

# The Young People's Magazine

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**Issued by the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland  
Reformed in Doctrine, Worship and Practice**

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*“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*



***October 2015***

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**Cover Picture:** The beach at Borge, on the west side of Harris. See page 183.

## The Young People's Magazine

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# The Young People's Magazine

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## Worry and Happiness

One day recently I was driving down the beautiful west side of Harris on my way home. I caught up with a campervan which carried the slogan: “Don’t worry; be happy”.

But is this wise advice in a fallen world, in a world where everyone suffers, in one degree or another, from the disease of sin? Thomas Boston, a noted Scottish minister of 300 years ago, put it like this: “We are in a hospital where most are dying of their disease, and the best [are] but in the way of recovery”. In a world such as this, is it safe not to worry?

First of all, let us think of *believers*, those who are recovering from the disease of sin. The Holy Spirit has begun to work in their hearts and lives; so God is with them and they are on their way to heaven. God has made them His children; so He will care for them always. The Bible tells them to be “casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you” (1 Peter 5:7). Surely they have no reason to worry.

Yes, that is how they should live, but only in heaven will everything be perfect. Nothing is perfect in this world, not even the trust of God’s children. They should not worry; yet, more or less, they do. They are recovering from the disease of sin and unbelief, but it is only when they pass through death into a better world that they will be perfect.

And should they not be happy? Of course, they should. Paul tells them: “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice” (Philippians 4:4). He repeats his counsel because he knows that it needs emphasis. But notice: he does not only say, “rejoice”; he says, “Rejoice in the Lord”. Apart from Christ, believers themselves have no reason to rejoice. It is for His sake that all their needs will be supplied; it is for His sake that they will be delivered from all their troubles – in particular, fully delivered from all their spiritual diseases and brought at last to heaven. There they will feel no reason to worry and they will be happy for ever – perfectly happy.

But what about *unbelievers*? Is it right to say to them: Don’t worry: be happy. Surely they have every reason to be concerned; they are in a very dangerous position – still responsible for their sins. And if they would look

seriously at their situation, they could not possibly be happy; for their sins will bring them to a lost eternity unless they believe in Christ.

Yet just to worry about what is beyond death is not what is called for. Think of someone who has a large bill to pay and, though she would search thoroughly through the whole house, she could find only a few pounds. But if she would only think seriously, she would realise that she has a very rich friend who could easily and willingly give her all the money she needs. She only has to go to her friend, state her difficulty and at once she will have all the money she needs to pay off her debt.

So all unbelievers have a huge bill to pay, and they cannot begin to pay it off. Indeed, they are adding to that bill every moment because they are sinning all the time; they are refusing to give God the glory which is His by right, and that is sin. But Jesus is the friend of sinners; He says to each of us: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). In particular, Christ is calling every sinner who is worrying about his or her guilt to come to Him – to trust in Him for salvation, for forgiveness, to be brought into the way of recovery from that spiritual disease, and, in the end, for complete deliverance from sin and its power. If we go to Christ by faith, He will pay off the huge debt we owe to God because of our sins.

Paul was conscious of the huge debt he owed to God, especially because he used to persecute God's children. "But", he said, "I obtained mercy." God, in His great kindness, cancelled his debt, for the sake of Christ, who died for sinners like him. That is why he wrote to Timothy: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15). When Paul believed in Jesus Christ, his recovery had begun. And when he died, his recovery was complete and his soul entered heaven. So, if Paul was received into glory though he believed he was the chief of sinners, why should anyone worry about not being received because their sins are so great?

But we are not to be careless about our souls and the salvation that is offered to us; we are to be in earnest about the matter. It is vital; it is urgent. The Bible tells us: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). Christ is the only one who can cure us from our spiritual disease. But we cannot afford to let time drift on, even if we are still young. We must seek salvation now, for God's accepted time is *now* – today, this very moment. This is the time that *He* has appointed for us to obtain healing, not some time that we might choose – some convenient time in the distant future or even tomorrow. Remember that eternal happiness is only possible if we come to Christ to be cured.

# Daniel's Determination not to Be Defiled

## 3. By Babylon's Education

*Rev K M Watkins*

This is the third part of an updated version of a paper originally given at the Young People's Conference in 1998. Daniel, one of the Israelite children carried away to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar, was determined not to be defiled by the sin of that place. In previous articles we have seen that he would not be defiled by Babylon's pollutions, pleasures or religion. Now we see that also he would not be defiled by its education system.

**4. Daniel would not be defiled by Babylon's education.** Daniel was gifted with a good mind. He was "skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science" (1:4). Along with others, he was selected to be taken to Babylon because he was obviously clever. The Babylonians were looking for those who could be useful to them in future years, and who would be able to function at the highest level in the kingdom – those who "had ability in them to stand in the King's palace" (1:4).

The Babylonians had a plan for these young, gifted Israelites – to "teach [them] the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans" (1:4). The Chaldean language was spoken in Babylon. Daniel was going to be educated in this language and in the culture and philosophy that went along with it.

This was a serious problem for young Daniel. His Jewish upbringing was to be trained out of him. Instead he was to be plunged into the pagan principles of Babylon. His education was in the hands of the heathen, and they would try to extinguish all knowledge of the true and living God, and to substitute for it Babylonian thinking.

Daniel knew how defiling this would be to the thoughts of his mind, so he purposed in his heart not to have his thinking distorted by Babylon's education system. He was determined not to be moulded by godless principles.

This determination did not stop him learning of course. Three years later Daniel was examined, along with his three friends, with excellent results. "In all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the King enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm" (1:20).

Moses had been the same. Brought up by Pharaoh's daughter, he became "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22). We know from the evidence of archaeology that Egypt's learning was considerable. But that education system denied the true God, and worshipped and served idols instead. Even though Moses was educated in that system, he did not allow it to extinguish his knowledge of, and belief in, the true God.

That was proved when the time came for him to turn his back on Egypt. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter any longer, and chose rather to suffer affliction with the Israelites, God's people. Although he had learned much from his Egyptian education, Moses did not allow it to shape his belief system and outlook on the world. Rather, he had the fear of the Lord in his heart, and this kept his thinking right.

Babylon's education system sought to turn Daniel into a Babylonian. Egypt's education system sought to turn Moses into an Egyptian. We should not be surprised that our education system today seeks to turn young people from the Church into godless worldlings. Much of the state education system ignores, or even denies, the existence of God.

The ideas that underlie much of today's teaching are basically man-centred, and contrary to the Word of God. Sometimes this comes to the fore in the clearest way, as in the theory of evolution, which is an outright contradiction of the Bible's account of creation by God in the space of six ordinary days. At other times the principles underlying the education are the problem, and then the danger in the classroom is more subtle, as the devil was with Eve. For example, history is taught without reference to the reality of God's providence, which orders everything that comes to pass.

If left unchecked, today's education system will defile our understanding and prejudice us against a scriptural view of things. Our minds are precious. Let us take care of them, and be on our guard. Let us take care of the seed of the Word that has been sown in them, that it might yet bring forth fruit. Like Daniel, let us purpose not to be defiled by the world's ungodliness put forth in its education.

Our duty is clear: "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2). We need minds like Daniel's, renewed by the Holy Spirit and transformed by Scripture truth. We need to test the spirit of all our education, rejecting the false and receiving the true. How many have been defiled by learning "falsely so called" (1 Timothy 6:20)!

Many have departed from the gospel, and many more have become prejudiced against it, through a God-denying and God-dishonouring education system. To protect ourselves against this, let us bring everything to the touchstone of Scripture, saying, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

Let the question be asked:

"By what means shall a young man learn his way to purify?"

Then the answer is clear:

“If he according to Thy word thereto attentive be”

(Psalm 119:9, metrical version).

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## John Brown of Haddington

### 3. “The Danger of Saying the Truth”

John Brown grew up in the Perthshire village of Abernethy. He lost his parents in early life and became a shepherd. He spent very little time in school; yet he was very anxious to learn more, especially languages, as we saw in last month’s article. After he had learned some Greek, he set off for St Andrews to buy a Greek New Testament; he went to a bookshop and asked for one.

Some of the St Andrews professors came into the shop and overheard the conversation. They began to ask John who he was, where he had come from and who had taught him. Then one of them asked the bookseller to bring out a Greek New Testament. The professor put it down on the counter and said, “Boy, if you can read that book, you shall have it for nothing”. John took it up eagerly and read a passage successfully. Everybody was surprised, but the book was his. He returned to his sheep as quickly as he could and no doubt spent as much time as possible studying the precious volume. We can assume that John remembered to thank God for providing the book he so much wanted, and without even having to pay for it. He had very little money to spare.

By this time, John believed that God was calling him to be a minister. He was now a member of his church in Abernethy. But a very difficult trial awaited him. One day, John was talking to William Moncrieff, a son of his minister, who was himself studying with a view to becoming a minister. As they spoke about John’s progress in learning Greek, William said to him: “I’m sure the devil has taught you some words”. John laughed; he was sure it was a joke. But it seems that William was at least half serious. And for five years, people assumed that the devil had some influence in John’s progress; it seemed to be the only possible explanation for his success in mastering Greek – rather than his powers of mind and his sheer determination.

“I did not know the danger of saying the truth”, John recalled afterwards. Not that he was suggesting anyone should be untruthful; he meant that he would have been better to have said little or nothing about his progress in learning languages. His point was that there are things it is wiser not to speak about. The Bible says, “A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards” (Proverbs 29:11).

When people were saying what was untrue about John, probably most of them thought that they were telling the truth. Yet many things are better not said, especially if we are not sure that they are actually true and if it is not necessary to repeat them. Even John's going away to some quiet place to pray on his own was used against him. He was charged with having made an agreement with the devil, with hypocrisy and telling lies.

John wrote to his minister, Alexander Moncrieff, William's father, who was a godly, prayerful man. John asked for a certificate that he was indeed a member of the church. All the elders agreed to give him such a certificate; so John was given the certificate, although the minister refused to sign it. Moncrieff believed that there must be some truth in the accusations against John. At first he had encouraged John in his studies, but when he saw that John wanted to become a minister he seemed to think that this was beyond someone who had scarcely been to school. Even good people can make serious mistakes.

After this, John spent five years going about the countryside as a pedlar. He walked around with a pack on his back, selling things like thread, ribbons and buckles. But he was not very successful in this work. For one thing, his pack was often not well organised. For instance, if he would pull out a piece of ribbon to show it to a customer, then needles and pins, handkerchiefs and lace might come out as well, all jumbled up. Sometimes a sympathetic housewife would take the trouble to tidy up the goods in his pack.

But perhaps his biggest problem was his interest in books. Whenever he discovered good books in a house he visited, he found them far more attractive than his work. He spent a good deal of his time reading these spiritual treasures; it was even difficult for his hosts to get him to leave whatever book he was reading to sit down for a meal. One such host came to the conclusion that John was only fit to be a student.

No doubt he made less money as a result of his reading than he might otherwise have done, but he must have made considerable progress in learning the teachings of the Bible. And people kindly gave him food without expecting anything in return, which reduced his need to earn money. Whether John was altogether wise in neglecting his work, we can be sure that God was overruling his activities so that he would be better prepared for the work of the ministry, when providence would open up a way for him to begin that work.

John also attended communion seasons in various parts of central Scotland, when – under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, applying the Word of God to his soul – he would have made further progress in spiritual things. Once, John was one of a party who walked over 25 miles to a communion in



Stirling. He and several others stayed for the weekend in what was probably a farmhouse, just outside the town.

John's rough clothes suggested that he was a man of no importance – which no doubt was true, in the way that people tend to consider these things. So he was left to sit with the servants in the kitchen until they were all called into the parlour for evening worship. Among those who came along with John was a Mr Ireland, possibly a prominent elder. The householder asked Ireland to conduct the worship. Ireland replied that he was too tired to do so after his long walk. “Johnnie Brown, you’ll do this service for me,” Ireland then said, as he handed John the family Bible. John conducted worship in an appropriate way, and the people saw that he had real spiritual gifts. Afterwards he was shown much more respect.

Yet people were still saying nasty things about John, believing the false reports that were spread around about him. But he lived a quiet and humble life; he knew, as he looked into his heart, that he was a great sinner. So he went on patiently, waiting for God to deliver him from this difficult situation. He commented later: “I have since looked on that sharp affliction as one of God’s most kind providences to my soul”. He was thinking of the spiritual benefit God gave him at that time through his troubles. They kept him humble and dependent on God, when he might have become very proud because of his gifts and his success in learning difficult subjects with very little help.

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## What the Bible Teaches on Holy Living

### 6. How Do People Become Holy?

*Charles Hodge*

This series is taken, with editing, from Hodge’s book, *The Way of Life*. In last month’s article he was emphasising this teaching of the Bible: if we are saved, we must be holy.

**H**ow are we to become holy? Many Christian writers direct us to control our evil tendencies by thinking properly. We are, they say, to remember the motives to holy living, and to strengthen our resolve by acts of self-restraint. Conscience is summoned to back up these ideas; they warn us that sin has consequences. These writers rely on Bible teachings – about God being present everywhere, about His providence, and about punishment of sin – to prevent sin and to stimulate people to do what is right.

As we are creatures with the power to think, there is much that is true and important in these ideas. But we are depraved beings, who have no power to heal ourselves spiritually. So such rules cannot, by themselves, have any

real effect; nor can the efforts to which they lead. God has given the body the power to heal itself. But as long as the heart is not renewed, nothing that thinking and conscience can do will heal the soul.

Even after the Fall, we still think, we choose, we love others, we have a conscience, a sense of justice, fear and shame. Thus much may be done to produce right ways of living. But it is impossible, by these means, to bring into existence right views and feelings towards God, or to get rid of the pride, selfishness and other forms of evil by which our nature is corrupted.

Thinking and conscience may bring someone to change his conduct, but not to change his heart. A sense of duty may force him to help someone he hates, but it cannot change hatred into love. The desire of happiness may make him serve God outwardly, but it cannot make that service a delight.

This is not meant to undervalue reason and conscience, but we must recognise their limits so that we do not rely on what cannot really make us holy. Though Scripture and experience teach us that our own powers are not, on their own, enough to bring us to know and love God, yet rules for doing what is right do have some value. It is important for us to learn the advice that wise people have given on this subject, and be careful to use it. But we must remember that the life of God in the soul cannot be either produced or kept up by the strength of our own purposes, nor by any rules of behaviour.

Other people wrongly think they can make themselves holy by relying on washings, pilgrimages and other ceremonies. Even in churches that claim to be Christian, they sprinkle themselves with holy water, repeat forms of prayer, have priests anoint them with oil or lay hands on them. The sacraments, though received without faith, are supposed to convey grace to the soul. Some rely on hiding away from the world, on praying at particular times or places, and on following some routine of denying themselves.

How diligent people have been in using these means to destroy sin, but they are of no use. Even in the days of the Apostles, this tendency to rely on such means to become holy had begun to show itself. There were men who commanded to abstain from meats, who forbade marriage, who said, "Touch not; taste not; handle not". Paul added that these things "have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship and humility, and in neglecting of the body," but they only satisfy people's fallen nature (Colossians 2:21-23).

What the Scriptures teach us is different. They say that believers are so united to Christ that they not only benefit from the merit of His death, but also receive the Holy Spirit. The Spirit dwells in them as a principle of life, making them more and more like the image of God. *He* works in them "both to will and to do", according to "His good pleasure". The Scriptures teach that so long as people are under the law, they are bound to satisfy its demands

if God is to accept them; they are governed by a mere sense of duty and fear of punishment. In other words, they are in the condition of slaves. They do not have right feelings towards God; they cannot produce fruits of holiness.

But when they trust in Christ, their whole relation to God is changed. They are no longer slaves but children. They are united to Christ in His death; so they bring forth fruit to God. From now on, they are led by the Spirit, who dwells in them; and the Spirit is a source of life, not only to the soul but also to the body; for “if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you”.

The doctrine of sanctification taught in the Bible is: sinners are made holy, not by the force of conscience, but by being united to Christ. Then they are reconciled to God and receive the Holy Spirit. Christ is made to them sanctification as well as justification. He not only frees them from the penalty of the law, but He makes them holy. So there is no such thing as sanctification apart from justification. Those who do not believe in Christ are under the power of sin, as well as under its condemnation. And those who are in Christ are not only free from condemnation, but they are also delivered from the dominion of sin.

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*For Junior Readers*

## **“I Did not Think of That”**

Ellen was a young woman who had no money and no work. She went shyly to a tailor to ask for work.

“What can you do?” he asked her.

Ellen told him that she could sew up a waistcoat. After asking her a whole lot of other questions, Lawson the tailor took out a small bundle – some pieces of cloth cut out and ready to be sewn up to form a waistcoat. He wanted it back by the next evening, at the latest. “If you think you can do it very neatly,” he told her, “and have it done in time, you can take it.”

Ellen went quickly home, which was a back room three stairs up in an old house. There she lived with her sister Mary, who was ill in bed. Indeed Ellen was not very well herself.

As soon as she got home, Ellen told Mary cheerfully about the work she had been given. But Mary was afraid that Ellen would not get the waistcoat finished in time. “You are not very fast with the needle”, Mary told her sister; “and besides you are very far from being well.”

Ellen worked away as well as she could. It was already dark when her

work was complete, perhaps beyond the time that Lawson expected to have the finished garment in his hands. Anyway, Ellen rushed away at once, promising her sister to bring back some food, to be paid for with the money she would receive for her work.

Lawson was already rather annoyed when Ellen appeared. He took the waistcoat and turned it over. He made clear that he was not impressed with Ellen's work. He tossed it aside and walked away. Ellen waited for him to return. At last he told her: "You need not stand there, thinking I am going to pay you for ruining a job. It is bad enough to lose my material and customer." He suggested that she should be paying him for the material, but he knew there was no hope of that; Ellen was too poor. So he told her to go away and never come back again.

Ellen said nothing and turned away sadly. She walked away slowly and burst into tears.

Later, Lawson picked up the waistcoat again and showed it to an old man who was sitting near him. The tailor told him: "I refused to pay her. She knew she could not make the garment when she took it away."

The old man suggested mildly that it was her need that drove her to try to do a piece of work which required greater skill than she had. "She certainly looked very poor", he added. Lawson answered his friend in a tone which showed he was now a little less annoyed. He explained that it was because she looked so poor and miserable that he gave her the cloth.

The old man was known to be kind and godly. He told the tailor that one should not blame someone too severely who, in extreme need, undertakes to do some work for which she does not have the skill. He suggested that Ellen might have been relying on the money she expected to be paid for making the waistcoat – to get some food perhaps. He understood this clearly from the way she turned away from Lawson's shop.

"I did not think of that", the tailor answered.

"I did not think you did," the other man said; "we are all more apt to think of ourselves than others." He pointed out that Ellen had brought the waistcoat back that evening, as she had promised. Then he asked if it really was very badly made.

Lawson picked up the waistcoat again and looked at it more closely. "Well," he replied, "I can't say that it is badly done." But he complained that it was dreadfully dirty and crushed and it was not as neatly sewn as he wanted it to be.

The other man accepted that all this might be annoying, but suggested that Ellen might perhaps have had a sick mother to attend to and that she was always interrupting Ellen. Then it could be no surprise if the waistcoat came

back somewhat dirty. "If so," he went on, "you should not find it in your heart to speak unkindly to the poor girl, much less turn her away angrily and without the money she toiled for so earnestly."

"I did not think of that", Lawson said once more.

Meanwhile Ellen went home and, saying nothing, threw herself on the bed beside her sister. She buried her face in a pillow, trying to smother her sobs. Mary did not ask her anything; she realised what had happened: Ellen had come home without being paid.

Just then there was a knock at the door. No one answered. There was a second knock. Again no one answered. Then the door opened and Lawson walked in. "I felt that I did wrong in speaking to you in the way that I did", he confessed as he walked towards the bed. He handed Ellen the money she had earned, and he said about the waistcoat: "It was better made than I at first thought it was. Tomorrow I will send you more work. Try to cheer up."

The sisters were thankful but they were embarrassed, perhaps too embarrassed to say anything. So Lawson left at once.

Soon afterwards, someone left a basket of good food at the women's room and some money to pay for anything that the sick sister might need. There was no name in the basket, but Ellen and Mary were quite sure that it was Lawson who had sent it. Clearly there was some real kindness in his heart. But too often he did not think.

He was not the only one who did not think before speaking, or before doing something. Probably you often do not think before you say or do something. Do you not say, as an excuse: I did not think?

And how many will realise, after they leave this world, that they did not think about their souls. But then it will be too late. There will be no point in saying, I did not think.

Remember the words of Scripture: "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while he is near" (Isaiah 55:6).

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## How Nat Became Happy

Nathaniel Fellowes was a watchmaker, repairing watches. Most people called him Clever Nat, and it was meant to be a compliment, because he could do all sorts of things: he could mend locks; he engraved names on door plates; he carved heads on walking sticks; and he composed poems for weddings. Nat read a lot of books, some of them in French. But these did him no good, for many of them taught atheism.

He used to go to church, but then he sneered at it; later still he stopped

attending altogether. He used to spend his Sabbaths fishing and wandering through the woods. His closest friend was a gunsmith who was suspected of forging money. No one suggested that Nat was involved in forgery, but the gunsmith's friendship was not helpful. Nat became careless about his watch-repair business, taking a long time to do his work. Then he found that he had few customers. He continued to read, but his reading left him unhappy.

One day a minister met him; they had known each other well when they were boys. The minister asked him lots of questions, but Nat did not want to answer. Though he had learned much from his reading, he was unhappy and afraid of what might happen in the future. He showed the minister an essay he had written in favour of suicide; clearly he had drifted far from the Bible if he thought that there was anything to be said in favour of people taking away their own life. The minister suspected that he had written the essay to make himself feel better about making such an escape himself from the difficulties of life, but Nat was entirely wrong in any such thought. Those who take away their own lives are ignoring what God has told us about a lost eternity. Nat wished, as he told the minister, that he "had never seen a book or learned to read and write".

The minister took him by the hand and said, "Fellowes, what you lack is the religion of Jesus Christ". Nat jumped to his feet; he was very angry, swearing and blaspheming. The minister knew he had touched a raw nerve.

But he ignored all the angry words. He referred to some things that had happened when they were boys. He spoke too about Nat's mother, whom Nat loved dearly. He sat deep in thought, looking out of the window at the cottage where his mother used to live.

The minister commented that Nat looked like his mother, but that she was happier than he was. "Her old age was peaceful", the minister said, and her death was like "a beautiful sunset".

Nat burst into tears. "Now," the minister asked, "tell me truly, do you think that good woman was sincere in her religion?"

"Sincere!" he exclaimed, again becoming angry. "I could cleave the man down who would charge her with hypocrisy."

"Do you think that she was less happy because of her Christian belief?"

Nat said nothing.

"And do you not believe that that same Christian belief is exactly the thing which her prodigal son needs to make him equally happy? And can you, my dear old friend, abandon all hope of ever meeting her sainted spirit in a better world?"

Nat gradually gave up his atheism. Some time later, he started to read a little, worn-out copy of the Bible that his mother had carried about for many

years. Later still, Christ revealed Himself to Nat as an all-satisfying Saviour. From then on, Nat Fellowes was a hard-working, cheerful workman, a kind neighbour. He was, said the minister, “the very happiest old man I ever saw”.

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*For Younger Readers*

## The Girl's Question

The girl was just 7. She was upset. She knew there was something wrong with her, something badly wrong.

What do you think it was? She went to her minister to tell him about herself. She said, “I have been a great sinner all my life. I have lived seven years without God and without Christ.”

Perhaps you would not think as the girl did. Would you say it was a great sin to live without thinking about God and Jesus Christ? Perhaps you are very surprised at what the girl said. I am sure you would think it a sin if someone stole your money. Or if someone hit another person so hard that they fell down in great pain.

But we are to love God with all our heart. So it is a sin if we do not think about Him, if we do not obey Him, and if we do not speak to Him in prayer.

The girl asked the minister, “Do you think such a sinner as I can be forgiven?”

Yes, he did. He knew that all her sins could be taken away. So he told her about the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ. He is the One who died for sinners, to take away their sins. And we are to trust in Him.

The girl trusted in Jesus. All her sins were forgiven. She did not need any more to be afraid that she would be punished for her sins. And she went on to live a godly life.

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## Looking Around Us

### There Is a Creator

The *English Churchman* has reported the case of Paul Gentuso, who began his medical training as someone who “didn’t really believe in God”. He

believed in evolution, so he “assumed that his existence was but a random accident of nature”.

Dr Gentuso looked back on an area of his medical training: “In anatomy class we dissected a human hand. In investigating the hand, I first removed the skin, then isolated the individual tendons and muscles as I worked my way to the bones.

“The tendons of the hand are aligned in tendon sheaths, like self-lubricating pulleys, allowing the hand to work in a tireless, noiseless, almost effortless fashion. It was perfectly designed to carry out all the work it was called to do, everything from lifting a small object to lugging a tree trunk. In seeing how each tendon was perfectly aligned along the axis of each finger and how each finger moved in a co-ordinated fashion when tugged by individual tendons, it became obvious to me that there was a Creator who had intelligently designed and created the human hand. This was the first time in my adult life that I could say with assurance that a Creator existed. . . . I went from disbelief to certainty based on studying God’s creation.”

Even although we live in an age when everyone is liable to be influenced by the theory of evolution, God’s creation still speaks. Often Satan and those who resist God’s revelation in the Bible – in particular what it says about creation – make so much noise that most people do not hear God’s voice. When we see the wonders of creation, we should understand – as Dr Gentuso did – something of God’s “eternal power and Godhead” (Romans 1:20). The fine tuning and the design of the hand, the eye, the individual cell and every other part of the human body are so wonderful that it is quite unbelievable that all this could have come about by chance. If we do not listen to God’s voice in nature, we are “without excuse” if we reject the existence of God.

Dr Gentuso went on to become a medical missionary in Cote d’Ivoire, a country in West Africa.

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## Scripture and Catechism Exercises

### General Information 2015-16

There will be three exercises, the first in this magazine, the second next February and the third in May. Study hard, search the Scriptures, and may the Lord bless His Word to you so that it would be mixed with faith in your hearts.

Please read the following rules very carefully before you begin:

1. Your section for *the whole year* is decided by your age on 1 October 2015. Stay in that section for the three sets of exercises. You may miss a prize or award by changing sections.
2. Exercises are to be in the correctors’ hands before November 30, March 31 and



June 30. So you have about two months in which to do each exercise. Please send it in time in case you lose marks for being late.

3. Each entry is to be the work of the person whose name is on it, except for beginners in the Lower Primary Section, who are allowed a little help.

4. Prizes will be given in all sections except Lower Primary, and awards of books will be given to everyone in each section who does the three exercises. The names of the award and prize winners will be published in *The Young People's Magazine*.

5. Teachers and others working with young people can arrange for groups to do the exercises, and correctors will be glad to hear from them.

6. The exercises are based on the Bible Reading Cards which will be distributed through the ministers of the congregations (or they may be obtained from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE). It is very important for you to read God's Word every day. The exercises this year are based on readings from cards A and B: Exercise 1: Exodus 35 to Numbers 21, and Luke 1 to John 6. Exercise 2: Numbers 22 to Joshua 13, and John 7 to Acts 19. Exercise 3: Joshua 14 to 1 Samuel 25, and Acts 20 to 2 Corinthians 4.

7. The exercises are now to be found as pdf files, at <http://www.fpchurch.org.uk/spiritual-help/scripture-and-catechism-exercises/>. When they are printed out, space is available for the answers.

## Exercise 1

All answers from overseas should be sent to *Mrs C E Hyde, 2 Belts Wood, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 9GL, UK*. The correctors should have your answers before the end of November.

### 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. These questions are from Numbers, chapter 11.
  - (a) What should the children of Israel have learnt from the episode related in verses 1-3? (2)
  - (b) What shows immediately after this that they had not learnt this lesson? (1)
  - (c) Why was their present complaint unreasonable? (2)
  - (d) How was Moses affected by it? (3)
  - (e) How did the Lord answer Moses and the people? (2)
  - (f) How were the people punished? (1)
2. These questions are from Numbers chapters 13 and 14
  - (a) What were the precise instructions given to the spies? (4)
  - (b) What report did they bring back? (4)
  - (c) How did the Children of Israel react to the news? (2)
  - (d) How and by whom was this report then contradicted? (2)
  - (e) How was this new report received? (1)
  - (f) How were the Children of Israel punished? (1)
  - (g) How were the false spies punished? (1)
3. What lessons could the Church of God today learn from these incidents? (2)

#### New Testament

During His ministry Jesus taught the people many lessons for Christian living. Read the following verses and match the story to the lesson. For example, the first passage illustrates forgiveness, so you would write 1A. The chapters are in Luke's Gospel.

- |            |                         |     |
|------------|-------------------------|-----|
| 1 7:41-43  | A Forgiveness           |     |
| 2 10:30-37 | B Fervency in prayer    |     |
| 3 11:5-8   | C Perseverance          |     |
| 4 12:35-40 | D Humility              |     |
| 5 14:7-11  | E Obedience             |     |
| 6 19:12-27 | F Watchfulness          |     |
| 7 14:25-30 | G Patience in suffering |     |
| 8 9:59-62  | H Faithfulness          |     |
| 9 6:27-29  | I Compassion            | (9) |
2. When and to whom did Jesus say the following? The answers are in Luke 4-8.
- (a) Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. (b) Follow me.  
 (c) Weep not. (d) Where is your faith?  
 (e) Fear not: believe only. (10)

### Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 99 in the Shorter Catechism: What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer? (3)

## Intermediate Section (13 and 14 years old)

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

### Old Testament

- Read Numbers 1.
  - Who had to be numbered by Moses? (2)
  - How many was that? (2)
  - Which tribe was not be numbered, and why not? (2)
- Read Numbers 10.
  - What were the two trumpets of silver used for? (2)
  - Who was to blow the trumpets? (2)
  - When were they to blow an alarm with the trumpets? (2)
- Read Numbers 11.
  - Why did the Lord send fire into the camp of the Children of Israel? (2)
  - What effect did this have on the people? (1)
  - What did Moses do, and what was the result? (2)
  - Why was their soul "dried away"? (1)
  - How was Moses affected by their complaint? (2)
  - How did the Lord ease the burden for Moses? (2)

### New Testament

- Read Luke 1.
  - In what way did Zacharias and Elisabeth show that they were righteous before God? (2)
  - What was Zacharias doing when the angel appeared to him? (2)
  - On seeing the angel, how did Zacharias react? (2)
  - What was to be true of John "from his mother's womb"? (2)
  - Why was Zacharias struck dumb? (1)
  - When did he recover his speech? (2)
  - What did he do immediately after that? (2)
  - What effect did this have on the people around him? (2)
- Read John 1.
  - What did Jesus say to Simon? (2)
  - What did Andrew say to his brother Simon? (2)
  - Who said, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God"? (1)
  - What else did he say about Jesus? (1)

### Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to question 42 in the Shorter Catechism: What is the sum of the Ten Commandments? (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 Numbers 11:1-9.
  - (a) Why was the Lord so displeased with the Children of Israel that He sent fire? (1)
  - (b) What happened when Moses prayed unto the Lord? (1)
  - (c) Write down 6 foods which the children of Israel had enjoyed in Egypt. (6)
2. Read Numbers 11:31-35. The people asked Moses to give them flesh (meat) because they were tired of the manna.
  - (a) How did God provide flesh for them? (2)
  - (b) What happened while they were eating the flesh? (2)
  - (c) What lesson about discontentment can we learn from this chapter? (2)
3. Read Numbers 13:17-25
  - (a) Moses sent 12 men to spy out the land of Canaan. Write down 3 things they were to find out about it. (3)
  - (b) What fruits did they bring back with them? (3)
  - (c) How long did they spend in the search? (1)

**New Testament**

1. Read Luke 5:1-11.
  - (a) How long had Simon Peter and his friends been fishing without success? (1)
  - (b) What did Jesus tell them to do and what happened when they obeyed? (2)
  - (c) What effect did this result have on Simon? (2)
  - (d) What do you think Jesus meant when He said, "From henceforth thou shalt catch men"? (2)
2. Read Luke 19:28-36. Jesus sent two of His disciples to a village where they would find a colt tied.
  - (a) What were they to do with the colt? (2)
  - (b) What were they to say to anyone who asked them what they were doing? (1)
  - (c) What did they do with the colt when they brought it to Jesus? (2)
  - (d) This was a fulfilment of an Old Testament prophecy. Can you find it in Zechariah, chapter 9? Then write down the number of the verse. (1)

**Memory Exercise**

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 26 in the Shorter Catechism:

How doth Christ execute the office of a king? (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 Exodus 40:34-38. The tent or tabernacle has now been finished.
  - (a) What filled the tabernacle? (1)
  - (b) How did the Israelites know to start a journey? (1)
  - (c) How did they know not to travel? (1)
  - (d) What did they see during the night? (1)
2. Read Leviticus 7:37,38. Name the different types of offerings which were to be offered to the Lord. (5)
3. Read Numbers 21:4-9.
  - (a) The Israelites were unhappy. Why? (3)
  - (b) God punished them. How? (1)
  - (c) What did God tell Moses to make? (1)
  - (d) How could a sick Israelite live and not die? (1)

**New Testament**

1. Read John 3:14-17.

- (a) Why was Jesus lifted up (on the cross)? (1)
- (b) Write out the verse which shows God's great love to sinners. (1)
- 2. Read Luke 7:11-16 (miracle 1) and Luke 8:41,42 and 49-56 (miracle 2).  
Say from each miracle:
- (a) Who died? (2)
- (b) What words did Jesus say to the dead body? (2)
- (c) What happened next? (2)
- (d) What effect had the miracle on others that saw or heard about it? (2)
- 3. Read Luke 24:46-53.
- (a) Who had risen from the dead? (1)
- (b) What happened as Christ blessed His disciples at Bethany? (1)

### **Memory Exercise**

Learn by heart and write down the answer to Question 28 in the Shorter Catechism:  
Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation? (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**

1. When the Children of Israel complained against God and Moses, what did God send among them? (Numbers 21:6)
2. What happened when the serpents bit the people? (Numbers 21:6)
3. What did God tell Moses to make? (Numbers 21:8)
4. What was it made of? (Numbers 21:9)
5. What did Moses put it on? (Numbers 21:9)
6. If anyone was bitten by a serpent, what happened when he looked to the serpent of brass? (Numbers 21:9)
7. Jesus speaks about this in John chapter 3. Fill in the missing words: As M\_\_\_\_ lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the S\_\_\_\_ of m\_\_\_\_ be lifted up: that whosoever b\_\_\_\_ in him should not p\_\_\_\_ but have eternal l\_\_\_\_. (John 3:14,15)

#### **New Testament**

1. What was the name of the wife of Zacharias? (Luke 1:5)
2. Did Zacharias and his wife have any children? (Luke 1:7)
3. Who appeared to Zacharias when he was offering incense? (Luke 1:11)
4. What was his name? (Luke 1:19)
5. What happened to Zacharias when he did not believe he would have a son? (Luke 1:20)
6. What did Elisabeth's neighbours and cousins call the baby? (Luke 1:58,59)
7. Zacharias wrote down the baby's name. What was it? (Luke 1:63)
8. Who told Zacharias to give the baby that name? (Luke 1:13)
9. What happened to Zacharias when he named his son? (Luke 1:64)

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