

Good News



**Credit Crunch?
Christ Paid the
Greatest Debt**



Editor

Rev William Macleod
B.Sc Th.M

25 Branklyn Crescent
Academy Park
Glasgow
G13 1GJ

Tel 0141 959 0292

williammacleod@fccontinuing.org

Design and Layout: Alasdair Macleod
Front Cover: *Despair* (Jupiter Images 2009),

Subscription Details

Subscription rates (including postage) for a year's issues of the *Free Church Witness* (monthly magazine) and *The Explorer* (Youth) mailed to one address are:

U.K. £22.50
Europe (Airmail) £29.00
Overseas (Airmail) £35.00

We would like to encourage churches to make bulk orders. The *Explorer* may be ordered separately for Sabbath Schools.

Cheques/Postal Orders should be made payable to: "Free Church Witness"

Subscriptions and orders should be sent to:
Sandra Judge
10 Montrose Terrace,
Whiting Bay, Isle of Arran KA27 8QN,
email: sandrajudge@btinternet.com

Witness on Tape

The Free Church Witness magazine is available in two tapes which can be ordered at no cost.

Please order your tapes from:

Mr D Grant
4E Belmar Court
Linwood
PA3 3EE

FCC Audio Ministry

Sermons by ministers of the Free Church (Continuing) are available on CD and a catalogue listing the sermons may be obtained. The cost of each CD (including postage) is £1.00.

Cheques/Postal Orders should be made payable to:

"Free Church (Continuing) Tape Ministry"
Please order your catalogue and CDs from:

Mr Donald Morgan
7 Cearn Sheileidh
Stornoway
Isle of Lewis
HS1 2YW
Tel. 01851 702476

email: donaldmorgan186@googlemail.com

Gifts and Donations

All donations and gifts for the Church should be sent to the Financial Administrator

Mrs Mary Gillies B.Sc., C.A.
7 Oliver's Brae
Stornoway
Isle of Lewis
HS1 2SS

from whom further information may be obtained. Cheques should be made payable to "Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)".

The Church is a recognised Scottish Charity (No. 030976).

Published by

Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)
25 Branklyn Crescent
Academy Park
Glasgow
G13 1GJ

Printed by

MMS-Almac Ltd.
Unit F Isla Bank Mills, Keith AB55 5DD
Tel: 01542 886409

Page

SEEK GOD! 3

TESTIMONY - JOHN MACLEOD 4

CAMPBELL MCBAIN 7

THE CHRISTIAN HOPE. 8

A TESTIMONY TO SOVEREIGN GRACE 10

THE DEBT PROBLEM. 13

A 'FREE THINKER' CONVERTED 14

THREE THINGS GOD CANNOT DO 16

DON'T LET ME DROWN 17

UP OR DOWN 18

HE DIDN'T INTEND TO. 19

Church Website at www.fccontinuing.org

For more information, contact the Editor at the address above, or the distributor below:

Seek God!



Credit Crunch

We live in strange days. Who would have expected the Bank of Scotland and the Royal Bank to be in financial difficulties? They seemed to be in a 'win win' situation. They were always able to find ways of charging us more, and paying us less interest. The rest of us might struggle with our finances but these banks' annual profits were measured in billions. We thought, surely our money is safe in the bank, but is it? Iceland has gone bankrupt, could Britain go bankrupt too? Those who worked for the banks felt they had a secure job for life. But sadly no longer. The Royal Bank of Scotland has shed many thousands of jobs. These cuts come on top of job losses already announced. Other banks and similar institutions have also made drastic job cuts. Many well-known firms have gone to the wall. Suddenly, gifted young folk with big salaries who had taken out large mortgages are finding themselves no longer able to keep up the payments. Houses and property seemed a safe investment, but no longer. Ordinary people have lost thousands. Many who wish to move cannot sell their homes. Pensions and investments, being linked to the stock market, have seen huge drops in value. And things appear to be getting worse. Many analysts compare the situation today with the Great Depression of the 1930s.

What is God Saying?

Does God have anything to do with this? Could God be speaking loud and clear to our society? He is in control. Surely He is saying, 'Remember your Creator'. People have thought, 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing' (Revelation 3:17). Like the successful farmer of whom Jesus spoke in the parable, people say, 'This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry' (Luke 12:18-19). Take the redundancy, take the retirement package and have a good time. But God says: 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God' (vv20-21). Many have discovered that a fortune can disappear overnight. Others, who felt secure in their employment with a good income, suddenly find themselves unemployed. And others still find their successful lives here interrupted by cancer, heart disease, strokes, accidents and death. God is saying, 'seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you' (Mathew 6.33).

Eternal Perspective

Many forget that what really matters is the next life, not this one. We are all on our way to eternity. We live in this world at most for 100 years. While we are here, life is very uncertain and can end suddenly at any moment. Not even tomorrow is guaranteed. We make plans but often they come to nothing. Death is certain and then it's eternity in heaven or hell. Where will it be for you? Are you ready to die? Sadly many live as if this world was all there is. They look for heaven here and forget the Judgment Day. With a busy job, an active social life, a family, hobbies and lots of entertainment it's easy to forget God. You drift through life and suddenly it's over and too late to make your peace with God. Thank God for waking us up with a jolt! He mercifully takes away some of our security and pleasures today to show us our need of Him and that we must make sure that we know Him and are on the road to heaven.

God Made Us

Lots of people wish there was no God and no day of reckoning. They like Darwin because they think that his theories do away with the need to believe in God. Somehow or other a universe came into existence, and then by some amazing reaction a living cell formed in a puddle and then by natural selection the various life forms on the planet developed. It is all a matter of chance. No one would believe this theory but those who are desperate to find another explanation of existence apart from a Creator God. But don't fossils show us creatures developing from one into another? Actually the fossil records do the opposite. They show the different species but none of the missing links from one to another. Darwin thought that as more fossils were found the gaps in the development of one creature into another would be found. Today, however, with many millions of fossils having been found we are still waiting for the discovery of the transition forms – and we will have to wait a long time because there was no transition. Evolution is simply man running away from God and trying to explain existence without a Creator. In your conscience you know God made you and that you will have to answer to Him on the Judgment Day.

Seek God

Christ says, 'But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you' (Luke 12:31). The kingdom of God is in contrast to worldly things. Seek to have God as King and to do things as God commands you. All around us people are seeking pleasure, wealth, power and fame. These can evaporate so quickly. Seek God and you will get everything else that is truly worthwhile. Actually God gives His people heaven on earth as well as in the next life. Looking back in my life I have to say in words similar

to the Psalmist that my lines have fallen in pleasant places (Psalm 16:6) and surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life (Psalm 23:6). Having God as your Father, Christ as your beloved Saviour and the Holy Spirit as your friend living in your heart, you have the key to true joy, contentedness and peace.

How then do you seek God?

Realise that you are a sinner under the condemnation of God the Judge. There is nothing you can do to save yourself. Jesus died to save sinners. Repent of your sins and believe in Jesus.

Turn from all your wicked ways, words and thoughts and trust in the Saviour who died for sinners. Cry with one of old, 'God be merciful to me a sinner' (Luke 18:13). The only hope for you is that the Lord will have mercy upon you, cause you to be born again, work faith and repentance in you, pardon your sins, adopt you into his family, sanctify you and prepare you for heaven. Without Christ you are without hope. Having the Lord Jesus you have real treasure. 'He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life' (1 John 5:12). Do you have Christ? Are you saved?



Testimony of John Macleod

(Treaslane, Isle of Skye)

Unknown to me at the time, the Lord has been sending me warnings for at least the last 30 years especially through various encounters with high voltage electricity. On one occasion I was sent out to Camustinavaig in Braes to construct a road for new houses. I was all on my own and when I took the bulldozer off the transporter I checked for water main markers etc. There was a house in trees beside me and I noticed the electricity supply to it was overhead. I started to work and didn't go ten yards when flames came from my dozer blade. I then discovered a new house beyond the existing one. It was obscured because of the trees and it was supplied by an underground cable. I phoned my boss to get in touch with the Hydro Board. To get on with the job I thought I would pull the cable to one side thinking I would have blown the fuse anyway but, thank the Lord, I changed my mind and used my boot instead. When the Hydro Board boys arrived they went to the main fuses to check before they began work. They came back to me and said, 'It's very strange you did not blow the fuses'. If I had caught that cable by hand I would have been stone dead.

On another occasion while tipping a load in the yard (MacFarlane Contractors, Portree) I heard a terrible noise coming from the back of my lorry like a pneumatic drill. When I looked in my mirror I saw smoke coming from one of my back tyres. I had hit the high tension cables above me. If I had stepped out of that lorry and put my foot on the ground it would have been fatal. It was yet another warning.

On another occasion when hauling material from our own yard half a mile up the road to where the local undertaker was extending his yard, I put his offices in darkness by hitting the power lines. I went back for another load. A car came screaming in and I saw it was Donnie MacLeod, Undertaker. I thought there was going to be a big row. All

he said was 'John, I didn't get you into the back of my hearse today but if you carry on the way you are doing I soon will'. On yet another occasion which remains a mystery to this day, I was hauling tar for the council to Glenshiel. After my last load, on my way home, I stopped in a lay-by outside Kyle for a break and when I went to start up again one of my lorry batteries exploded out into the lay-by. I got a lift home and went out the following morning with our mechanic to fit a new battery. We discovered that one of my tyres had melted where it made contact with the road. As that day had been a beautiful summer's day with not a cloud in the sky a lightning strike was ruled out. Yet another unheeded warning. I shiver now every time I pass that lay-by.

About three years ago I was working on the croft with my son's mechanical digger when for some reason I had to stand up to look out at something and leant on the half open windscreen, with my hand on the glass. My weight shattered it and it slit my wrist. I thought I was going to bleed to death. My son, Douglas, was not very far away so he rushed me to Portree Hospital then Broadford Hospital and my wife drove me to Raigmore where I was stitched up. I was told I had missed the main artery by a hairsbreadth. Yet another unheeded warning.

At the October 2007 Communion in Snizort we had the Rev Richard Ross (Portree) preaching on the Sabbath evening. His text was Luke 14:16-24 – the great supper and those who made excuses. He was used by the Lord to fire an arrow from the pulpit straight into my heart. Before going to bed that night I went down on my knees and prayed to God that I would not be one of those that would make excuses and not come to His feast. The following morning when I opened the Bible, staring me in the face was Psalm 91:3: 'Assuredly he shall thee save and give deliverance'. A few weeks after that I happened to be in the manse and as usual our minister Mr Macdonald asked me what part of the communion I liked the

best and I told him it was Mr Ross's Sabbath evening service that frightened the living daylight out of me. I said to him, 'Surely Psalm 91:3 was not an answer to my prayer – that quick?' He replied, 'It certainly seems like it and we may see you next year at the Lord's table', and he did, but I still was in darkness though seeking.

About a fortnight before our July Communion, 2008 I had my periodic check at the hospital and I asked the doctor for tablets to stop smoking which he gladly gave me. I had a look at the leaflet and it guaranteed that I would stop smoking within 8-14 days so that was good. I would be a non-smoker by the time the Communions started. But I started to feel unwell. First of all the tablets got the blame and they got thrown aside! I got through the Communions being able to go to all the meetings, but I was getting worse daily. I couldn't eat or sleep because of the horrific dreams I was having. My daughter and her friend came home on holiday from Rosyth. He is a first class chef and did all the cooking and the smells from the kitchen were terrific but when it came to dinnertime I could not look at it. I used to make the excuse that I had had some food earlier. He was very worried about me and tried to get me to go to a doctor. But I knew somehow that no doctor on this earth could cure me.

My son Douglas asked me one day what my symptoms were and he said (his wife is diabetic) 'that's the way Kirstie is when her sugars are high or low. I'll send her over to check your blood'. That proved negative.

I had to do a lot of driving back and fore to Portree for animal feed and such like and it terrified me. I couldn't get home quick enough to park the car with the turmoil that was going on in my head. I was seeing treble white lines on the road. If I had not known the road well I'm sure I could have killed someone.

On the Sabbath morning before I was saved, Mr Macdonald preached from Mark 9:43-50, 'where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched'. For the first time in my life it was explained to me what the word 'worm' meant. I knew then it was my conscience that was bothering me. That whole sermon was for me alone as if he knew everything about my ailments. That Sabbath evening when I went into church I looked at the Psalm board and all that evening's Psalms were the ones I had been concentrating on – 25, 51 and 130. I said to myself, something strange was happening there – someone was telling Mr Macdonald about me. But no, it was the Lord at work. My daughter and friend went back home to Rosyth and I started going from bad to worse.

Our friend from Rosyth kept phoning me begging me to go to the doctor.

I think it was the day before I found peace that I told him I had been to the doctor. He asked me what the doctor said. I told him he didn't tell me anything yet. He then said what a strange doctor you've got when he cannot say what is wrong with you. I then told him I went down on my knees but didn't get an answer yet. He started to laugh on the other end of the line which brought to my mind a sermon I had heard preached in Portree Free Presbyterian Church about 40 years ago on Ecclesiastes 7:6: 'As the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool, this also is vanity'.

On Friday 8th August 2008 I was at my wits' end. I thought my head was about to explode. I must have been acting very strangely as my wife asked me if I had been drinking. I told her no, but asked if she would phone Mr Macdonald to come down to pray with us. That was around 10pm. However there was a misunderstanding on the phone and he thought that I was going up to the Manse, and so he waited up late and I waited up until 1.30am. I went to bed knowing I would not sleep anyway. I lay down and suddenly a terrible darkness came over me. I asked my wife if it would annoy her if I put on the bedside light. She asked why, and I told her I couldn't stand this darkness (as if that light was going to do any good). I then slipped into a trance or something and saw myself with a bundle on my back which looked like the pictures you see of Christian in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The weight of it to me was equivalent to 40 tons of bricks and the Devil like a dragon on top of that clawing into my back and legs dragging me into the bottomless Pit at a fearful speed. The fear, pain and darkness was horrendous and unexplainable. In my torment I cried to God asking why didn't he destroy me quickly on one of my encounters with 11,000 volts of electricity. I got no reply. So I cried to Him for mercy and immediately He stretched out His arm and took me from that fearful pit and I saw my bundle and the Devil still holding on to it disappear into that bottomless Pit. I came out of that darkness with the last verse of Psalm 23 on my lips:

Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me:
And in God's house for evermore
my dwelling place shall be.

I came round and all my pains had gone completely. I was like a newly born baby. I cannot praise the Lord enough. That was about 2.30 am on the 9th of August 2008.

"Yet another unheeded warning."



I was never very good at giving presents. When my wife's birthday came around I just gave her a card. The boys would come with their presents and ask her, 'What did Dad give you?' She would say, 'All I want from Dad is that he would be converted'. Her birthday is 9th August. She got her gift and what a gift!

I was strengthened to profess faith at the Lord's Table on 5th October 2008. I can now joyfully sing with the Psalmist in Psalm 16:6.

Unto me happily the lines
in pleasant places fell;
Yea, the inheritance I got
in beauty doth excel.

Climate Change?

Rev John Keddie

There's a great preoccupation with climate change these days. It's a controversial issue whether it arises from cyclical factors or man-made carbon emissions. From a Christian point of view, based on the biblical doctrine of creation, and the mandate from God to man to manage the earth (Genesis 1:28) there is no excuse for polluting the environment. Mankind is to care for the creation. It is perhaps little wonder that in an age in which people have denied or turned their backs on their Creator there has been so much carelessness about the wise use of this His world.

Moral Climate

However, that isn't the sort of 'climate change' I'm referring to. It's more to the social and moral changes that have been overtaking us at such a fast rate. There seems to be a growing intolerance of Christian things. There was the recent case of the Christian foster-mother who was struck off the register for 'allowing' a Muslim girl in her care to convert to Christianity. And there was the case of the community nurse who offered to pray with an elderly patient and was suspended for her pains. One daily newspaper commented that 'The Government is entitled to ensure that other faiths are fairly treated. What it is not entitled to do is to impose penalties on Christians for practising their faith. Too often, that is what is done'. This is a sad trend in society today – a social 'climate change' which amounts to prejudice against Christianity.

Britain Needs Christian Values

It was strange to read in the paper the other day the headline: 'Britain needs Christian values, says poll' (*Daily Telegraph*). That seemed an encouraging headline. But what made it surprising was that it did not come from some church or Christian source. We read, 'more than three-quarters of Muslims say Britain should be guided by Christianity'. But it was a real shock to read that the percentage of Muslims who felt that way (79%) was *higher* than supposed 'Christians' themselves (70%)! Hindus also, apparently, gave more support (74%) to a strong role in public life for 'Britain's traditional Christian values'. They seemed to appreciate that at least Christianity was a religion of good values for society as against prevailing secularism.

Secularism Provides No Values

Sadly, the propaganda of the Humanists in their posters on buses: 'There's probably no God. Now stop worrying...' with its implication that there is probably no judgment day seems to have been swallowed in our society. Moral values have plummeted as people live out their individualistic selfish lives with broken marriages, teenage sex, neglect of the elderly, abuse of children, increasing fraud and dishonesty and widespread drug and alcohol abuse.

However, appearing on the sides of buses more recently has been the verse: 'The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God' (Psalm 14:1). May the Lord send us a 'climate change' of spiritual and moral renewal in these days!



"May the Lord send us a 'Climate Change' of Spiritual and Moral Renewal in these days"

Testimony - Campbell McBain



I was born in 1950, and have lived all but two years since in East Kilbride. My parents were Christians and I was brought up to respect the things of God. They had a Brethren background but were attending a Baptist church. This was a church that laid great emphasis on getting people to believe the Gospel and I remember many times the minister making calls from the pulpit for individuals to come forward and make a decision for Christ. This can place a burden on children to profess faith, but it is really only 'easy believism' and not true saving faith. This is what happened to me. I made a profession of faith when I was thirteen years old. It was a mere profession of faith and did not involve conviction of sin and true repentance. I had no real sense of my need for a Saviour. As time wore on the fact that my faith was only skin deep began to show. I drifted from the church. Later I came back but really I was in no better condition spiritually. When I married I left all attachment to the church. I did however have within me a strong awareness of the fact that Christ had died for sinners. This belief was what may be called a taught faith. Yet for a time I lived as though there was no judgment day. I lived in great wickedness before God, knowing that He could see my sins. I was always conscious of my sins but thought, since I knew the Gospel and believed it in a way, all would come right.

Testing Times

I had worked as a toolmaker for over fifteen years and then went to university. When I graduated I started working with an American semi-conductor company. Over the years I worked my way up to a management position. All was going well and then in 1995 my wife Anne developed a rare cancer. I had to take a break from work and nursed her for over fifteen months. This was to place a great strain on me and was to take a toll on my health. After Anne's death I returned to work but within three years I had a complete mental and physical breakdown. Eventually, when the company was offering redundancies, I left my employment due to my deteriorating health. God was now working to convict me of my sins through the Holy Spirit. I was now in turmoil. All had changed. All plans gone. When I thought things could not get worse I was diagnosed with cancer of the tongue. I was told that I had a low chance of living more than five years and would require major surgery. I had a biopsy the day after my diagnosis. The following week I was booked in for a full body scan and surgery. The day prior to my operation it was all called off. I was then told I would just require some minor operations. The cancer had been growing out and not into my tongue. I would be monitored monthly and I was not to get any other treatment. I am still in remission.

The Change

These events saw a sea change in my life. God had my full attention and I started to seek after Him. I started reading

my Bible and good Reformed books. I was gripped by a verse of Scripture (Matt.7:14) 'Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it'. It was the 'few' that got me. I was at that time reading a book by Anthony Burgess who spoke of the dangers facing those brought up in the church and having a false conversion. He also emphasised the rarity of true conversion. These things all added to an increasing despair over the position of my soul. My carefree spirit was gone as I contemplated a lost eternity. But then I considered if a few got through the gate I was resolved in myself to gain entry. I had come face to face with a God of great rectitude and infinite holiness.

Finding Peace

I now was under deep conviction of sin. Long nights were spent pleading with the Lord to save me and forgive me my sins. I found it increasingly difficult to get to sleep due to the alarm in my soul. God's Holy Spirit brought before me many passages of Scripture such as, 'For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved' (Rom.10:13), and, 'It shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved' (Act 2:21). These were promises from the Lord and I used them to plead before Him. A verse which increased my hope was John 6:37: 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out'. Added to that was John 6:65: 'Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father'. As I felt God pointing me to His Son, I thought there must be hope that I would be saved by Him. I earnestly wanted Jesus to be my Saviour. God in His mercy and grace made this sure. A major hurdle to me was that I knew my sins were deep and dreadful. God's grace can however overcome any guilt. I can say from that time on the turmoil in my soul stopped and a great peace descended on me. I had taken Jesus as my Saviour and Mediator. I was then taught by God's Spirit that I was born again, a doctrine I had never heard preached.

I was now 57 years old. My old grandmother who died when I was very young had always said she prayed day and night for me. Prayers are not always answered at once or even in our lifetime. But our God and His Son dwell in eternity and as the old commentator Trapp has said, 'God's time seems long, because we are short'. The Holy Spirit does not bring a person to a state of grace without making sure that that faith is established. I had no contact with any church for over 30 years, and it was on this that the Spirit now worked. I was looking at a website on the internet when I came across the

verse that spoke to me: 'Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching' (Heb.10:25). I had now to seek out a church in which to join with God's people in the worship of Him. This was difficult as I knew that the true worship of God was in decline and many churches were places of entertainment. I had prayed the Lord would direct my paths and He did.

A Church

God's ways are higher than ours and in His providence my computer needed some work done to it. I contacted a young man to come and assist. He was a member of the Free Church (Continuing) and when talking he told me they were beginning church services in East Kilbride. He said he would email me the details. I was contacted by the Rev William Macleod whom I subsequently met. I was convinced this was God's work and determined to attend the Thornwood

Church even although it was some distance from my home. God answers many prayers and whilst answering mine he also answered that of two ladies. They were members of Thornwood and had difficulty getting to church on Sunday nights and to the midweek prayer meetings. I became to them 'God's chauffeur'. This was a seal to me of God's dealings with me.

I have attended Thornwood since my conversion and God in his mercy has established my faith through the faithful preaching of Mr Macleod. It is great to be a Christian. Many folks think that you have to give up so much to be a Christian. But it is not like that. The Lord spoils you with His love and kindness and you only want to do what pleases Him. I miss nothing of my old life. The great realities are the things unseen and the greatest of these is God Himself. I am thankful that Jesus seeks the lost sheep and brings them into His fold.



The Christian Hope

Rev David Blunt

'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept' (1Cor.15:19,20)

Is there hope in your heart today? I am sure that you have many hopes for this life: hopes concerning yourself and your family. But do you have any hope beyond this life? Do you have that confidence which will sustain you all your days in this world, taking you through the dark valley of death and into the great eternity? How few have this sort of hope! Let us consider it together.

The Resurrection

1Corinthians 15 is the key chapter in the Bible concerning the resurrection. Paul begins it by providing a summary of the gospel. Then he refers to some of Christ's resurrection appearances to His disciples. Sadly there were those in the church at Corinth who denied the resurrection of the body. Paul shows us that many uncomfortable conclusions follow if there is no resurrection. If this is the case Christians are to be pitied for they are deluded. Christians often suffer scorn and persecution – and to what purpose? Soon they die and that is it. They enter oblivion. So ultimately their faith is pointless. They have put their hope in a Saviour who promised them eternal life but who never left His own tomb. They are no better by their hope than the unbelievers. In fact they would be just as well to follow those who say: 'let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die' (v.32).

Sure Hope

What is Paul's response to this lie? He says that the Christian has a *sure* hope. With conviction he writes, 'now is Christ

risen from the dead'. It was meeting the risen and ascended Lord that led to Paul's conversion (Acts 9:5,6). The Old Testament foretold the great events in the life of the Saviour. So we read that Jesus Christ died for our sins 'according to the Scriptures' (v.3) and rose again the third day 'according to the Scriptures' (v.4). The two truths stand or fall together. While there are many evidences and arguments for the resurrection the only resting place for our faith is the inspired and infallible Word of God. How precious it is to read there that Jesus 'showed himself alive after his passion by *many infallible proofs*' (Acts 1:3).

Lasting Hope

Then the Christian has a *lasting* hope. By His own resurrection Jesus has become the 'firstfruits' of those who are now asleep in the dust of the earth. In Israel the people were to offer to God the firstfruits of their wheat harvest. Green corn was presented to the Lord in thankfulness for a successful crop (Lev.2:14). It was the token of the full harvest to be gathered in shortly. Having paid for the sins of His people the Lord Jesus Christ has taken our humanity into heaven. The bodies of believers are resting in their graves but they are united to Christ. Jesus is described as 'the first begotten of the dead' (Rev.1:5). He is first in order and in dignity and because He rose in 'the power of *an endless life*' (Heb.7:16) it is certain that His people shall one day rise also.

Joyful Hope

Finally the Christian has a *joyful* hope. The Bible speaks of the unconverted as 'having no hope, and without God in the world' (Eph.2:12). If you are still in your sins then you are guilty before God and heading for hell. Those who foolishly deny the resurrection of Christ can have no joy as they look ahead to death. The fact is that a joyless believer is a contradiction. Certainly we are 'in heaviness through manifold temptations' as we struggle with the sin and trials but in Christ we already rejoice with '*joy unspeakable and full of glory*' (1Pet.1:6-8).

Christ Lives and Saves

Hope placed in Jesus Christ can only fail if Christ Himself can fail. That is an impossibility. He paid the ransom-price

for sinners when He died for them on the cross. Having paid the price, death cannot hold Him or them. Christ is 'alive for evermore' (Rev.1:18) and He will raise us up at the last day (John 6:54). The Christian has a hope born in his soul by the very power that raised Jesus from the dead (1Pet.1:3). As 'an anchor of the soul' (Heb.6:19) this hope keeps him in all the storms of life.

Friend, do you have this hope that 'maketh not ashamed' (Rom.5:5)? You need to repent of your sins and trust in Christ crucified and risen. Then you will know the meaning of these precious words: 'Christ in you, the hope of glory' (Col.1:27). You too will enjoy the wonderful prospect of a perfect and blessed life in heaven with the Lord.

Be Wise!

The Wise Owl! Have you ever heard of someone described as being 'wise as an owl'? I suppose, more than anything else, the owl's large head and wide-open eyes mark him out as a symbol of wisdom. In any case, he is a remarkable bird, wonderfully designed and fitted by the wisdom and power of the Creator for his peculiar life. At night he is able to see far better than in the day; and in the day he is able to safely hide himself from his enemies.

Can you see in the dark? Are you wise like the owl – able to see in the night? Do you wonder what I mean? Let me try to tell you.

You see, sin has produced spiritual darkness in this world – a darkness so great that when Jesus was here as the Light of the world, 'men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil' (John 3:19). And what did they do? They crucified Him because they did not want Him; they did not love Him. They did not see Him to be the Son of God who came to shed His blood and to die so that sinners like you and me might be saved. Let me ask you: Do you know Him as the Son of God who died for your sins? Do you love Him? If so, then you, like the owl, have wide-open eyes in this time of night caused by the Lord Jesus Christ's absence from this world. If you do not, then BE WISE and trust Him as your Saviour. Then you will be able to say with the blind man whom Jesus healed, 'One thing I KNOW, that, whereas I was blind, now I see' (John 9:25).

Are you safe from the enemy? Are you wise like the owl? Are you able to safely hide yourself in the day? Again, do you wonder what I mean? Let me tell you.

This is the daytime of God's salvation and grace, but do you know that the enemy of your soul stalks about like

a roaring lion seeking whom he

may devour? Who is that, do you ask? It is none other than Satan, the Devil, who has many deceitful tricks to make you fall into his hands. You are no match for his power nor his cunning, so you need a refuge from him – a hiding place for your soul. Is there such a hiding place? Yes! The Hiding Place is the same One who gives light so the wise may see. It is the Lord Jesus Christ (Psalm 32:7). He is referred to as the ROCK of our Salvation (Psalm 95:1) – the place of strength, safety and security. He defeated the Devil at the Cross where He was smitten for our sins, and became the 'Rock of Ages' cleft for sinners. Your safety depends solely upon hiding in Him. There is no other salvation for you than in the Lord Jesus. 'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other Name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved' (Acts 4:12).

How to be Wise?

BE WISE! Come to the Lord Jesus Christ NOW! How do you come? Come just as you are, confessing to Him that you are a sinner, and tell Him you believe He died for sinners on Calvary. Take Him as your Saviour. He is able to save you. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved' (Acts 16:31). You will then have in Jesus Christ a Light in the darkness, and a Hiding Place from danger and judgment for time and eternity. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life' (John 5:24).

By Kind Permission (MWTB – DTJ)





A Testimony of God's Sovereign Grace

Gearóid Marley

Not many people get the opportunity to attend seminary. In an amazing way I have attended two. The first was training for the Roman Catholic priesthood in Ireland and the second at an Evangelical seminary in England.

Raised a Roman Catholic

Like most boys in the Republic of Ireland in the 1980s I was brought up a Roman Catholic. My parents taught me to live a good life, say my prayers, and attend mass every Sunday. I believed there was a God, but I did not know Him personally. I prayed as my mother taught me, but I never knew whether God was really listening. I attended confession monthly and did many penances. Conscious of my sinfulness, I hoped that God would accept me into Heaven if I did enough good works. I tried to live the best life I could. It was like balancing the accounts, hoping that my credits (good deeds) would cancel my debits (my sins). Zealous to please God, I was eleven years of age when I decided to become a Roman Catholic priest. I went to the local priest but he said I would have to wait until I was eighteen years of age before entering the seminary.

During my teenage years, I got involved in much sinful behaviour. I rebelled against God and disobeyed the Commandments. I loved my sin, but I hated that miserable life and started to cry out to God. I realise now that God was working in my heart. He showed me I was a sinner. I longed to be right with Him. This became the focus of my life. I knew that I needed to be saved from my sins. I went on a pilgrimage to a famous Catholic shrine. I ate oatcakes, drank black tea, and crawled on my knees around the Stations of the Cross over three days to do penance for my sins. I fasted and meditated but never knew pardon for sin. I wanted to know forgiveness, but how?

Training for the Priesthood

In 1993, at the age of nineteen and after checking different religious organisations, I finally decided to join the Society of Missions to Africa (SMA). They are a society of priests who live together in small communities in different parts of the world, seeking to convert pagans to the Roman religion. I entered the Roman Catholic Seminary located in Maynooth, County Kildare, Ireland. I began training for the priesthood. During my two years in the Seminary, I learned about religion and philosophy but there were no biblical studies.

I attended daily mass and monthly confession. Alas, there was no teaching on forgiveness for sin. We had set times of prayer as a community – at morning, evening, and night. I heard many talks that were focused on pleasing God by doing charitable works and buying favour with God through the church. I also heard a lot about how to use psychology to spiritually counsel people. Not once did I hear how to be reconciled to God through Christ who alone could forgive my sins!

I began to read the Bible (an NIV my parents gave me). As I read it, I asked the priests serious questions about the religious rituals in the Roman Catholic religion, but they could not show me a scriptural basis for much of the superstition and traditions. I discovered that the Bible does not promote the veneration of Mary as practised in the Catholic Church. The official teaching of the church is that Mary does not necessarily answer prayers but rather intercedes on the Catholic's behalf and prays for us. However, the Bible implies she is a sinner: in the famous 'Magnificat' she is found praying to God her Saviour (Luke 1:47). Mary knew she had sinned and here she is found rejoicing in God her Saviour, who was conceived in her womb, that is Jesus Christ her Lord.

I realised that rosaries and prayers to the saints have no scriptural basis. Mary is addressed in Catholic prayers, (eg 'O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee') but the Saviour teaches us to pray to the Father directly (Luke 11:1-4). Indeed, the Bible warns us against ritual prayers: 'This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me' (Matt.15:8). This described me exactly: outwardly very holy and pious, but inwardly my heart was sinful and corrupt.

Also, the Church teaches its followers to pray to the saints. There is a saint for almost every circumstance: St. Christopher for travel, St. Anthony for lost things, Martin de Porrés for healing, St. Joseph for the dying, St. Vincent de Paul for the poor, and St. Jude for lost causes. I asked the priests many questions about religion. I could not find anything in Scripture to support this teaching. I was told that these Church traditions could not be questioned.

I was conscious of my sin and longed to have assurance of salvation. I asked the priests but I was told that we could never be sure of salvation until we died! I was instructed to attend the priest for auricular confession, but I did not find that in Scripture either. In the Bible one is urged to confess

**"How could I forgive other people's sins, when I did not even know forgiveness myself?
Forgiveness for sin is in Christ alone."**

his sins to God, not to human priests: 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1John 1:9). I also realised that as a priest I would have to hear people's confessions and absolve them. I was confused – how could I forgive other people's sins, when I did not even know forgiveness myself? I now realise that the Lord was lifting the veil from my eyes to show me that true faith and forgiveness for sin is in Christ alone. Eventually, I left the Roman Seminary in 1995. The society had decided I was not suitable, but the Lord showed me through His Word the errors of Catholicism and that I should leave the priesthood as well. I had entered the Seminary thinking that I would find forgiveness of my sins. When I left, I thought that I was finished with God – but He was not finished with me! For the next two years I lived in Dublin and continued my search for God. I went to various Protestant churches and also met people from different cults. One cult told me that if I were baptised again, then I was born again. This sounded too much like the Roman Church and its teaching of justification by works, so I left them as well.

England

I went to London to work in preparation for nursing studies. On the first night I met a man who told me how I could know forgiveness for sin. He gave me a leaflet that emphasised the need to trust in Jesus Christ alone. I read this leaflet many times, but still had no peace with God. I became depressed in my spirit, although I was well physically. I knew that I was condemned if I was not converted. The Bible says that if I did not believe then 'the wrath of God abideth' on me (John 3:36). Then I read, 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit' (Romans 8:1). This was a constant challenge to me. I was alone in a huge city with no one to turn to for spiritual advice. Oh, how my heart yearned to be right with God!

I met some students on my nursing studies who seemed to know God. I attended their church where the Bible was central to the whole service. The sermon was preached from the Bible. That was something completely new to me. Deep down I knew these people were genuine Christians. I asked many questions and started to attend the church regularly. About this time, a small Christian group was meeting in my halls of residence. I went along aiming to disrupt the meetings, but slowly began to be drawn to Christ. I saw that they had something that I did not have – peace with God



and a real love for Christ. They knew the reality of 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ' (Romans 5:1). I asked them many questions and one of them gave me a book called *Knowing God* by J I Packer. I read this book and saw that I too could know God in a personal way.

My Conversion

One Sunday morning, the 8th of February 1998, I was listening to a sermon from Luke 10:30-37 about the Good Samaritan. The preacher spoke of Jesus Christ being like the good Samaritan who comes to help us in our wretched sinful state, while at the same time he declared that the Holy Spirit gives new life to lost sinners (1Peter 1:23). He also urged the listeners to repent of sin and trust in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of sin. I called on Jesus Christ to save me, 'for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved' (Romans 10:13). Right there and then I knelt down in my room and prayed, 'O God, I know that you have sent your Son Jesus Christ into the world to save sinners. Will you save me? I trust in Christ alone and ask that you would come into my life by the power of your Holy Spirit and make me new'. I felt a huge weight of guilt and sin taken from my heart. As soon as I opened my eyes a deep sense of peace came over me. At that moment I knew that I was a Christian and truly forgiven of all my sins. The Bible became the living Word of God and He was speaking to me as I read. I realised that we were not saved by works but by grace, 'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast'

(Eph.2:8-9). I was baptised in September 1998. After my baptism I struggled with temptations and trials, but the Lord is my constant refuge – ‘God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble’ (Psalm 46:1).

My Life as a Christian

On my first visit back to Ireland, I did not know of a Christian church, so I went to Mass with my parents. I realised the priest was re-enacting a sacrifice that was accomplished once and for all on the cross of Calvary. The Bible says in 1 Peter 3:18 – ‘Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.’ For this reason, I could not attend the Catholic mass any longer.

As a young Irish man swearing was second nature to me. Very soon after my conversion this dried up! Worldly pursuits like drinking in pubs and going to nightclubs ceased. Prayer and communion with God became a whole new area of experience. I had learned formal rote prayer as a young boy, but now as a Christian I began truly to pray from my heart. This is still an amazing experience to me – to be able to lift my heart to God as my Father and know that He is listening and will answer my prayers according to His will!

My family were upset that I had left the Roman Catholic faith. At first they thought it was another religious phase I was going through, but they soon realised that this was different. However the Lord gave me opportunities to share the true gospel with them. About a year later my youngest brother was converted! Oh, what joy filled my heart!

Since my conversion, the Lord has taught me so much from His Word. I am especially thankful to one man from the church in London who helped me to study the Bible. We did a complete overview of the Scriptures as well as an in-depth study of the doctrines of grace, also called Calvinism. The glorious truth that God is sovereign in salvation and reaches out in mercy to sinners is truly humbling and amazing. That God, the Creator and Sustainer of the world, should call and choose wretched polluted sinners to Himself shows His grace. ‘He hath chosen us in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world’ (Ephesians 1:4). God saves sinners through Christ and He preserves His people through all trials. What a joyful day it will be when his people are united with him in Heaven!

Christian Service and Work

About a year after my conversion I was asking the Lord about how I could serve Him. I graduated and worked for a year in the National Treatment Centre for Alcohol and Drugs. Some of the patients were hardened criminals; others were involved in many sordid areas of society due to their addictions. I realised the psychological treatment was not dealing with their real problem: their unpardoned sin. I was not allowed to witness openly to the patients but some patients enquired what kept me through the difficult times in my life. I told them that it was my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and they were amazed. My housemate and a Roman Catholic friend were converted and baptised during this time. It was a great privilege to see the Lord use even me to win sinners to Christ. The Lord amazingly opened up a way for me to go to London Theological Seminary. In October 2003 I was called to be the assistant pastor of a Reformed Baptist Church in Birmingham, and the following year was inducted as the full time pastor. What an amazing thing – a Roman Catholic seminarian converted and called to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Conclusion

I pray that you, dear friend, (whether Roman Catholic or not) would read the Bible and pray to the Lord to lead you to the truth. The Lord promises that those who seek Him with all their hearts will find Him, ‘when ye shall search for me with all your heart’ (Jeremiah 29:13). I urge you, friend, ‘Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near’ (Isaiah 55:6). The Bible says, ‘repent ye and believe the gospel’ (Mark 1:15). Leave behind your works – they are unable to buy pardon of sin (Ephesians 2:8). Trust in Christ who is ‘the way, the truth, and the life’ (John 14:6). We do not need a human priest: ‘For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all’ (1 Timothy 2:5-6). Trust in Him alone. Please do not delay another moment! Seek Him with all your heart and you will find Him, just as He promised. May He lead you to Himself, that you too would be saved.



"What an amazing thing – a Roman Catholic seminarian converted and called to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ!"

The Debt Problem

Rev Gavin Beers



The Credit Crunch! We have all heard of it and are more or less affected by it. The banks are in trouble, credit markets are frozen, and here, we are informed, lies the source of our financial woes.

But the credit crunch is the result of a more basic problem – **The Debt Problem!** It is the simplest of economic principles that you can't keep spending what you don't have! Debts in the end are called and must be paid. The Independent Office for National Statistics has revealed the sum of our national debt is £2 trillion ie £33,000 of debt for every citizen. On top of this, personal loans, credit cards and mortgages leave the average UK adult a further £29,500 in debt; but still we are encouraged to borrow and spend what we don't have!

Spiritual Economics!

Our concern about this debt problem is right and proper, but we must learn from it a greater spiritual lesson. The Bible speaks of sin in terms of debt.

God requires perfect obedience to His Law from every man. Our failure to obey, our falling short of His standards and breaking His commandments is reckoned by God as a debt that must be paid.

Not Enough Zeros

Our national debt is £2 trillion, that's 12 zeros! This our media calls 'terrifying', even when it is spread across the whole population. What an awful mess we are in and where will it end? But what is more terrifying by far is your personal debt to God's law as a sinner. That is infinite! It cannot be calculated, it is without limit because you have offended the infinitely glorious God of heaven. There are not enough zeros to calculate your debt!

Paying Forever

Death won't cancel this debt and **you** can't begin to pay it in life. Our works, even the best, only add to our debt because they are all tainted with sinful motives! If this debt is not paid by another then death will be the creditor's call on the day of reckoning – the Judgment Day. You will be delivered to the torment of an eternal Hell from which there is no release till you pay all that is due to God (Matt.18:34). Our present financial problems are small in the light of our eternal sin/debt problem. The pressing question then is, Who can pay our spiritual debts?

How Can I Pay My Debts?

When at university I spoke to a Muslim friend about the differences between our two religions. It was clear that we used a lot of the same religious language eg God, sin, heaven... but it became very clear that we differed over the most important question – *How can I have my sins forgiven?*

Can our Good Works Pay our Debt?

He said that we should view our problem like our bank balance. Sometimes we are in the red (sin) but we are to work to get it back in the black (good works). In other words we pay our sin debt by our own good deeds. However the Bible, and if we are honest all our consciences, testify against this. God says 'all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags' (Is.64:6) – that's our best works. God says, 'There is none righteous, no, not one... there is none that doeth good, no, not one' (Rom.3:10,12). And though we do not like to admit it we know it!

How can man whose best works are polluted by sin do anything other than add to his debt when he tries to pay it? Men have flogged themselves, given themselves to poverty, hunger and chastity, seeking to earn forgiveness and peace but never attained it.

Christ Alone can and must Pay our Debt

All must face up to the reality that we owe a debt but we have no ability to pay. The good news of the Gospel is that Jesus Christ has paid for the sins of every man, woman or child who will come to Him! God in mercy sent Him to be our Saviour. His righteousness will be yours if you trust Him and God will accept you in Him. On the Cross He endured the torment of Hell and paid in full for the sins of others: 'He was wounded for our transgressions' (Is.53:5).

You owe a debt you cannot pay, He paid a debt He did not owe and now offers to sinners a free salvation. How can you have your sin debt paid? Come to Christ, trust in Him alone for a full and free forgiveness!

O God, Forgive us our Debts!

Until recently the Lord's Prayer was still recited every morning in schools. It may be the little bit of Gospel that has stuck in the minds of some who read this. Christ taught us to pray, 'Forgive us our debts' or sins because our sins can be forgiven! 'Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out' (Acts 3:19).





Adoniram Judson

A 'Free Thinker' Converted

Rev Maurice Roberts

Adoniram Judson who was born in America in 1788 and he died in 1850 was one of the great pioneer missionaries. He brought the gospel to Burma (now known as **Myanmar**). Yet, eminent as he became after his conversion, Judson was for a time drawn away from the Christian faith and became a 'Free-Thinker'. This is the name given to people who do not accept the Bible as God's word but feel 'free' to believe as they choose. His story is an encouragement to us to know that God can convert a proud young intellectual drifting toward Atheism.

Judson was the son of a godly family in New England. His father was a Congregational minister. So Adoniram had had a very good religious upbringing as a child. However as a young man he began to attend university, and, as so often happens, it was at this stage of life that he began to move away from the faith of his parents.

Influenced by a Clever Young Man

The change began in this way. In the class ahead of him there was a clever, good-natured young student called Jacob Eames who claimed to be a non-Christian. He had been influenced by the new spirit of Atheism coming across the ocean from Europe, where the French Revolution had recently taken place. In the France of that time Christianity was being rejected wholesale by a new generation of 'clever' thinkers. Their books were coming into America and influencing people there towards unbelief.

When Adoniram Judson graduated in 1807 and returned home again from college he faced the awkward task of having to tell his dear parents that he now no longer believed what they had taught him as a child. He had now become a 'Free-Thinker'. His parents were shocked and deeply saddened by what their son told them. His mother wept and pleaded with him to change his mind and to turn again to Christ as the only Saviour of the world. But the young Judson proudly kept up his attitude of unbelief. He was now grown up! Instead of listening to his parents he set off to travel on horse-back through the Northern States of America.

The Reality of Death

Late one evening he stopped at a country inn to spend the night there. The landlord showed him to the only room left explaining apologetically that in the bedroom next to his there was a young man who was very ill – and possibly dying. Judson assured the landlord that he would not be upset by this and off he went to prepare for bed.

But as time went on during the night the noises emanating from the bedroom next door made rest impossible for him. His early upbringing in the Christian faith led him, all unconsciously, to ask the great question, 'Is the man in the next room ready to die?' When Adoniram reflected on his own fears he felt ashamed. Why should it matter to him how a man was going to die? Had the clever student in the class above him at university not taught him to dismiss such fears? He consoled himself with the thought that he was now no longer a Christian but a bold unbeliever with no reason to fear death for himself or anyone else. But for all that, he spent a very uncomfortable night as he could hear the sounds from the next room.

When morning at last came he quickly dressed and hurried to the inn-keeper to enquire how the young man in the next room was. 'He is dead', came the reply. 'Dead?' exclaimed the young Judson – 'dead?' 'Yes', replied the landlord. 'The doctor said he would probably not survive the night'. 'Do you know who he was?', asked Adoniram. 'Oh yes', replied the other. 'He was a young man from Providence College – a very fine fellow'. To the horror of Judson the landlord then told him his name – Jacob Eames. It was the very student whom he had so much admired and who had turned his mind away from the gospel towards becoming a 'Free-Thinker'!

The news came to Judson like a thunder-bolt. That day he discovered that he could not live without Christianity. His college friend, so much admired by him till now, was dead! 'Dead!' he thought in his heart. 'Dead – and lost!'

That day was the turning-point in his life. Abandoning his plans to travel he turned his horse's head homewards. A few years later, now converted to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, he felt God's call to go to the mission-field. He sailed away from America and began in Burma to spread the gospel of Christ and to translate the Bible into the language of the Burmese. By the time of his death his converts could be numbered by thousands.

The God who turned Adoniram Judson back from unbelief to Christ can do the same for all who have turned their back for a time on the faith of their parents. If you are one of these, then kneel down right now and ask God to have mercy upon you. God can make you a saint and a servant of His. If you repent and believe the gospel, God promises that you will shine as a star at last among the galaxy of those who were truly converted to faith in Jesus Christ. How terrible to be as the young 'Free-Thinker' apparently was at the end of his life: dead – and lost!

Who Made It?

Rev Gavin Beers

Isaac Newton, the famous physicist who first described the laws of motion and gravity, once had a craftsman build him a scale model of our solar system for display on a large table in his home. The excellent workmanship simulated the sizes of the planets and their relative distances from each other. It was also a working model in which everything precisely rotated when a crank was turned.

One day, while Newton was in his study, a friend came by who himself was a great scientist, though an atheist. Examining the model enthusiastically he exclaimed: 'My! What an exquisite thing this is! Who made it?'

Without looking up, Newton answered, 'Nobody.'

Stopping his inspection, the visitor turned and said: 'Evidently you did not understand my question. I asked who made it.'

Newton, determined to show his friend the error of his atheism, again replied in a serious tone 'Nobody. What you see here just happened to take the form it now has.'

'You must think I am a fool!' retorted his visitor. 'Of course somebody made it, and he is a genius. I want to know who he is.'

Newton arose and laid his hand on his friend's shoulder, saying 'This model is but a puny imitation of a much grander system whose laws you know. I am not able to convince you that this mere toy is without a designer and maker. Yet you, as an atheist, profess to believe that the great original from which the design of my model is taken, has come to exist without either design or maker!'

The atheist was no longer an atheist when he left that day.

God has not only created the universe and everything in it, including our solar system, the earth and man. He has created man with a soul that will never die. Soon our lives on earth will be over and we shall stand before our Maker and 'everyone of us shall give account of himself to God' (Rom.14:12). You will answer for your sin on that day; all your violations of God's holy law. If an atheist, you will answer for your atheism.

Still it is not enough to have a vague belief in God. Sinners need a Saviour and that Saviour is the one who made all things. The Bible says of Jesus Christ: 'All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made' (John 1:3). It also says 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son (Jesus) that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life' (John 3:16).

So believe in God your Creator, but more specifically 'believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house' (Acts 16:31).

The Friend of Sinners

John Newton

One there is, above all others,
Well deserves the name of Friend;
His is love beyond a brother's,
Costly, free, and knows no end:
They who once His kindness prove,
Find it everlasting love!

Which of all our friends to save us,
Could or would have shed their blood?
But our Jesus died to have us
Reconciled, in Him to God:
This was boundless love indeed!
Jesus is a Friend in need.

Men, when raised to lofty stations,
Often know their friends no more;
Slight and scorn their poor relations
Though they valued them before.
But our Saviour always owns
Those whom He redeemed with groans.

When He lived on earth abasèd,
Friend of sinners was His name;
Now, above all glory raisèd,
He rejoices in the same:
Still He calls them brethren, friends,
And to all their wants attends.

Could we bear from one another,
What He daily bears from us?
Yet this glorious Friend and Brother,
Loves us though we treat Him thus:
Though for good we render ill,
He accounts us brethren still.

O for grace our hearts to soften!
Teach us, Lord, at length to love;
We, alas! forget too often,
What a Friend we have above:
But when home our souls are brought,
We will love Thee as we ought.

Three Things God Cannot Do???

By Kind Permission (MWTB)

There are three things that God cannot do. But surely God can do everything? Let's take a look at God's own Word to see what He Himself tells us.

1. God Cannot Lie

'Ah', you say, 'yes, I believe that God cannot lie'. This may seem rather obvious or even a trick answer, but nevertheless absolutely true. According to God's own Word in Titus 1:2 we are told of the 'God, that cannot lie'. God, and God alone, can make that claim.

2. God Cannot Change

'Oh, sure', you say, 'I believe that God cannot change'. This is also a rather obvious truth. God tells us in His Word, in Malachi 3:6, 'I am the Lord, I change not'. This is another characteristic which is unique to God alone.

3. God Cannot Allow Sinners into Heaven

'Hmmm', you say, 'I'm not so sure about that one. I don't know that I believe that'. But do you know why we know that this is true – absolutely true? Because God Himself tells us, and God cannot lie and God cannot change. So, if God said it, it is true and it is true for all time. Jesus spoke in John 3:3,5 'Verily, verily [truly, truly], I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.... Verily, verily [truly, truly], I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God'.

You may reasonably question the truthfulness of whatever you hear from men, including myself. But what we find in God's Word (the Bible) is absolutely true and true forever (Psalm 119:89).

Now, if God cannot allow sinners into heaven, this is very bad news for all of us because God also tells us: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23). That may be a difficult truth to accept of yourself, but accept it you must. You may have believed that you were pretty good, but you now know that you are a sinner. The Bible says in 1 John 1:10: 'If we say that we have not sinned, we

make Him [God] a liar'. Is there more to the story? Is there a way to get to heaven? Let's examine more of God's true words to us.

So How Can I Get to Heaven?

In John 14:6 Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me'. Jesus explains that there are not many ways to get to heaven. There is one way, and that way is Jesus Himself, because He alone died for our sins: 'While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us' (Romans 5:8). Again, we know this is true, because God said it and He doesn't lie and He doesn't change. 'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved' (Acts 4:12). Salvation is only through Jesus.

There is an incident recorded in the Bible where a man asked: 'What must I do to be saved?' The answer was: 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved' (Acts 16:30,31). You may say, 'But don't I have to do something else?' God gives the answer: 'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast' (Ephesians 2:8,9). God made salvation so plain and so simple. He does it all Himself.

Simply take God at His word. His Word is eternally true (Psalm 119:160). You now know that you are a sinner; you know that there is no salvation in works; and you know that you must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved. 'Repent ye, and believe the gospel' (Mark 1:15). 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved' (Romans 10:9).

If you have repented and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, then you have eternal life. God says in 1 John 5:13: 'These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life'. In the past, you may have hoped that you were going to heaven. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will know it!



"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God"

'God, Please Don't Let Me Drown!'

Heavy summer storms had filled to overflowing the drainage canals in the city. So much water was great for the farmers in the parched area and a delight to all who enjoyed water sports. Yet, unprotected by lifeguards as these streams were, they were a real danger to the careless and a worry for many anxious parents. Among those playing in her neighbourhood canal was a teenage girl. She was not a very strong nor expert swimmer, and she seemed unaware of danger. Even when the swift centre current caught and swept her downstream, she believed she could fight her way back to the bank. How like the soul drifting away from God this is! To enjoy 'the pleasures of sin for a season' he drifts in the current of the world, trusting to his own ability to return to the safety of Christ and the early Christian teaching he received. Just so, many have made shipwreck of otherwise promising lives.

Realising danger

At last, realising her inability to overcome the force of the current and seeing the ever-widening expanse of the swift waters, the frightened girl screamed for help. A young fisherman on the bank saw the struggling girl and plunged in, hoping to reach her. He was not a very strong swimmer, but he fought the current in his effort to help until he himself was exhausted and had to be rescued. He said: 'I had to try! There was nothing else I could do.'

'Please don't let me drown'

Another observer on the bank threw an empty five-gallon container to the girl. She grabbed it as it bobbed past her, and encircled it with both arms. Yet the relentless flood swept her on. About two hundred yards further downstream and still in the swift centre current, the poor girl seemed to realise fully her helpless situation. Within sight was the great culvert filled to overflowing with the flood-stream from the

canal. Once within that watery trap no human help could reach her. Did the thought of her only possible Helper now come to her? Did He, the soul's only sure Refuge, present Himself to her? The few watchers on the bank were startled into action by a desperate scream: 'O God, PLEASE don't let me drown!'

Too late?

On the banks of the canal stood two men watching the struggle in the water. Neither was a good swimmer, and both were painfully aware of physical disabilities. Yet at the hopeless cry one of the men muttered, 'I may die first, but I can't just let her drown.' Throwing off his coat and shoes, he plunged into the yellow flood and started swimming. Letting himself be carried by the current as much as possible, he reached the frantic girl. He feared that, in her panic, she might drag both of them beneath the water, but both her arms were still desperately hugging the empty container. Grasping her as best he could, he fought against the rushing water while keeping his grip on the now half-conscious girl. Halfway to the bank, exhausted by his efforts, he was met by his friend and another man. Together they were able to pull both rescuer and rescued to safety.

Why not cry now?

The course of this world is flowing ever more swiftly towards destruction. Caught in its relentless tide, rushing helplessly onward, why not cry as that girl did, 'O God, PLEASE don't let me drown'? In Christ Jesus alone is eternal life; why not cry to Him now to be your Saviour and your sure Refuge from life's storms? He has promised that 'him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out' (Jn.6:37). 'The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost' (Luke 19:10).

'Echoes of Grace' by Bible Truth Publishers

"The course of this world is flowing ever more swiftly towards destruction."





Up or Down?

I work on the 23rd floor of an office building. Day after day I see the same faces and know who gets off

at each floor. One day I was late for work, and, as I rushed to the lift, a man I had never seen before held the doors and asked me, 'Up or down?' As we went up in the lift he surprised me by breaking the silence to ask if my final trip was going to be up or down.

'What do you mean?' I asked. 'Well, when your life is over, will you be going up to heaven or down to hell?' 'I sure hope it will be up,' I said, while anxiously watching the lights approach number 23. As the elevator stopped he said, 'If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, it will be.' 'Of course I do,' I replied. Then, as the doors closed behind me I added, 'I go to church every week.'

I didn't think much about our conversation. In fact I forgot all about it until a couple of weeks later when I was late for work again. This time I was the one in the lift as he came running to beat the closing doors. Remembering his kindness to me a couple of weeks earlier, I held the doors and said, 'Up or down?' But instead of getting in the lift, he stopped just outside the doors.

'What are you doing?' I asked. 'Come on, I'm in a hurry.' 'Are you sure this elevator will take me to my office?' he asked.

'Of course it will,' I snapped. 'I take it every day.'

'I know it works, and lots of people go up in it, but will it take me where I need to go?'

'Not if you don't get on it,' I said impatiently.

He finally got into the lift and as we waited to reach our floors, he said, 'You see, going to heaven is very like going up in this lift. You can know that it works and watch it go up and down all day, but if you don't ever get into it, it can't take you anywhere.' 'Yes, but what does that have to do with going to heaven?' I asked. 'You can go to church every week and do good deeds and say prayers and even believe about Jesus, but if you are depending on those things to get you to heaven you will never get there. You must trust on the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour.' As the doors opened at my floor he handed me a card with some Bible references on it. 'Read these,' he said, 'and you'll see what I'm talking about.'

That night when I got home I took out the card he had given me and looked up the verses in my Bible. Tears came to my eyes as I realised that I was a lost sinner in need of salvation, and that Jesus died and rose again to take away sins. Right there I prayed to God, confessing my sins and trusting Jesus to be my Saviour.

Now I'll ask you – when your life is over, will it be up or down for you? Have you ever taken the step of faith and trusted Jesus as your Saviour? Jesus said, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life' (John 6:47).

By Kind Permission (MWTB)

The Way to Heaven

My father was a wise man and he always explained it like this... my friend began. We had been talking together about salvation. I thought I had clearly explained the way to Heaven to my friend; however, it became quite apparent that the oft-repeated thoughts of his father were deeply embedded in his mind. This would have been good had those thoughts been according to divine truth, but that was not so.

'My father said,' he went on, 'that just as there are many roads leading to London and it doesn't really matter which one you take, it will lead you there; so there are many roads leading to Heaven, and as long as you are sincere in what you believe and the road you follow, it will get you there.' 'You are

right,' I quickly replied, 'about going to London, but you are completely wrong about going to Heaven. The only map to Heaven, the Bible, clearly presents only one way to Heaven. Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"' (John 14:6).

Men of earthly wisdom have formed various opinions which set forth many ways to Heaven. However, the wisest man who ever lived wrote these words: 'There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death' (Prov 14:12). Another divinely-inspired writer asks, 'Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?' (1 Cor 1:20). Philosophy presents the way of moral respectability, but ignores God's verdict that 'There is none righteous, no,

not one' (Rom 3:10). Men also urge the sincere religion of human effort but refuse the divine pronouncement – 'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast' (Eph 2:8,9).

The Word of God, on the contrary, presents Christ, and Christ alone, as the Way for ruined, helpless man to enter into Heaven. It is not that He is a way, as though there were other ways. Nor is it that He and something else or someone else with Him is the way. He is the 'one Mediator between God and men' (1 Tim 2:5). In order to be the Way, it was imperative that He 'put away sin' (which had closed Heaven to man) 'by the sacrifice of Himself'. This He did once when He 'suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God' (1 Pet 3:18). The pouring out of His precious blood at Calvary atoned for sin and paved the way

for guilty man to draw nigh to God: cleansed, forgiven, and made fit for His holy presence.

This way is still open, dear reader. The living Saviour who has already entered into the Father's house invites you come with Him to that place of eternal glory. To go to Heaven, all you need to do is to repent of your sin and believe in Him as the One who died for sinners and rose again. This is coming to Christ. This is salvation by grace through faith. This is the way to Heaven. Belief in any other way, however plausible it may seem, however religious it may be, or however sincerely it is pursued leads only away from God and ends in 'the blackness of darkness for ever' (Jude 13). But this need not be. Allow this article, as a signpost along the highway of life, to point you to the Lord Jesus who says, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out' (John 6:37).

By DTJ (MWTB)

He Didn't Intend To...

What were you thinking about just before you picked up this Magazine? Most likely you were concerned with daily things like your work, family, or personal matters. Or maybe you were thinking about politics, sport, or something else. But when was the last time you stopped to think about your future, your eternal future? The following solemn story is told about Tom. Like us all Tom 'intended' to do many things. But there was one certain thing that Tom didn't intend doing.

He didn't intend to be lost – lost in hell forever. He always intended to be saved. When he was just a small boy he often heard his Sunday school teacher quote a well-known verse from the Bible. It was this: 'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation' (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Then, when he entered college, Genevieve, the girl he liked a lot during his college days but didn't marry, used to talk to him about his soul's eternal welfare and the danger of putting off getting saved until it would be too late. He usually listened respectfully but did not answer. One Sunday evening, as he and Genevieve were walking across the quiet college campus from a service at the church she attended, she asked: 'Tom, when do you expect to be saved?' 'Sometime, Genevieve,' he answered. 'When will that "sometime" be?' 'When I am not as busy as I am now, and I will have more time to think of those things.' 'Tom,' Genevieve said, as her large brown eyes looked squarely into his face, 'that "sometime" may never, never come.'

They were near Genevieve's home by this time, and as it was getting late and Tom had lessons to study, he bade Genevieve a cheery goodnight. Soon afterwards Genevieve and her family moved from town and she never saw Tom again.

One year after Genevieve's Sunday-evening warning, Tom met a girl at a college dance who became his wife. Ten months after they met they were married. No one ever spoke again, personally, to Tom about his soul's eternal welfare.

After his graduation, Tom and a classmate went into business together. The venture was a successful one resulting in increasing profits each year until a drunk driver drove through a stop sign at a high rate of speed. Tom's brakes screeched. There was a crash. Then all was silent. The drunk driver was unconscious. Tom was dead!

Tom would undoubtedly give a thousand worlds, if he possessed them, to be able to roll back time and stand with Genevieve in the old, tree-lined college campus and hear her inviting him to trust in her precious and eternal Saviour. But Tom will never hear God's voice, his Sunday school teacher's voice, or Genevieve's voice pleading with him to be saved. To die without Christ is to be lost in a sinner's doom, not for a year, nor for a thousand years, nor a million years, but for eternity! Tom has found out how true Genevieve's words were: 'Tom, that "sometime" may never, never come.'

Dear reader friend, are you saved for eternity? If you value your soul and are concerned about your eternal destiny, be thankful that your feet still stand on the shores of time, and that you still have the opportunity of being saved. Don't delay, like Tom did, or you will be too late – for ever too late. Do it now before eternity calls you. Claim God's promise for salvation 'if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved' (Romans 10:9).

Tract by MWTB, altered by DJM



**"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord
shall be saved"**

Romans 10:13