

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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Contents

Principles for Life	83
The Captain Struck by a Bird	85
Samuel Rutherford and Prayer:	
3. How Should We Think About Prayer?	86
The Bible's Teaching on Repentance:	
5. A Necessary Duty	88
Fool's Gold and Fool's Faith	90
For Junior Readers:	
"I Have a New Master Now"	93
Through the Alphabet with the Bible:	
Pray	94
For Younger Readers:	
What Does <i>Precious</i> Mean?	95
Looking Around Us	95
Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2013-14:	
Exercise 3	96

Cover Picture: *St Andrews, where Samuel Rutherford was a professor.*
See page 86.

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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

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Number 5

Principles for Life

God has told us how we should live. He has given us the Bible, which contains all we need to know so that we may act properly before Him. Yet let us bear in mind that the Bible not only takes to do with our words and actions, but also with our thoughts.

God's directions come in various ways. First of all, there are the Commandments. We might think of these as 10 principles for life: we must have the true God as our only God; we are not to make idols; we must not take God's name in vain; we must keep the Sabbath; we must honour our parents; we must not kill, commit adultery, steal, speak dishonestly, or covet what is not ours. And Jesus reduced these principles to two. First was what He called "the first and great commandment"; that is: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind". And the second was: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39). We are to show our love to God by doing what He tells us. Indeed we are to be wholehearted in our love to God, which means that we must be wholehearted in keeping all His commandments. Whenever we come short of that wholehearted love and obedience, we sin. Sin is a terrible thing, because it is done against God, who is our Creator and is totally holy. And sin will be punished for ever in hell if we do not repent.

The principles God has given us are expanded in many parts of the Bible. For instance, the later parts of many of the Epistles are full of directions. Let us note a few examples from Ephesians 4. (1.) We are to go about "with all lowliness and meekness" (verse 2); we are not to be proud and bossy but are to love others as we love ourselves. (2.) We are not to be "carried about with every wind of doctrine" (verse 14); we are so to love God that we follow all the teachings of the Bible; we are not to be blown about by any form of teaching which is not in line with what God has revealed in the Scriptures. (3.) Believers are told: "Walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind . . . to work all uncleanness with greediness" (verses 17-19); they were not to imitate the ways of those who did not know about God and His commandments. In particular, these believers were not to follow the people

around them in their filthy sins against the Seventh Commandment. We too should think in the same way.

The principles of the Commandments are also illustrated in the examples the Bible gives of how people have acted. We find the principle of the First Commandment illustrated in the life of Abraham, who heard the God of glory call him away from the idolatry of the heathen city of Ur, where he was brought up. By faith, Abraham obeyed. He is to be our example in forsaking a life of sin and walking by God's principles for a godly life. Others, such as Pharaoh, refused to obey God; they rejected His authority and refused to pattern their life by these principles – the principles Pharaoh saw illustrated in the lives of Moses and Aaron. And we today should take godly people as a pattern – as far as they live their lives on God's principles.

In Old Testament times, God directed the Israelites to write His commands on their door posts (Deuteronomy 6:6,9). This meant that, when they went outside, they were reminded how they should behave. They might say to themselves: It does not matter who I meet, I must deal honestly with them. Or: I must treat other people with respect; I must not try to take unfair advantage of them. Again, when they came back home and went inside, they should once more have been reminded that God's commands still applied to them. They might then say to themselves: I must not take God's name in vain; I must always speak and think about Him with respect. Or, if it was just before the Sabbath, they might think: I must remember God's day to keep it holy; tomorrow, during the whole day, I must try to give as much time as possible to thinking about Him and worshipping Him.

It would be good for us too to think in that way, although *we* are not told to write God's commands on our door posts. As we go outside, let us say to ourselves, I am obliged to keep all God's commandments, wherever I go and whatever I do, all the time till I come home. And as we come inside again, let us say, I must keep God's commandments all the time till I go outside again.

Yet we ought to realise that we can never keep God's commandments perfectly. So should we not pray again and again – in particular when we go out and when we come in again – that God would keep us from sin and from being tempted to sin? If we want to avoid temptation, we should avoid, wherever possible, places where we are likely to be tempted to sin. You might expect, for example, to meet temptation at school or at university or at work; but then you can ask God to protect you – assuming it is your duty to be in these places. But can you expect God's help if you go into bad company when you do not really need to do so? Can you really feel free to ask God's help when you deliberately go out to meet temptation? How much we need God to change us so that we would want to be holy!

The Captain Struck by a Bird

Christ said to His disciples, “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.” How little we think of the fact that not one sparrow alights on the ground without the permission, care and control of God. Yes, the God of providence governs “all His creatures and all their actions”, even those of the sparrows.

A wonderful example of God’s control over His creatures was seen in 1857 by Anders Johnsen, captain of the Norwegian ship *Ellen*, as it sailed up the east coast of America. A storm arose which forced the captain to change course slightly. As he stood on deck that evening he was struck on his shoulder. He turned to see a large bird fly away.

“I remained standing in the same place,” said Captain Johnsen, “and kept watching it with great amazement.” He was even more astonished when the bird swung round, came back and flew straight into his chest. It fell to the deck and was caught. After it was tethered and offered food and water, the captain and some of his crew stood watching it.

“It occurred to me”, said the captain later, “that when it struck against me it might be a sign from the Almighty, but what was in store for me I had no idea. Neither did I tell the crew about my thoughts until someone said, ‘It is a sign from God’.” Not that this was a miracle or a revelation, but simply a happening by which God in providence influenced his mind.

“I then said to my first mate, ‘Maybe our ship is on a more westward course than our dead-reckoning [suggests] and we are nearer to land than we think’.

“I thought intensely about the situation but found no relief until I had changed the course back to North as I first had ordered it.”

After midnight, as Captain Johnsen rested below deck, he was called by the second officer, “Captain, come on deck quickly. I hear shouting. Whether from land or the water I do not know”. The captain rushed on deck and in the darkness heard many voices shouting, “Help! Help!”

In the dark, early hours of that Sabbath morning, the Captain and his crew succeeded with much difficulty in rescuing 44 people from the heaving sea. They discovered that the people they rescued had been shipwrecked when the *Central America*, carrying more than 550 people and 10 tons of gold, was sunk by a hurricane the previous day. As dawn broke, the crew of the *Ellen* managed to rescue another five people.

If it was not for the extraordinary providence of the bird striking the captain, he would not have set the ship back on her original course and would have missed the people who had been shipwrecked. Some might say that it was just chance or luck, but we have called it a providence, because

there are no such things as luck and chance. God has not only “foreordained whatsoever comes to pass”, He also governs all things. “His kingdom ruleth over all” (Psalm 103:19). NMR

Samuel Rutherford and Prayer

3. How Should We Think About Prayer?

Matthew Vogan

the last article, in March, told about Samuel Rutherford's ministry in Anwoth, in the south of Scotland, and his exile in Aberdeen because he would not submit to the unscriptural principles of those who had power in the Church.

***T*eaching on prayer.** As events developed, godly people hoped that the reformation and revival witnessed in Scotland would spread to the other parts of the British Isles. Rutherford therefore welcomed the opportunity, as one of the Scottish commissioners, to take part in the Westminster Assembly. This body was called to reform the doctrine, government, and worship of the Church of England to be as close as possible to the Scottish Church. He hoped to be involved in building “the waste places of Zion in another kingdom”.

The men of this Assembly were especially eminent in the life of prayer; something that was very evident in their fast-day services, when some of them were called on to pray for an hour at a time. In their *Shorter Catechism*, the Westminster Assembly have given to us a very full, but concise, biblical summary and definition of prayer: “Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies”.

While in London, Rutherford was active in preaching and writing. He wrote various books that are extremely helpful to understanding prayer. *The Trial and Triumph of Faith* is a series of sermons which deal with the patient, humble and persevering prayers of the Syrophenician woman in pleading with the Lord Jesus Christ. *The Power of Faith and Prayer* is a set of sermons on the two blind men (in Matthew 9:27-31) that followed Christ crying out to Him for mercy. Towards the end of his life, Rutherford also published *The Influences of the Life of Grace*; it deals practically with the vital theme of our need for the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit upon us; it also deals with prayer as an all-important means to this end.

The foundation of prayer. Rutherford believed that prayer has its foundation in the doctrine of adoption, which according to his own *Catechism* is “God's reckoning and esteeming of us to be sons after we believe and are reconciled unto God”. But this prompts the vital question: “How shall we know that we

are adopted?" The following practical answer is given: "If we can pray to our Father; if we be in fashion like our Father and our brother Christ, serving for the inheritance as heirs, not for the moveables as slaves". He means that God's children are looking for the whole spiritual inheritance, while others – like slaves – are only looking for a few little possessions that can be carried from place to place in this world, but not to the eternal world.

Adoption has its harvest; it brings forth certain distinguishing fruits, the two fruits of hope and of prayer. We hope for the inheritance and also pray that we may be led unto it. Hope arises from "the feeling of God's love towards us in Christ" and is an "assured waiting for glory to be revealed even under troubles". Troubles themselves, he says, are only to make us white and ripe for the Lord's harvest-hook. Hope in turn brings forth its own harvest in this world: the fruits of patience, joy and holiness.

Adoption makes us pray, crying, "Abba, Father, as earthly bairns [children], [who] because they are sons, seek all things they need from their father". "Ye think nothing of one tear, yet God puts it in His bottle; and nothing of one sigh, but God gathers it in His treasure God has not a pleasanter sight in the world than the face of a child of God. No music delights Him more nor [than] the sighs and tears, complaints and prayers of His children."

The Lord's Prayer teaches us to come before God "with reverence and faith in prayer, as bairns to their father's knee, with love to our brethren, and to speak to Him in a bairn's tongue who has made us bairns in Christ". "Our Father which *art in heaven*" teaches us that "we are in humility to think of ourselves as worms and as strangers upon earth, and to trust in His power and reverence His glory, with heavenly minds, in prayer". The whole treatment of this prayer in his *Catechism* is both valuable and distinctive, but we cannot pause to consider all his teaching on every petition.

Prayer and outward mercies. It is a delight to follow Rutherford in unpacking and expounding the full meaning of such a portion of the Word of God as the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread", which seems straightforward and basic. In making this petition, "we desire of God food and raiment" but, more than this, we also ask "a blessing upon the labours of man and beast and lawful pleasures, that we may be helped in our journey to heaven, blessed in health, sleep, and houses, good magistrates [rulers], fair weather."

(a) Why do we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread"? Because we deserve nothing at God's hand, and neither our conquest [what we have] nor our birth, but only God's free gift makes [gives] us a spiritual right to the earth."

(b) "But when our barns and houses and the table is full of meat [food], need we then to pray?" "Yes, indeed, because God may curse our bread

and turn it into a stone, and they are robbers who put their hands to God's creatures [what He has created] and seek not liberty [permission] by prayer from Him."

(c) Why do we pray "Give us *this day* our daily bread? "Because we should pray as often as we are hungry, and God will have us for the morrow to trust in His providence."

(d) Why is it "Give us this day our *daily* bread? "Because our hearts should not run after covetousness but be content with our present meal and food and raiment."

(e) Why is it that all the necessities of this life are called *bread*? "The Word of God puts it in this way in order to teach us to be thankful for that which suffices nature, and not to seek for that which does please the desires of our sinful flesh."

(f) How can we call it *our* daily bread though, seeing it is God's bread? "Because we are to labour for it in a lawful calling, else we steal our bread and make unjust conquest [get it unjustly], and because it must be made ours in Christ else we rob God."

The Bible's Teaching on Repentance

5. A Necessary Duty

Charles Hodge

Last month's article in this series emphasised that where there is repentance, there is also hope in God's mercy. This is the final article in this series, which is taken, with editing, from *The Way of Life*.

Repentance unto life is a turning; it is not being driven away from sin by fear and stress of conscience, but forsaking it as evil and hateful, with sincere sorrow, humility and confession. It is a returning to God, because He is good and willing to forgive; so the repenting sinner is determined to obey God's commandments.

There are only two ways we can judge if this change is genuine. One is to compare our inward experience with the Word of God; the other is to observe its effects. If we examine our feelings, we will generally be able to find out what kind of feelings they are. Have we had such views of God's justice and holiness as convinced us that we were sinful and deserved to be punished? Have we given up being complacent about ourselves and felt the disapproval of our character and conduct which leads the soul to confess, with shame and sorrow, its guilt and pollution in the sight of God. Have we so grasped the mercy of God in Jesus Christ as to return to God with a strong

desire after His favour, and with a firm determination to live to His glory? These are the exercises of soul which repentance involves, and the person who is conscious of them may know that he has turned from death unto life.

True self-knowledge is very difficult to attain; and unless the feelings are unusually strong, it is hard to detect their true nature. So the surest test of any change of heart we may have had is: What are its permanent effects? "By their fruits ye shall know them", applies to judging both ourselves and others.

So whatever our inward experience, whatever joy or sorrow we may have felt, our experience will do us no good unless we bring forth "fruits meet for repentance". We need to repent of our repentance (1) unless it leads us to confess the wrong we have done to others and also to try to put it right; (2) unless it causes us to give up, not just outward sins, which other people notice, but also those that lie hidden in the heart; (3) unless it makes us choose the service of God, as that which is right and pleasant, and causes us to live not for ourselves but for Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

No duty is more necessary, or more often stated in the Bible, than repentance. Nature itself teaches us that we should be sorry when we have done wrong, and turn away from it. Every parent looks anxiously for the repentance of a disobedient child; he considers nothing worthy of the name except sincere sorrow and a return to loving obedience. So no one needs to wonder that God commands all men everywhere to repent. Though the salvation offered in the gospel is a salvation for sinners, it is a salvation *from* sin. The heaven which it promises is a heaven of holiness.

So no one can be saved who does not, in repentance, forsake his sins. This is a great part of salvation. The inward change of heart, from the love and service of sin, to the love and service of God, is the great end of the death of Christ, who gave Himself for His Church, "that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish". So there can be no salvation for sinners without repentance.

This is why repentance is such an important part of true preaching. When the Saviour began to preach, He said, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). When He sent out His apostles, He told them "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations" (Luke 24:47). Thus His disciples went forth and preached, "Repent ye and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19). Paul called on the elders at Ephesus to bear witness that he had testified "both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21).

Thus repentance is the great, pressing duty of all who hear the gospel. They are called to forsake their sins and return to God through Jesus Christ. As we have seen, unless we repent we must perish. It is because repentance is thus totally necessary that God reveals so clearly, not only the evil of sin and the terrors of His law, but His infinite compassion and love. He calls on us to turn to Him and live, assuring us that He is “the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth”.

This call to repentance often follows people from the cradle to the grave. It is one of the first sounds which wakes the infant; it is one of the last which falls on the failing senses of the dying sinner. All joy and all sorrow are calls to return unto God, with whom are the issues of life. Every opened grave, every church, every page of the Bible, is a warning or an invitation. Every serious thought or anxious fear is God's voice, saying, “Turn ye, for why will ye die?” It is through all this counsel that men force their way to death. They perish because they deliberately reject salvation.

Under this scheme of mercy, all duties are graces. Though repentance is our duty, it is not less the gift of God. Those who twist the Scriptures to their own destruction, gladly seize on such truths either as an excuse for delay, pretending to wait for God's time, or lessening the guilt of a hard heart that will not repent. But those who feel the greatness of the repentance required of them rejoice in the truth and rouse themselves with new energy to their duty. They no longer consider it a hopeless task; with all earnestness they work out their own salvation, because it is God that works in them to will and to do, according to His pleasure.

Fool's Gold and Fool's Faith

Rev K M Watkins

Gold is very valuable. People pay a lot of money for it. If you look closely at a gold ring, you will notice a hallmark pattern pressed into the back of it, to show that it is true gold. People should always look for that before they buy anything made of gold, because there is such a thing as *fool's gold*. Fool's gold looks the same as real gold, but in fact it is worth next to nothing. It is not gold at all. It is a metal called *pyrite*, which has little to no value. Many are deceived by it. It is foolish not to check.

The Apostle Peter tells us that faith is “much more precious than gold” (1 Peter 1:7). He calls it “precious faith” (2 Peter 1:1) – and we also should call it precious. Faith is much more valuable than the gold of this world. Gold will not take us to heaven. But if we have faith in Jesus Christ, He will

take us to heaven. That is what the Bible says: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

However, just as there is fool's gold, so there is *fool's faith*. Fool's faith looks like faith in Christ, but it is not true faith. The Bible warns us that fool's faith deceives many people. That should frighten us. It is very foolish to think that you believe in Christ when really you do not. It is very foolish not to check that your faith is true. With fool's gold you lose your money. That is serious. But with fool's faith you lose your soul. That is worse. Much worse! "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

Jesus spoke about ten virgins (see Matthew 25:1-13). They all had lamps and were waiting for the bridegroom. But only five were ready when he came; so only they went into the marriage. The other five were shut out. Their lamps had gone out, because they did not have any oil. Spiritually it is the same. Many people say that they have the lamp of faith, and are waiting to meet Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom. But when they are put to the test, only some have the oil of the Holy Spirit working in their hearts. Only they go to be with Christ for ever. The others, even though they say they believed in Christ, do not have His Spirit and therefore never really trusted in Him. Jesus will reject them for ever. They had fool's faith!

In his Letter, James speaks about some people who were very sure that they were saved by their faith. But their faith was not right. It did not produce a holy life of good works (see James 2:17). It was dead. It was fool's faith. Yes, we must be saved through faith alone. But saving faith is never alone in the true believer. True faith is alive, and it produces a godly life. In order to be saved, sinners must believe in Christ. But then they start to live for Christ. He loved them so much that He died for them. Therefore they love Him, and want to please Him. They desire to do His will. That is the gold of real faith. Those who never start living for Christ have never been saved by Him. Their faith is false. It is fool's faith.

This false faith is sometimes called historical faith. Many people believe in Jesus in the same way as they believe in some person from history – Winston Churchill, for example. People who never met him or saw him believe that he existed and that he led Britain through the Second World War. But believing in Churchill in that way is not the same as trusting him. It is not the same as knowing him personally.

It is the same with the Lord Jesus. If we believe that He died on a cross for sinners as a mere fact of history, that will not save us. James tells us that even the devils can believe things like that. On its own, historical faith is not saving faith. It is fool's faith. The devils' faith in the history of Jesus does

not save them. It does not make them holy. It does not stop them from going to hell. And if our faith is like theirs, it will not save us either. It will not make us holy. It will not stop us from going to hell. We must have saving faith – the faith that *trusts* in Christ.

Some people are very busy doing all kinds of work for Jesus, because they think they believe in Him. But they are going to have a terrible shock. One day Jesus will say to them: “I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:23). They did so much. “Lord, Lord,” they will ask, “have we not prophesied in Thy name? And in Thy name have cast out devils? And in Thy name done many wonderful works?” (verse 22). Yes, they did do all those things. But they did not do them with the right kind of faith. For their faith never brought them to Jesus Himself, to enjoy fellowship with Him in their hearts. They did not *know* Him. They never met Christ.

Imagine a man spending his time and skill working very hard to produce beautiful jewellery, only to discover at the end that his effort has been completely wasted because he was not using true gold. He was so busy working that he never checked the metal that he was using. When he finally discovers that he has been using fool's gold, it is too late to put things right. It will be the same for anyone who thinks that he is working for Christ but never really knows Him in his heart. When he finally realises that he has fool's faith, it will be too late to put it right.

In the Parable of the Sower (see Matthew 13:1-8, 18-23), some people were so happy when they heard the gospel. They thought that their sins were forgiven. All that joy looked like saving faith! But it was not true faith. For it did not last. It was fool's faith. Their hearts were hard like stony ground, and the gospel seed never went deep enough to produce true faith. Some others lasted longer. They seemed to grow up in the Christian life. But after a while they started to care more about the world than the gospel. Slowly they went back to their old lives. It was only fool's faith that they had. Their hearts were still joined to earthly things, which were like thorns in the garden. They choked the good seed of the gospel.

But there were other people whose hearts were prepared by the Holy Spirit to receive the gospel seed deeply. They were born again, and really believed in Christ. Their lives became fruitful for the Lord. Only they were saved. Their faith was real – like true gold, not fool's gold.

Do you see now? It is so easy to lose your soul! It is so easy to deceive yourself! The Bible speaks about us all when it says that “the heart is deceitful above all things” (Jeremiah 17:9). It is so easy to think that our faith is true, when really it is fool's faith. Do not be deceived! Do what the Bible tells you. Test your faith more than you would test gold. “Examine

yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves” (2 Corinthians 13:5). “Let a man examine himself” (1 Corinthians 11:28). Just as a man tests a piece of metal to see if it is real gold, so we must test our faith to see if it is real faith.

Peter tells us: “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure” (2 Peter 1:10). That does not mean that we must work hard in order to save ourselves. No. It means that we must work hard to test that our faith is real. We must make absolutely sure that we have really been called by God’s grace, and that we really know the Lord Jesus as our Saviour. We must put effort into it. If we are lazy, we could easily be deceived, and go to the flames of hell for ever. No one wants that to happen!

Sometimes it is known that people have made false money, to cheat others. At first, the notes that they have made look like real money. But if you look very carefully you find that the notes are fake. They are called counterfeits. At times like that, everyone is very careful to check his money. The shop-keeper takes the note you give him; he holds it up to the light; he turns it around. He examines it very closely. He accepts it only when he is really sure that it is true money.

That is what we must do with our faith. These days, many people believe that they have faith in Christ, and they are sure that their faith will save them. But they are not checking it! Not many know the Bible’s warnings about deceiving themselves. Very few do anything about it. Make sure that you do so! For the sake of your soul’s salvation, do so! Do not be deceived by fool’s faith.

For Junior Readers

“I Have a New Master Now”

Have you heard of Billy Bray? Maybe you have a book about him in your home. He lived in the 1800s in Cornwall, in south-west England. He was brought up in a church-going family. But once he started working as a miner in the local tin mine, he became wild and rough. He wasted his money on strong drink and often came home drunk.

When he was convinced of his sins, he was afraid that he would never find mercy. He felt he was such a great sinner. But he pled Christ’s promise. He prayed, “Lord, Thou hast said, They that ask shall receive; they that seek shall find; and to them that knock the door shall be opened” (see Matthew 7:7,8). And the Lord heard his prayer and saved his soul.

After his conversion, he had a great love to the Sabbath Day. He called

it, "The pearl of days". But one of the tunnels in the mine filled up with water every 12 hours, and the men had to take turns to pump it out. Billy's turn fell on a Sabbath; yet he went to chapel as usual, trusting that the Lord would take care of him and the mine.

On Monday morning, he went in early to do his duty. But he was called to the manager's office to explain why he had not come on the Sabbath. Billy told him that it was the Lord's will that he should not work on the Sabbath.

"Well," said the manager angrily, "you shall not work here any more."

Billy felt unmoved, although work was hard to find and this would mean hardship and poverty for him. "I felt," he said, "I had the Lord of rocks and hills for my friend and I did not care who was against me."

The manager tried to persuade him to give up his idea of not working on the Sabbath. He told Billy that it was necessary for men in mines to work every day. Billy bravely replied, "I have a new Master now, and He tells me I must not work on the Sabbath Day but keep it holy. And I shall do as He tells me."

Time went on, and one day two men from the mine came to him. They told him that the manager wanted to see him. He must have been short of workmen and wanted Billy to work a shift for him. Billy accepted this offer, although at first he did not know if he would be paid for it. But the job continued and it turned out that he was better paid for doing this than for his other job. Now, instead of receiving £2 a month as before, Billy was making more than £5 and he had his Sabbaths to worship his God!

As he said himself: "So the Lord cleared my way for ever from working on the Lord's Day. I did not lose by serving the Lord, but got £3 a month more than I got before, and did the will of the Lord, which is better than all the money in the world."

Does this remind you of God's words in the Bible: "Them that honour Me I will honour". Will you not pray to the Lord to make you able to honour Him in all areas of your life and to obey all His commandments.

J van Kralingen

Through the Alphabet with the Bible

Here are five verses from the Bible using the word:

Pray

And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to *pray* and not to faint (Luke 18:1).

Precept. *Pray* without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Promise. Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and *pray* unto me, and I will hearken unto you (Jeremiah 29:12).

Prayer. Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto Thee will I *pray* (Psalm 5:2).

Encouragement. We know not what to *pray* for as we ought: but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered (Romans 8:26).

For Younger Readers

What Does *Precious* Mean?

Someone asked a little girl a question. Could she give the meaning of the word precious?

She thought for a minute and then she gave her answer. “It means this,” she said, “Father says of Mother again and again, ‘She is so precious, whatever should we do without her?’” Then the girl said, “That means that she is precious”.

Yes, the girl’s father found his wife precious. He loved her; and how much better off he was because she was with him!

Do you ever think about how precious your parents are? You love them; of course, you do. Whatever would you do without them?

But have you ever thought how precious Jesus is? Ask Him to save your soul. Then you will love Him and you will know a little of how precious He is, and you will never want to be without Him.

Looking Around Us

Sin Found out

A woman who appeared in a Welsh court in early April was found guilty of claiming state benefits for four and a half years when she had no right to them. She claimed to be agoraphobic, which means *afraid of open spaces*, and that therefore she was not able to go out to work. She told the court that she had not left the UK for years and that her fears and illnesses had left her a “prisoner at home”.

The court did not accept her evidence. It heard that she had made a number of overseas trips in that time, including a four-month holiday in

India, as well as visits to New York and Madrid. And a picture on a news website showed her standing on the wide open space of a beach in Argentina, where she spent six months working as a tour guide.

This story reminds us of the importance of being honest in all our dealings with other people, not least if we are claiming money from the government. How much we need the grace of God in our hearts so that we would live consistently in His fear – so that we would live with a godly respect for Him and for all His commandments.

Sometimes it is much easier to detect sin in what other people do than in what we do ourselves. But we should always be looking at our lives, and our hearts, in the light of God's Word. Then we will be more ready to say to God, I have sinned against Thee, and to use the words of the publican that Jesus spoke about: "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13).

The story also reminds us of the warning we find in the Bible: "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23). It is true that not every sin becomes public in this life. Many a crime goes unpunished because the criminal is never discovered. But God sees everything, and He "shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

The woman convicted in Wales has been warned that she faces a jail sentence. Those who do not repent of their sins in this life will be sentenced by Christ, the Judge of all. They will be sent away to a lost eternity. How necessary to seek "the Lord while He may be found"!

Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2013-14

Exercise 3

The correctors should have your answers before the end of June. These exercises are based on Isaiah 41 to Jeremiah 46, and Acts 20 to 2 Corinthians 4. All answers from overseas should be sent to *Mrs C E Hyde, 2 Belts Wood, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 9GL, UK.*

Senior Section (15 years old and over)

UK answers to *Miss S M Gillies, 5 Balnabeen Drive, Dingwall, Ross-shire, IV15 9LY.*

Old Testament

1. In each of the following, quote a verse from the chapter mentioned in Isaiah, where God promises to His people:

- | | | |
|--|---|-----|
| (a) Help (ch 41) | (b) Guidance, even in unfamiliar situations (ch 42) | |
| (c) His presence and protection (ch 43) | (d) Forgiveness of sins (ch 43) | |
| (e) His constant remembrance of them (ch 49) | | |
| (f) Comfort (ch 51) | (g) Mercy (ch 54) | (7) |

2. Jeremiah was a prophet raised up by God to bring His word to Judah and Jerusalem

- | | |
|--|-----|
| (a) Why was Jeremiah at first reluctant to obey God's call? (ch 1) | (1) |
|--|-----|

- (b) Which early leader of the Israelites also complained in the same way? (1)
 - (c) Describe briefly how the Lord dealt with each of them? (3)
 - (d) For which principal sin are the people rebuked in chapter 2? (1)
 - (e) Quote a verse from chapter 3 which sums up God's message to the people. (1)
 - (f) What warning are they given in chapter 19? (2)
 - (g) Why did King Zedekiah send Pashur to see Jeremiah at the beginning of chapter 21? (1)
 - (h) Give the main elements of Jeremiah's solemn reply. (5)
- In the middle of all the threatening of approaching judgement, the Lord gives comfort in chapter 23.
- (i) What great promise is given to the Jews in verses 3 and 4? (2)
 - (j) To whom do verses 5 and 6 refer? (1)

New Testament

1. In the Epistle to the Romans, what does Paul describe as:
 - (a) "the power of God unto salvation . . ." (ch 1)
 - (b) "the gift of God"? (ch 6)
 - (c) "enmity against God"? (ch 8) (3)
 2. In Romans 9, 10 and 11, Paul deals with the attitude of the Jews towards Christ and the gospel.
- Chapter 9.*
- (a) What privileges did the Jews enjoy as a chosen, covenant people? (4)
 - (b) Paul goes on to explain that the promise of salvation was not to the Jewish race as a whole, but only to those who believed. Quote a verse which shows the sovereignty of God in choosing some and passing by others. (1)
 - (c) In verses 30-32, Paul indicates the true reason for the rejection of the Jews and the reception of the Gentiles. Try to explain this in your own words. (4)

Chapter 10.

- (d) Quote the verse which shows that Jews and Gentiles (Greeks) stand on the same level in the sight of God. (1)
- (e) Read verses 14-21. What is the great sin of those who hear the gospel? (1)

Chapter 11.

- (f) Paul reminds the Gentiles that it was in the gracious providence of God that they heard the gospel at all. What lessons are we, as Gentiles, to learn from verses 16-22? (4)
- (g) What great promise is given regarding the Jews in verse 23? (3)
- (h) Quote the verse from the middle of the chapter which sums up the effect of the rejection and the final ingathering of the Jews on the rest of the Gentile world. (1)

Memory Exercise

Bearing in mind the great privileges we enjoy in having the gospel, learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 85 in the Shorter Catechism: What doth God require of us, that we may escape His wrath and curse due to us for sin? (3)

Intermediate Section (13 and 14 years old)

UK answers to *Mrs E Couper, 17 Duncan Street, Thurso, Caithness, KW14 7HU.*

Old Testament

1. Read Jeremiah 1.
 - (a) Why was Jeremiah at first reluctant to obey God's call? (2)
 - (b) What special promise did God give him? (2)
 - (c) Under what kings did he work? (2)
2. Read Jeremiah 17.
 - (a) Which people are "cursed"? (2)
 - (b) What is true of the "blessed man"? (2)
 - (c) How is the heart described? (2)
 - (d) To which commandment are the people to give special heed? (2)

3. Read Jeremiah 38.

- (a) Tell, in your own words, how Ebed-melech helped Jeremiah out of the dungeon. (3)
- (b) Who was King Zedekiah afraid of? (2)
- (c) What sound advice did Jeremiah give to King Zedekiah? (2)

4. Read Jeremiah 39.

- (a) What promise from the Lord did Jeremiah give to Ebed-melech? (2)
- (b) Why did he receive this promise? (1)

New Testament

All the questions are from the Epistle of Paul to the Romans.

- 1. Why was Paul not "ashamed of the gospel of Christ"? (chapter 1) (2)
- 2. Give two of the great blessings which follow for those who are "justified by faith". (chapter 5) (2)
- 3. See chapter 10.
 - (a) What lesson can we learn from verse 12? (1)
 - (b) How is the gospel described? (2)
- 4. See chapter 12.
 - (a) What does Paul "beseech" believers to do with their bodies and their minds? (3)
 - (b) What are Christians warned against in verses 3 and 16? (2)
- 5. What do we learn about "love" in chapter 13? (2)
- 6. (a) Which chapters in Isaiah are referred to in chapter 10 of Romans? (3)
- (b) What does this teach us about the Old and New Testaments of the Bible? (2)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 34 in the Shorter Catechism: What is adoption? (3)

Junior Section (11 and 12 years old)

UK answers to *Mrs C M Sutherland, Inchure, Saval Road, Lairg, Sutherland, IV27 4ED.*

Old Testament

1. Read Isaiah chapter 41.

- (a) Who is referred to as the friend of God in this chapter? (1)
- (b) God promises help to Israel in verse 14. What does He say Israel will be able to do to the mountains? (2)
- (c) What does God promise to do when the poor and the needy seek water? (1)
- (d) What will He make into a pool of water? (1)
- (e) Where will He open fountains? (1)

2. Read Isaiah chapter 55.

- (a) Who are invited to the waters? (1)
- (b) What is promised to those that hear? (1)
- (c) When should we seek the Lord? (1)
- (d) When should we call upon Him? (1)
- (e) In what way are God's thoughts and ways different from our thoughts and ways? (1)
- (f) What effect do snow and rain have on the earth? (2)
- (g) What is compared to snow and rain in this chapter? (1)

New Testament

1. Read about the shipwreck in Acts chapter 27.

- (a) What was the name of the centurion who had charge of the prisoners? (1)
- (b) How did the centurion show kindness to Paul? (1)
- (c) What was called Euroclydon? (1)
- (d) In verse 21 Paul says, "Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me and not have loosed from Crete". Find the verse earlier in the chapter when he gave them this advice, and write it out. (3)
- (e) Who said to Paul: "Fear not; thou must be brought before Caesar"? (1)
- (f) How many people were in the ship? (1)

- (g) Why would the centurion not allow the soldiers to kill any of the prisoners? (1)
 (h) Did any lose their lives in the shipwreck? (1)
 2. Complete these sentences from Romans chapter 8. The marks indicate the number of words you need to write down.
 (a) There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are _____. (3)
 (b) To be carnally minded is _____. (1)
 (c) To be spiritually minded is _____. (3)
 (d) The carnal mind is _____. (3)
 (e) They that are in the flesh cannot _____. (2)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 82 in the Shorter Catechism:
 Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God? (3)

Upper Primary Section (9 and 10 years old)

UK answers to *Mrs M Schouten, 58 Fairfield Road, Inverness, IV3 5QW.*

Old Testament

1. Read Isaiah 55:1-7.
 (a) How many times do we read the word “come” in these verses? (1)
 (b) Whose voice are we to listen to? (1)
 (c) When are we to seek Him and call upon His name? (1)
 (d) What is promised to those who obey Him and return to Him? (2)
 2. Read Isaiah 58:13,14.
 (a) The Lord here calls the Sabbath “My ____ day”. Fill in the blank. (1)
 (b) Tell me 3 things we should *not* do on this day? (3)
 (c) Why should we keep this day holy? (1)
 3. Read Jeremiah 1:1-10.
 (a) What was the name of Jeremiah’s father? (1)
 (b) Which Kings ruled during the time of Jeremiah? (1)
 (c) Why did Jeremiah feel he could not become a prophet? (1)
 (d) Write out the “I am” promise which the Lord gave to help Jeremiah. (1)

New Testament

1. Read Acts 26:12-23. Then read the following sentences and say if they are true or false.
 (a) Paul was going back home from Damascus when he saw a vision.
 (b) Paul had been persecuting Jesus.
 (c) The Lord was calling Paul to work as a minister.
 (d) Paul was sent only to the Jewish people with the gospel.
 (e) Paul was an obedient servant of the Lord.
 (f) Paul was able to go on with his ministry because of the help he received from God. (6)
 2. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. This chapter speaks about charity, which means *love*.
 (a) Count how many different ways love is described in these four verses. (1)
 (b) Love is described in several ways, to show us how we should behave to others.
 For example, charity is long suffering to others. Give three other examples. (3)
 (c) Love is described in several other ways, to show how we should *not* behave to others. For example, charity does not envy others. Give three other examples. (3)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write down the answer to Question 58 in the Shorter Catechism:
 What is required in the Fourth Commandment? (3)

Lower Primary Section (8 years old and under)

UK answers to *Mrs R J Dickie, 11 Churchill Drive, Stornoway, Lewis, HS1 2NP.*

Old Testament

Answer these questions about Jeremiah. In some of them you can fill in the missing words.

1. Why did Jeremiah feel that he could not speak as a prophet?
Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a c _____. (Jeremiah 1:6)
2. What did God tell Jeremiah so that he would not be afraid?
I am w _____ thee to d _____ thee, saith the Lord. (Jeremiah 1:8)
3. What did Jeremiah say about our hearts?
The heart is d _____ above all things, and desperately w _____: who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9)
4. Jeremiah knew that God can save. Complete this verse.
H _____ me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; s _____ me, and I shall be s _____: for thou art my praise. (Jeremiah 17:14)
5. The princes of Judah did not like what Jeremiah told them from God. They threw him into the dungeon in the prison.
What happened to Jeremiah in the mire, or mud? (Jeremiah 38:6)
6. Who told the king that Jeremiah would die in the dungeon?
(Jeremiah 38:8,9)
7. What old things did he give Jeremiah to protect his arms when he pulled him out of the dungeon with ropes? (Jeremiah 38:11,12)
8. What promise did God give to Ebed-melech?
For I will surely d _____ thee . . . because thou hast put thy t _____ in me, saith the Lord. (Jeremiah 39:18)

New Testament

1. When Paul was shipwrecked, which island did he land on? (Acts 28:1)
2. What fastened on Paul's hand when he put a bundle of sticks on the fire?
(Acts 28:3)
3. What did the island people think that Paul must be? (Acts 28:4)
4. When no harm came to Paul, what did the people then think he was?
(Acts 28:6)
5. Whose father did Paul heal? (Acts 28:8)
6. Did Paul heal any other people in the island? (Acts 28:9)
7. When Paul spoke to the Jews in Rome, did they all believe the things he said about Jesus? (Acts 28:24)
8. What is sent to the Gentiles? (Acts 28:28)

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