

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

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Volume 79

December 2014

Number 12

Appearing Before the Judgement Seat

Another year is almost over. No doubt you have much to look back on. There have probably been happy times and sad times, successes and disappointments. But as you look back over these months and think of all that you have done, and what you have said and thought, does it strike you that all these were the acts and the words and thoughts of a sinner? How many the sins of this year were! You could say like David: "They are more than the hairs of mine head" (Psalm 40:12). And, assuming you are still young, the number of hairs on your head is very large; the average number of hairs on a human head is 100 000. But the number of sins you have committed this year, even in a day, is much greater.

Do you want to challenge that last statement? Surely, you perhaps want to say, you do not commit many sins in any one day. But, in fact, we are sinning against God every moment – because we are always coming short of the perfect obedience to God's law which He demands. And we commit many actual sins. Someone may tell a lie; that is an obvious sin. But, for example, when we do not seek to glorify God in all that we say, even while telling the truth, we are sinning against God. Of course, not all sins are equally serious; the deliberate lie, for instance, is more serious than not seeking God's glory while telling the truth.

What is more, God sees all our sins and He remembers every one of them. We may forget our sins; we most certainly will forget many of them. Indeed much of the time we will not notice that we are committing sin. May the Lord teach us what a terrible thing it is to be a sinner, for we are adding to our sins day by day – indeed moment by moment! It is something we cannot stop doing, by our own power. If we are ever to stop sinning, it must be by the grace of God. And, since we cannot by our own power stop sinning, how earnestly we should seek the grace of God, for Jesus' sake!

As we look back on the sins of this year – a number which no one can count, except God – what are we to think? We may wish that we had not acted in that unkind way, or said those thoughtless words, or even let that foolish idea go through our mind. But these things *were* actually done or said

or thought, and it is now totally beyond our power to take any of them back. It is too late to change the past, no matter how ashamed we may be of it.

Where does that leave us? First, let us note again that God knows everything that we have done and He will always remember it all. Let us note also that we must appear before the judgement seat of Christ at last. How serious if we are still responsible for our sins – those committed in 2014 and those committed in the rest of our lives!

But can God not pass by our sins and take no action? That is what parents often do, and that is what the police may do also. There may be good reason for doing so, but it is often very foolish. Parents, for instance, have a duty to punish their children when that is necessary; it shows the children that they cannot always do wrong and get away with it; it is part of the parents' duty to train their children to do what is right. But God is perfectly just; He must punish every sin.

Is there no way in which we can escape the consequences of our many sins? Yes, there is. But only if someone else is punished instead of us. How wonderful that the One who took the place of sinners, Jesus Christ, is the Son of God! He bore the punishment of everyone who will ever believe on Him. So this is what we are called to do: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). If you believe, all your sins will be forgiven. Then all will be well when you die and all will be well on the day of judgement, when we must all appear before Christ as the great Judge.

Ask yourself: When you appear before Christ's judgement seat, will you still be chargeable with all the sins you have committed throughout your lifetime? Thomas Manton, one of the ablest Puritan ministers, during the 1600s, said in one of his sermons: "It is infinitely terrible to appear before God, the Judge of all, without the protection of the blood of sprinkling".

What did Manton mean "by the blood of sprinkling"? He was thinking, first, back to the blood of the Old Testament sacrifices. A sinner came to the temple with his sacrifice. His sacrifice was killed; the animal died instead of him. And the animal's blood was sprinkled.

It was all pointing forward to Christ, and His great sacrifice, when He offered Himself up instead of sinners. This is what Manton was really thinking of, for Christ's blood points to the *benefits* of His death. So, when a sinner believes in Jesus, he receives the benefits of that death; we can say that the blood of Jesus has been sprinkled on the sinner, for "the blood of Jesus Christ [God's] Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). The sinner who believes in Jesus Christ will be safe on the day of judgement. But no one else will.

If the sinner has not trusted in Christ, he is still responsible for his sins;

he must endure for ever the punishment due to these sins, in a lost eternity. As Manton said, that will be “infinitely terrible”. And it will be infinitely terrible to appear at the judgement seat without having had the blood of Jesus sprinkled on your soul – in other words, without having believed in Him and so having your sin taken away.

So, as you look back over this year and as you remember that you have sinned, think too of the judgement day, when we must all appear to “give account” of ourselves to God (Romans 14:12). And as you think of the judgement day, think again of the call: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”. Do not let another year come to an end without seeking salvation earnestly – from the only One who can deliver you from your sins and make your appearance at the judgement seat perfectly safe.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne

1. Childhood and Youth

Frank Daubney

This is the first part of a paper given at this year's Youth Conference. Its sub-title was: “Jehovah Tsidkenu Is all Things to Me”.

Why a paper on Robert Murray M'Cheyne? He did not write memorable books; he did not die a martyr's death; he was not a noted missionary to foreign countries. He was a minister of the gospel in the Church of Scotland congregation of St Peter's, Dundee, who, after a ministry of about seven years, from 1836 to 1843, died at the age of 29. Yet, 170 years later, he is still remembered with love and admiration by the Lord's people. What I would like to do today is to give you some understanding as to why this might be.

M'Cheyne's great friend and fellow minister, Andrew Bonar, was so determined that his life should not be forgotten that, only a year or so after his death, he wrote and published a *Memoir and Remains* of M'Cheyne. Other biographies have been written: one was by J C Smith, who was a child in M'Cheyne's congregation and experienced the wonderful revival there; another was by Alexander Smellie and a third, by a Dutch author, J L van Valen, was published in 2002. I have made use of them all in preparing this paper.

Robert's Childhood and Youth. Robert Murray M'Cheyne was born on 21 May 1813 into a well-off family in Edinburgh. His father, Adam, was a lawyer, and his mother came from Ruthwell, in Dumfries-shire, which was where Robert spent many summer holidays. He was the youngest child of a family of five. The eldest was David, who was 8 or 9 years older than

Robert. Next was Eliza, who later kept house for Robert during his ministry at St Peter's in Dundee. After Eliza was William, who became a doctor; then a little girl, Isabella, who died when only a few months old. Finally, about a year later, Robert was born.

Robert's father wrote, "He was always a boy of the most amiable, and I may even say noble, disposition. I never found him guilty of a lie or any mean or unworthy action; and he had a great contempt for such things in others." He also said that, though he was not one to spare the rod, he could not remember that he ever needed to punish his youngest son.

There was a strong bond of love in the family and, although the father was strict, they all loved him. In the only picture of Robert's mother that I have seen, she looks very severe. But looks can be deceptive, because the evidence is that she had a very tender heart. When her children were older and away from home she would write long letters to them, full of interest. Robert commented that they were better than any newspaper.

Adam M'Cheyne and his wife attended Edinburgh churches where the ministers did not preach the gospel, and the parents' concern at that time seems to have been more for the temporal prosperity of their children than the salvation of their souls. After Robert was converted, he often begged them to seek out a gospel ministry and, as the years passed, it became evident that his parents' religion did become more Christ-centred. In 1835, Adam M'Cheyne was fearful for the eternal well-being of William, now a doctor in India. He wrote to him, "Above all, may the Lord lead you and guide you to Himself, and then you will never want for a Friend who sticketh closer than a brother".

At the age of 5, young Robert began to attend his first school. He was a good scholar and, when he left to go to the High School in October 1821, he was given the school's second prize. His studies at the High School opened up a world of Greek and Roman writing and inspired his first original poem, about the battle of Marathon. At high school he forged his life-long friendship with Alexander Somerville, who became a minister of the gospel in Anderston, Glasgow.

Robert lived life to the full. He enjoyed drawing, poetry and all forms of the arts. He was also a keen gymnast. Charles Dent Bell, who was at school with him, said that Robert "was a tall slender lad, with a sweet pleasant face, bright yet grave, fond of play and of a blameless life". He said, "I remember to this day his tartan trousers, which excited my admiration and my envy".

M'Cheyne would later reflect upon this time of his life as being without God. When he looked back on his early years, he said, "I kissed the rose, nor thought about the thorn". He meant that he enjoyed all the pleasures of the

world and gave no thought to suffering and death. But his views were to change drastically, so that he would later say, "Set not your heart on the flowers of this world; for they have all a canker [cancer] in them. Prize the Rose of Sharon more than all; for He changeth not. Live nearer to Christ than to the saints, so that when they are taken from you, you may have Him to lean on still."

In 1827, aged 14, he began his studies in the Arts Faculty of the University of Edinburgh. He was regarded as a good student although not a brilliant one. He gained several prizes, including one for the best poem on the Covenanters. His father said that, "during his first years at university, he turned his attention to elocution and poetry and the pleasures of society rather more, perhaps, than was altogether consistent with prudence". He could entertain and fascinate friends with his singing, recitations, wit and humour. He lived a carefree life and enjoyed card-playing, dancing and athletic activities.

David. When Robert was 18, his eldest brother David died at the age of 26, in July 1831. This was the event which was to awaken him from the sleep of nature and bring into his soul the first beam of divine light.

David was a gracious young man and spent much of his leisure hours with his younger siblings. It was said that there was no mistaking the miracle of grace in him; it was demonstrated in everything he said and did. Tender and affectionate, he was grieved when his brothers and sister resisted his counsel. Robert, who was so absorbed at that time in worldly vanities, was the subject of many of David's earnest prayers.

Yet a time came when a deep depression settled on David's soul and he spent many weary months in gloom; his bodily health too was affected. During this period he took a holiday in the English Lake District and caught a cold which he could not shake off. He returned home but never recovered from the fever which developed. But a few days before his death, his soul trouble was relieved and his face lit up with a joy which was apparent to all. The peace of his last few days was a great consolation to his family and friends.

The grief and the glory of his brother's death made a great impression on Robert. David had been more than a brother to Robert. He helped him in many ways. "He gave me a Bible and persuaded me to read it. He tried to train me as the gardener trains the apple tree upon the wall; but all in vain. I thought myself wiser than he and would always take my own way. Many a time, I well remember, I've seen him reading his Bible, or shutting his closet door to pray, when I have been dressing to go out to some vanity or some dance of frolic."

Each returning anniversary of his brother's death was recorded in his

diary. On the first anniversary he wrote: "On this morning last year came the first overwhelming blow to my worldliness; how blessed to me, Thou God only knowest, who has made it so!" In a letter to a friend on 8 July 1842, he wrote, "This day eleven years ago I lost my loved and loving brother, and began to seek a Brother who cannot die".

For Junior Readers

Andrew Lindsay

I am sure you have noticed that it is now December, the last month of the year. Another year is nearly at an end. No doubt you have grown up a bit this year, become a little taller and a bit more mature. But what about your soul? You know that God says in the Bible: "I love them that love Me; and those that seek me early shall find Me". Did you seek the Lord this year? Did you pray for the salvation of your soul?

There was a boy called Andrew Lindsay who lived a long time ago in the village of Cromarty in the north of Scotland. He sought the Lord when he was young. His father died when he was only 7 years old and he lived with his mother. He was as lively and mischievous as any other young boy.

But when he was about 12, he began to change. Now, when he went to church with his mother, he would listen. He paid attention to the godly minister, Mr Gordon, when he preached and taught the way of salvation. The Holy Spirit blessed the minister's words to awaken him to realise his need of salvation.

He then stopped keeping company with worldly friends, he started to read his Bible and to pray on his own. And he began to attend the prayer meetings each week. He could not rest until he found Christ.

Soon after this he travelled some distance to attend the special services of a communion season. Although it was winter, he had neither shoes nor socks to keep his feet warm, as his mother was so poor. Yet that did not stop him from going; all he wanted was to find Christ.

The visiting minister noticed Andrew, especially how he listened so carefully during the services. It was as if he was hanging on to every word that the minister said. The minister later visited Andrew and his mother and spoke to him about his soul. He encouraged the boy to go on praying in secret for a blessing and to go on attending public worship also.

About six months later the minister was back in Cromarty and was keen to find out how Andrew was getting on. He met up with him and they had a long talk together. He found that Andrew was much more cheerful; even

his face seemed different. He was able to tell the minister that he had found Christ, and that all his happiness was so wrapped up in Christ that he cared nothing for the world any more. All his confidence was through resting on the Lord Jesus and His righteousness alone.

Is that not wonderful – and Andrew was only 13! When he was 14, he was allowed to come to the Lord's table, and it was a time of great blessing to his soul.

Andrew grew up in the fear and love of God and lived until he was 50. His life was so consistent; it made such an impression on the people of Cromarty that, when he died, everyone said of him that he had “walked with God”, like Enoch long ago. On his gravestone it was written, “He was truly godly from a child”. Is that not a wonderful summary of his life!

What about you? At the end of this year, can you honestly say that you have begun to seek the Lord? If not, there is no time to waste. What does the Bible tell you? “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.”

J van Kralingen

The Bible's Teaching on Professing Religion

5. Are the Sacraments Effective?

Charles Hodge

Last month's section from Hodge's book, *The Way of Life*, spoke of the sacraments as seals of the covenant of grace. This means that, through them, God binds Himself to keep His promises to His people.

As the *effectiveness* of the sacraments is a very important subject, we must examine further what the Scriptures teach about it. Baptism is said to unite us to Christ (Galatians 3:27); to make us partakers of His death and life (Romans 6:4,5); to wash away our sins (Acts 22:16); and to save the soul (1 Peter 3:21). The bread and wine, in the Lord's Supper, are said to be the body and blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:24,25); to eat and drink these emblems is said to secure union with Christ and receive the merits of His death (1 Corinthians 10:16,17).

Do these and similar passages apply to everyone or are must we understand them as limited to some? Any such limit must be supplied by the Scriptures. The Bible teaches that the sacraments *are* effective, not to every adult who receives them, but to believers – those who already have the grace which these ordinances represent.

Someone may ask how they can bring grace if the person already has it.

Let us remember that the one who has been sprinkled, with the blood of Christ, needs it to be applied again often. He who has received the Holy Spirit needs to receive Him again; he who has received Christ needs to receive Him day by day so that he may live upon Him. It is clear that the Bible teaches that only believers can profit from the sacraments; otherwise it would be teaching that every baptized person is a child of God, renewed by the Holy Spirit, united to Christ and blessed with all the saving benefits of His death. Let us give some further reasons for this.

(1.) The Bible clearly teaches that those who are renewed and receive the Holy Spirit, have the fruits of the Spirit: including love, gentleness, goodness and faith. Where these are not, the Spirit is not. But those who receive a sacrament outwardly do not always, or even generally, have these fruits. We know that, although Simon Magus was baptized, he remained "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity". We know from Paul's epistles that many of the baptized Galatians and Corinthians were the enemies of the cross of Christ. We know from what we see around us that multitudes of those who are baptized and have received the Lord's Supper live the same kind of life as the world around them.

(2.) Some people believe that such ordinances always convey grace and bring the one who receives them into favour with God. This was one of the Jews' false doctrines which Paul so earnestly strove against. Some people in that age were confident that circumcision was so powerful that no circumcised person could enter hell. It was a dangerous idea. But note what the Scriptures teach about the sacraments.

Paul assured them that circumcision would indeed profit them if they kept the law, but if they broke the law, their circumcision would become uncircumcision. "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter" (Rom 2:28-29). This is a very definite statement: a sacrament has no power in itself; its value depends on performing the condition of the covenant to which it is attached. If the Jews kept all the law, their circumcision secured to them all the blessings of the covenant under which they lived. But if they broke the law, then circumcision was of no avail. It was therefore not outward circumcision that made a man a Jew; but the circumcision of the heart, of which the outward ceremony was the sign.

In the same way, it is not outward Baptism that makes anyone a Christian, but the Baptism of the Spirit, of which the washing with water is God's appointed symbol. The two are not necessarily connected, and where there is no Baptism of the Spirit, the other can be of no use. But have we a right to

apply what is said of the Old Testament sacraments to those of the New? In fact, the Bible gives the same teaching about the New Testament sacraments. Peter says that believers are saved by water (1 Peter 3:20,21) – not ordinary water, but Baptism; and not mere outward Baptism, but by the sincere turning of the heart to God; that is, by the inward change of which Baptism is the outward sign. So neither circumcision or Baptism will always convey the grace of which they are the signs; and neither has any value apart from the spiritual change which they represent.

Paul's teaching about the Lord's Supper is similar. The mere outward act is not necessarily connected with receiving the benefits of Christ's death: those who ate and drank unworthily ate and drank judgement to themselves. Indeed nothing can be more opposed to the whole spirit of the religion of the Bible than the doctrine that outward things always bring spiritual blessings.

Someone may be baptized, or circumcised on the eighth day, he may belong to the purest church, he may be blameless in outward things, and still be without the grace of God and be unprepared for His presence. It is not by works of righteousness, much less by ceremonies, that we are to be saved, but by the righteousness of Christ and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. He is not a Christian who is one outwardly, nor is that Baptism which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Christian who is one inwardly, and the baptism unto salvation is of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter.

The Missing Bridegroom

Long ago in Kent, a man called Studly was a well-off lawyer and a landowner. He hated true godliness and those who tried to practise it. (Those who tried to live a pure live were at that time given the nickname *Puritan*.) His son grew up with the same attitudes. Young Studly went to London and, one evening, enjoying himself with his friends, he got drunk. It was very dark as he walked home and he did not notice an open cellar in front of him. He fell in and, in his drunken state, he imagined that he was in hell. He lay there for several hours before he was found, but he was not seriously injured.

Yet he did become seriously concerned for his soul and returned to his family home in Kent. Feeling wretched, he began to seek salvation; he spent his time reading the Bible and praying. When his father found out what he was doing, he dreaded the thought that his son would become a "Puritan". Studly was afraid that people would look down on him as a result and decided to do something about it.

His first plan was to treat his son harshly, hoping to turn him away from

earnestness in religion. He made him responsible for cleaning his horses. Young Studly got on with the work and did not complain. And God was good to him, giving him more spiritual enjoyment as he worked with the horses than he ever had afterwards. No doubt, as he got on with his duties, he thought about the truths of God's Word. This is what he spent his time reading, till late at night, after the day's work was over. But when his father found out how his son was spending his time, he would not allow him to have a candle. Yet he could not stop his son thinking over what he had read.

Clearly Studly's plan was not working; so he tried something else. He sent his son to France, thinking that the people he would meet in a Roman Catholic country would influence him away from his religion. The son obeyed, but in God's good providence he met a godly Protestant minister and went to stay with him. He got on very well learning French; more importantly, he grew in grace.

Studly asked for a progress report from his son's tutor and was very pleased to see how positive it was. He ordered his son back home and invited his tutor to come with him, not realising that he was a minister. Studly gave them a big welcome when they arrived, but not long afterwards he found them praying together. He became angry and told the Frenchman never to come to his house again, but paid him what he was due for tutoring his son. Again his attempt to cure his son of his religion was a failure.

So Studly tried again. He knew an upper-class lady in London and arranged with her to employ his son as a personal servant. Again he thought that the company of the other servants would get rid of his son's religion. Certainly they were a wicked group of people and, not surprisingly, young Studly felt very uncomfortable with their swearing.

Carefully, he tried to put them right. God blessed his efforts and there was a huge change in the servants' morals. A year had passed when Studly came to visit; he wanted to know what the lady had to say about his son. She spoke very positively, and was so grateful for the change in her servants' behaviour. Studly was amazed at what he heard; there was another fit of temper as he told the lady that her house was no place for this son. He left at once, taking his son with him. He had experienced another failure.

After reaching home, Studly decided to try one further plan. He would get arrange for his son to marry a worldly woman. One day he ordered a servant to have horses ready the next morning and told his son to be ready to go with him. As they rode along, Studly told his son how distressed he was at his behaviour. As every other attempt to put him right had failed, he was now going to make one last effort. If young Studly would submit to marry the young woman in the house they were riding to, he would inherit his father's

whole estate. If not, Studly would disinherit him. The young man said very little; he knew his father's temper. But he also knew that the family he was to meet were very worldly.

When they reached the house, father and son were both warmly welcomed. And young Studly fell in love with the woman. As the two men rode home, the father asked his son how he liked her. He answered that, if she was willing, he would be happy to marry her. Young Studly soon returned for a second visit, but his father took the precaution of warning the family that they should be very careful how they behaved, particularly that there should be no swearing; it might put the young man off marrying. So everyone took care not to offend young Studly, and soon the young couple were married.

But at the wedding dinner, everything changed. There was drinking and plenty swearing; even the bride swore. Young Studly was very upset. He rose suddenly from the table and hurried out to the stable. He mounted his horse and rode away, not really knowing where he was going. He was specially sad because he had not prayed properly to God about his marriage. He rode to a wood and led his horse to a quiet spot. He tied his horse to a tree and spent the afternoon in prayer. He prayed especially that his wife would be converted and, before he rose up from his knees, he had some hope that God would answer his prayer.

Of course, the bridegroom was soon missed at the meal. Messengers were sent out in every direction to look for him. But no one found him until he returned in the evening. Where was his wife? he asked. She had gone to her bedroom, he was told. He went there at once and, not surprisingly, found her very upset. He asked her to sit down beside him and said he would tell her what he had done, and why. He then spoke about his life, emphasising to her what God had done for him "through grace".

She asked what he meant by these words he had so often used: "through grace". After he had explained, she asked, "Do you think there is grace in God for me?"

He assured her that there was and said, "I have been praying for you in the wood, and God has heard my prayers and seen my tears. Let us now go to Him together." They knelt down and prayerfully sought mercy.

Soon they were called for supper. When her father began to swear, as was his habit, the bride began to plead with them not to do so. At once Studly got up from the table swearing, and complaining that his son had made a Puritan of his wife already.

When Studly made his will soon afterwards, he left only a small amount of money to his son and gave everything else to people outside the family. It was not long till he died. Young Studly went away to Sussex with his wife

and rented a farm there. All their friends gave them up, but God was with them and blessed them with several children.

Years later, young Studly met a man who rented part of his father's estate. The man greeted Studly as his landlord

"I am not your landlord", he replied.

Then the man explained, "Your father was a cunning lawyer but, with all his wit, he could not take the estate from you". The tenants on the estate had not paid their rent, but had saved it up for young Studly, who they understood was the rightful owner. Studly went to court and it was established that the estate was rightfully his.

Let us note some further lessons:

1. What a terrible thing it is to hate true religion! What unkind things it has made people like Studly do! But nothing can take true religion out of anyone's heart.

2. What a dangerous thing temptation is, even for those who are converted! Although young Studly had resisted many temptations, he unthinkingly married a worldly girl; he did not marry "in the Lord".

3. How important it is to pray about everything, especially the most important things in life, like marriage! Remember how sad young Studly became when he realised that he had failed to pray properly about his marriage. But notice that, even on his wedding day, young Studly's only hope for deliverance was to go to pray.

4. See how God hears prayer, especially when it is earnest. But every answer to prayer is for Jesus' sake.

5. Consider God's great care for His children; He delivered young Studly from the terrible situation into which he had thoughtlessly rushed.

6. See God's great mercy in so wonderfully delivering the young couple from what upset them so much: He converted the young bride. There could be no better outcome.

7. Although God so wonderfully delivered young Studly from his difficulties, we must not presume that God will quickly deliver us from our problems if we neglect prayer and rush into sin.

Through the Alphabet with the Bible

Here are five verses from the Bible using the word:

Understand

Then opened He their understanding, that they might *understand* the scriptures (Luke 24:45).

Precept. O ye simple, *understand* wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart (Proverbs 8:5).

Promise. Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall *understand* the lovingkindness of the Lord (Psalm 107:43).

Prayer. Make me to *understand* the way of Thy precepts (Psalm 119:27).

Encouragement. Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou *understand* the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God (Proverbs 2:3,4,5).

The Fifth Commandment

4. Marriage

Rev Donald Macdonald

Last month's article spoke about how parents should treat their children.

(g) Sins of superiors. People such as parents or employers may sin against those who are under them. What are these sins?

The Larger Catechism teaches that "the sins of superiors are, besides the neglect of the duties required of them, an inordinate [far too much] seeking of themselves, their own glory, ease, profit, or pleasure; commanding things unlawful, or not in the power of inferiors to perform; counselling, encouraging, or favouring them in that which is evil; dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing [disapproving] them in that which is good; correcting them unduly; careless exposing, or leaving them to wrong, temptation, and danger; provoking them to wrath; or any way dishonouring themselves, or lessening their authority, by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behaviour" (Answer 130).

(h) Marriage. We find examples of this in Scripture. The emphasis should be on marrying in the Lord. The wives Esau chose were "a grief of mind" to his parents Isaac and Rebekah (Genesis 27:34-35). Isaac sent his other son Jacob to their relations in Padan-aram to obtain a wife; he was not to marry the daughters of Canaan, and Jacob obeyed his father and mother. Esau had a totally different attitude, yet he realised that the daughters of Canaan did not please Isaac.

We all have a duty to follow biblical principles in this important matter; sadly, many do not. Those who are baptized into the visible Church ought to take great care, above all, to marry in the Lord. Ungodly marriage was the calamity that affected the old world after the Fall; the men in the line of Seth began to mingle in their marriages with the daughters of Cain, corrupting the

seed of the godly. This was the root of the decline of religion that at last brought the Flood on the ungodly world.

This is the root of the decline of religion in all ages. Many of the Israelites in captivity in Babylon married heathen wives, and the priesthood was defiled. This has happened down through the centuries; it is a problem in modern Britain. I fear too many who attend church do not care who their children marry; they seem quite content if they marry heathens, people who do not believe the Bible. It leads to religious decline, because the Word of God is set aside in the home, which is true of many nominal Christians today.

For Younger Readers

Jesus in the Storm

All day Jesus was speaking to the people who came to hear Him. There has never been a better preacher. Jesus knew exactly what the people needed to hear. Then the people went away, and Jesus was alone with His disciples.

It was now evening. Jesus wanted to go to the other side of the Lake of Galilee. The disciples took Him in one of their boats.

It was quite calm when they left the shore. But then a great storm of wind came up, and the wind was blowing big waves towards them. The waves were so big that they came into the boat.

The disciples became very frightened, but Jesus was asleep with His head on a pillow. They were so frightened that they wakened Him. Did He not care that they were in danger? they asked Him.

Jesus rose up. He spoke to the wind and to the sea. He said, "Peace, be still".

What would happen if you told the wind to go quiet? Nothing.

But what happened when Jesus told the wind to go quiet? It obeyed. The wind stopped; there was a great calm.

The disciples should not have been afraid; Jesus was with them. They should have trusted Him to keep them safe, even when asleep.

Notice two other points: (1) Because Jesus went to sleep, He must have been tired. That shows us He was a real man.

(2) But Jesus made the wind go quiet and the sea go calm. That is what no ordinary man could do. It shows us that Jesus is also God. He is both God and man.

The Young People's Magazine

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Editor: Rev Kenneth D Macleod

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)

Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland

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Looking Around Us

Is Religion Too Restrictive?

An award-winning chef was discussing his work and opinions with a journalist. He was brought up as a Roman Catholic, the chef said, but now he is inclined towards Buddhism. Yet “not as a religion”, he added, “only as a lifestyle”. What attracts him is an idea that “if you’re nice to people, you’ll get good things back”. But surely, if that was to happen, there must be an all-powerful God ruling over everything.

But the chef does not want to believe in God; he does not want a religion. “All religions”, he claimed, “are too restrictive.” This ignores the question: Is a particular religion true? The first question cannot be: Do I like this religion? It must be: Is it true?

The fact is that the religion of the Bible *is* true. God has spoken in the Bible. By nature, we find His commandments too restrictive; people may wish that a particular commandment did not exist and that others were less restricting than they are. But God’s laws are right and we are wrong.

What we need is a new heart; we need God, working by His Holy Spirit, to change us completely – including our desires and our whole way of thinking. Then we will begin to love God, and we will see that His law is good. We will see that it is good for us, that it keeps us from doing what would harm us.

How much people are losing, even in this life, by rejecting God and the way of life He sets before us, and the care He gives to those who trust Him. How wonderful the heaven that people will reach if they turn to God through faith in Jesus Christ. But how terrible the hell that people are heading towards unless they repent and believe the gospel.

I'll Tell It to the Lord

I'll tell it to the Lord, in life and death.
 In health and sickness, may I find this word:
 Turn me away from man, vain man, whose breath
 Is in his nostrils, unto Christ my Lord.

I'll tell it to the Lord, how worldly cares
 Burden my heart, and oft unduly grieve.
 He gives today's supplies, and yet my fears
 Hardly with Him tomorrow's needs can leave.

I'll tell it to the Lord, how former friends
Look coldly on me now, or turn away,
And He will speak of love which never ends,
His Own sweet love, the same from day to day.

I'll tell it to the Lord, how quickly years
Roll o'er my head, how strength and nature die;
How time grows old, and ah, how many fears
Mix with my thoughts of vast eternity!

I'll tell Him how the hope of this life fades.
That little now of earthly joy seems mine.
And gently my sorrowing He upbraids,
As though to serve Him were not joy divine.

But ev'n in serving Him, itself so sweet,
How marred my path; how oft beset with cares.
I'll tell Him all and, at His own dear feet,
Get strength to forward press through foes and snares.

I'll tell it to the Lord – tell all my sins,
My folly, guilt, entanglements and pride;
How oft instead of following Him, begins
My heart in byway paths to turn aside.

I'll tell Him how I need His mighty strength,
His precious blood applied from day to day.
How surely I must fall and fail at length;
Unless He hold my goings in His way.

But ah, I'll tell Him that I do believe
His Word is faithful, He Himself is true;
Unto His heaven my soul He will receive,
Sorrows and snares at last got safely through.

And while I journey onwards to my home,
May I, encouraged by His gracious Word,
Still as fresh needs and trials daily come,
Feel my heart say: I'll tell it to the Lord.

Grey Hazlerigg

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