? I will set them down.

(a) The first secret of victory over the world is a right heart. By that I mean a heart renewed, changed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost – a heart in which Christ dwells, a heart in which old things have passed away and all things become new. The grand mark of such a heart is the bias of its tastes and affections. Whoever has such a heart no longer likes the world and the things of the world, and therefore finds it no trial or sacrifice to give them up. He no longer has any appetite for the company, the conversation, the amusements, the occupations, the books which he once loved; and to “come out” from them seems natural to him.

Great indeed is the power of a new principle! Just as, in spring, the new buds on a beech hedge push off the old leaves and make them fall quietly to the ground, so does the new heart of a believer affect his tastes and likings and make him drop many things which he once loved and lived in, because he now likes them no more. Let him that wants to come out from the world and be separate make sure first and foremost that he has a new heart. If the heart really is right, everything else will be right in time. “If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light” (Matthew 6:22). If the affections are not right, there never will be right action.

(b) The second secret of victory over the world is a lively practical faith in unseen things. What saith the Scripture? “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4). To attain and keep up the habit of looking steadily at invisible things as if they were visible; to set before our minds every day, as grand realities, our souls, God, Christ, heaven, hell, judgement, eternity; to cherish an abiding conviction that what we do not see is just as real as what we do see, and ten thousand times more important – this is one way to be conquerors over the world.

This was the faith which made the noble army of saints, described in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, obtain such a glorious testimony from the Holy Ghost. They all acted under a firm persuasion that they had a real God, a real Saviour, and a real home in heaven, though unseen by mortal eyes. Armed

with this faith, a man regards this world as a shadow compared to the world to come, and cares little for its praise or blame, its enmity or its rewards. Let him that wants to come out from the world and be separate, but shrinks and hangs back for fear of the things seen, pray and strive to have this faith. "All things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23). Like Moses, he will find it possible to forsake Egypt, seeing Him that is invisible. Like Moses, he will not care what he loses and who is displeased, because he sees afar off – like someone looking through a telescope – a substantial recompense of reward (Hebrews 11:26).

(c) The third and last secret of victory over the world, is to attain and cultivate the habit of boldly confessing Christ on all proper occasions. In saying this I would not be mistaken. I want no one to blow a trumpet before him and thrust his religion on others at all seasons. But I do wish to encourage all who strive to come out from the world to show their colours, and to act and speak out like men who are not ashamed to serve Christ. A steady, quiet assertion of our own principles as Christians, a habitual readiness to let the children of the world see that we are guided by other rules than they are and do not mean to swerve from them, a calm, firm, courteous maintenance of our own standard of things in every company – all this will unconsciously form a habit within us and make it comparatively easy to be separate.

It will be hard at first, no doubt, and cost us many a struggle; but the longer we go on, the easier will it be. Repeated acts of confessing Christ will produce habits. Habits once formed will produce a settled character. Our characters once known, we shall be saved much trouble. People will know what to expect from us, and will count it no strange thing if they see us living the lives of those who are separate from the world. He that grasps the nettle most firmly will always be less hurt than the man who touches it with a trembling hand. It is a great thing to be able to say, No, decidedly but courteously when asked to do anything which conscience says is wrong. He that shows his colours boldly from the first, and is never ashamed to let men see whose he is and whom he serves, will soon find that he has overcome the world and will be left alone. Bold confession is a long step towards victory.

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

34. Youwili – the Menacing Chief

Although Paton's Christian teaching was having a good effect on many of the people of Aniwa, there were still others who resisted it. They did

not want to have anything to do with Paton or his message. They wanted to continue living as they always had done; suiting themselves and taking the law into their own hands.

For instance, while the finishing touches were being put to the church building, a newly-married couple were murdered by a jealous man and his brother. Also, about that time, an attempt was made to kill Paton. He was saved by some women who rushed on the men who were attacking him.

Superstitious beliefs still had a hold on the people, and Paton discovered this shortly after the church building was completed. For several days none of the islanders had come to visit the mission house. Paton asked the old chief if he knew why this was so. He replied, "Youwili has tabooed the paths, and threatens death to anyone who breaks through it." Youwili was a young chief who, from the time of Paton's arrival on Aniwa, had made trouble for him.

Paton was not impressed. He told the chief that he was going to leave with the next mission boat. He explained to the chief that, because the island people did not try to stop Youwili doing this or punish him, he could only conclude that they wished him to leave.

The old chief called the people together. They came to Paton, saying, "Our anger is strong against Youwili. Go with us and break down the taboo. We will help and protect you."

Paton went with them. They showed him reeds stuck in the ground, with twigs and leaves and rough string tied to each other in a strange way, forming a circle round the mission house. The island people had a real fear of this taboo and believed that, if anyone broke it or passed over it in some way, then they or someone else in their family would die.

All the people who had come with Paton to break down this taboo promised to punish anyone who tried to replace it. They also promised to punish anyone who would take revenge for it being removed.

One day, soon after the taboo was removed, Paton was busy clearing away some bushes from around the mission house when suddenly Youwili appeared. He was wielding his tomahawk and he menacingly warned Paton to stop. Paton did stop but Youwili then went straight up to the fence around the mission house and cut down a large section of it as well as some banana plants growing beside it. This was a traditional way of declaring war; it meant that the lives of the people in that property were now in danger.

The old chief and his men had witnessed this, and men were now on patrol around the mission house determined to protect Paton. But Paton was not happy with the situation. He told the old chief and his people: "This must not continue. Are you to allow one young fool to defy us all and break up the Lord's work on Aniwa? If you cannot righteously punish him, I will shut

myself up in my house and withdraw from all attempts to teach or help you till the ship comes, and then I can leave the island.”

This alarmed the people, for they had come to love Paton and were anxious to learn more about God. They surrounded the mission house and pled with Paton not to leave.

After the usual speech-making and tomahawk-waving, the people decided that they would indeed punish Youwili. They they came to Paton to ask him what the punishment should be. To all their suggestions of possible punishments Paton gave a definite “No!” They suggested killing him, or burning his houses and destroying his plantations, or tying him up and beating him, or putting him in a canoe and letting it out to sea. They exhausted all their punishment options and had no more ideas about how to punish him.

Paton then suggested, “Make him, with his own hands and alone, put up a new fence and restore all that he has destroyed; and make him promise publicly that he will cease all evil conduct towards us. That will satisfy me.”

The island people found this idea for a punishment very funny – they thought it was a good joke and were willing to go along with it. They went to find the young chief and gave him his sentence. He was surprised by the punishment and by how determined the people were to see it through. He agreed to carry out the work the next day.

Paton was a fair man. When someone had done something wrong, which had harmed others, he insisted that the wrongdoer should be punished. If the wrongdoer was not punished he would go on causing other people to suffer. But as well as insisting that Youwili should be punished for his wrongdoing, Paton made sure that the punishment itself was suitable. He wanted Youwili to realise that his actions had consequences. And he wanted Youwili to learn a lesson: that he must stop doing these wrong and harmful things.

Paton had these views about punishment because he read and believed the Bible. The Bible teaches very plainly that it is wrong to do certain things. And it teaches that, when we do wrong things, we deserve to be punished. Because God is fair and just He will make sure that sin is punished suitably. But the Bible also tells us the wonderful news that God has provided a way for sinners to escape the eternal punishment due to them for their sins – through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

When we suffer because of our sins in this world, we should realise that there is kindness in the suffering. God is showing us that what we are doing is sinful; He is teaching us to stop doing what is wrong. And He is calling us to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. Only then will we escape the eternal punishment which our sins deserve. *S M Campbell*

Looking Around Us

“Power to Make Us Think”

Liverpool Cathedral is the main place of worship for the Church of England in the city. It has the highest and heaviest ringing peal bells in the world and they can be heard for miles around. So it is rather sad that they were used on May 16, not to call the people of Liverpool to the worship of God, but to ring out the notes of the song “Imagine”, written by John Lennon, a member of the Liverpool pop group, the Beatles.

Lennon himself described the song as “anti-religious”. It begins: “Imagine there’s no heaven; it’s easy if you try”. Or is it so easy? Mankind was created with a knowledge of God which – even in his fallen, sinful state – he finds hard to stifle. And he finds it hard to stifle the thought that there is a better world beyond this life – a life so full of sadness and difficulty.

Lennon was trying to do more than put out of his mind the thought that there is a heaven, for his song goes on: “No hell below us, above us only sky”. But he was also trying to put out of his mind the thought that God exists. That effort solemnly came to an end when he was murdered on a New York street in 1980. But his influence lives on through his music. And this song is a reminder that the pop scene is not where anyone should be found who takes God and his own soul seriously. Pop is not music for a Christian.

A spokesman for Liverpool Cathedral stated: “Allowing Imagine to be pealed on our bells does not mean we agree with the song lyric”. One would certainly hope not. But it was highly irresponsible for them to draw attention to it as they did. The spokesman made the excuse: “We recognise [the song’s] power to make us think”. Yes, it is good to be made to think about God, about heaven and hell, and about religious issues in general. But we should choose what will make us think in a *right* way, not what is liable to put us wrong. What God has told us in the Bible is true; it is reliable; it is safe; it will never put anyone wrong. So let us read the Bible seriously and ask God to help us to think properly as we read it. Let us also ask Him to keep us safe from all the dangerous ideas that come at us from so many directions in this unbelieving age.

The original idea to ring out “Imagine” from the Cathedral bells came from artist Cleo Evans. She claimed, “Imagine . . . speaks strongly of the need for peace”. And in the face of widespread violence and war we cannot speak too strongly of the need for peace. But we should never forget that our greatest need is to be at peace *with God*. That requires us to receive the testimony He has given about how He brings human beings into a state of peace — through Jesus Christ, His Son, who died for sinners and rose again.

“That Rock Was Christ”

A poem giving us lessons from 1 Corinthians 10:4, which speaks of the Children of Israel in the wilderness: “And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ”.

When Israel’s tribes were parched with thirst,
Forth from the rock the waters burst;
And all their future journey through
Yielded them drink, and gospel too!

In Moses’ rod a type they saw
Of his severe and fiery law;
The smitten rock prefigured Him
From whose pierced side all blessings stream.

But ah, the types were all too faint
His sorrows or His worth to paint;
Slight was the stroke of Moses’ rod,
But He endured the wrath of God.

Their outward rock could feel no pain,
But ours was wounded, torn and slain;
The rock gave but a watery flood,
But Jesus poured forth streams of blood.

The earth is like their wilderness,
A land of drought and sore distress;
Without one stream, from pole to pole,
To satisfy a thirsty soul.

But let the Saviour’s praise resound;
In Him refreshing streams are found,
Which pardon, strength and comfort give,
And thirsty sinners drink and live.

John Newton

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