

# 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*



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**Cover Picture:** The City Chambers, Glasgow. See page 193.

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**Editor:** Rev Kenneth D Macleod BSc, 11 Auldcastle Road, Inverness, IV2 3PZ. Tel: 01463 712872; e-mail: kdmacleod@gmail.com. All unsigned articles are by the Editor.

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# The Young People's Magazine

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Number 10

## Martin Luther and the Reformation

**M**artin Luther was born in 1483. He became a monk, and later a professor of theology in the University of Wittenberg. God was very gracious to him and showed him, through the Bible, that the righteousness he needed was not his own goodness; he must receive the righteousness of Christ by faith. The Lord enabled him to understand the words: "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17), and to believe in Christ.

Early in 1516, another monk, named Tetzel, began selling indulgences in a district near Wittenberg. People, some of them from Wittenberg, bought these indulgences, which Tetzel claimed could bring them forgiveness of sin and deliver their friends and relations from their sufferings in purgatory. Of course there is no purgatory; the Bible tells us nothing about it – so it does not exist. And the indulgences, however much money was paid for them, were worthless. No one can buy forgiveness; it is free. Christ paid the price that needed to be paid, for "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Christ died for sinners so that they may be forgiven.

Luther was disturbed. He knew he had to do something about the selling of indulgences and all the deceit that was attached to them. For people to trust in a method of forgiveness that had no support from the Bible was highly dangerous. They could lose their souls as a result. So he drew up a list of 95 statements about indulgences, and on 31 October 1517 he walked along to the Castle Church in Wittenberg and attached them to the door.

This action, exactly 500 years ago this month, is taken to mark the start of the Reformation. At that stage, Luther did not mean his statements to be anything more than the basis for a debate with anyone who took the opposite point of view. No one took up his challenge, but very soon copies of these 95 Theses, as they became known, were circulating far and near.

One great blessing we have from the Reformation, and from Luther in particular, is a right understanding of the Bible's teaching about justification by faith. The Bible teaches that God accepts sinners as righteous, not on the basis of what *they* can do to keep His law, but only on the basis of what Christ did in this world as Saviour. Justification is by faith alone in Christ

alone (see Rev K M Watkins' articles in the August and September issues of this *Magazine*, and indeed the whole series when it is finished). Of course there were always those who recognised the basic teachings about Jesus Christ as Saviour, but now there was clearer teaching to protect people from relying on what they could do themselves in spiritual things.

What took place in 1517 was only a beginning. Luther himself came to clearer views about the Bible's teachings as the years went by, and other Reformers – including William Farel and John Calvin in Geneva, and George Wishart and John Knox in Scotland – made further progress in understanding the teachings of the Bible. Let us be diligent in learning the teaching God has revealed – especially from Scripture itself, but also from preaching in church, and from other books that faithfully teach what is to be found in the Bible. An obvious, helpful summary of Bible teaching is *The Shorter Catechism*, and this summary is expanded in, for instance, Thomas Vincent's *The Shorter Catechism Explained From Scripture*.

Luther was often under pressure to turn away from what the Lord had taught him. In 1521 he had to appear, in a place called Worms, before the Emperor, Charles V, who ruled over Spain, Germany and other countries. He was a very powerful man and strongly supported the Roman Church and all its errors. The meeting, where the Emperor was in charge, is known as the Diet of Worms, meaning the official gathering in Worms.

A large number of important people filled the hall. On a table there was a pile of books that Luther had written, many of them in support of Reformation teachings. Were these books His? he was asked. He agreed that they were. And would he recant – would he change his mind and go back to Roman Catholic teaching? He asked for time to consider.

The next day, after making a long speech, he stated, "My conscience is bound to the Word of God. I may not and will not recant, because to act against conscience is neither honest or safe." Then he added, "I can do nothing else. Here I stand. So help me, God." The Lord strengthened him in the face of so much powerful opposition to stand for the truth that he had learned from Scripture.

From the Reformation we have had handed down to us scriptural ideas about what we should believe, how we should worship God and how we should live to God's glory. Over the centuries many people who had received these ideas, in church and from their parents, have turned away from them. You, in particular, who are being brought up in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland have received a precious inheritance, which has been passed down to you from Reformation times. Make sure that you value that heritage, a heritage that is firmly based on Scripture.

You may face pressure from friends, fellow students, workmates and even employers to give up some of your principles. But it is unlikely that you will be under quite the same degree of pressure that Luther experienced before the Emperor. Yet he looked to God for strength and help and God gave him the strength and help that he needed. God is still the same; He is able to carry you too through all the difficulties you experience, even in an age as ungodly and unbelieving as the one in which we live. “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5).

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## Paul – a Character Study

### 1. Introduction

*Rev J R Tallach*

This is the first section of a paper given at this year's Youth Conference. The other parts of the paper are: “Some Characteristics of Paul” and “The Final Scene”.

We first find Paul watching the martyrdom of Stephen. He was not a mere observer, but he kept the clothes of those who were throwing the stones at Stephen and he was consenting with them to Stephen's death. Paul had been born a Jew and a Roman citizen in Tarsus, in south-east Turkey. He learned the Jews' religion at the feet of Gamaliel, a rabbi in Jerusalem. He had so heartily taken up the religion of the Jews that he approved of the stoning of Stephen and closed his ears to Stephen's sermon and shut his eyes to the evidence on Stephen's face that he was nearing “the better country”.

Paul was a man who would not only take a cause to heart but would single-mindedly carry it through, regardless of apparent contradictions. We are not surprised then that he was found pursuing down to Damascus, through the heat of the day, those “of this way”, “breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord” (Acts 9:1). Conversion does not obliterate aspects of character but sanctifies them and redirects them in a profitable direction.

Another illuminating scene, before Paul began his life's work, was his divine call on the Damascus road. Jesus' revelation of Himself as the light of the world had two immediate effects.

(a) Paul was made a willing servant of Christ; he asked, “What wilt Thou have me to do?” This single-minded willingness became one great characteristic of Paul. He never turned aside from asking that question throughout his life and where the mind of the Lord led Paul, his willingness followed unquestioningly. “To make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us” (2 Thessalonians 3:9).

(b) It was a well-considered choice. For three days he fasted – that is, he gave himself to the great business in hand and to nothing else. And for three days, all other light was denied him as he sat in the house of Judas in Damascus, in the street called Straight. He focused on the Light of the world, apart from everything else.

If you simply want a garden shed, you can buy one ready made and put it in your garden. If you are planning to build a lighthouse on an exposed rock, you need to make the foundation deep and the structure strong to withstand wind and wave, time and tide. Paul was going to be a lighthouse for many in a dark world. The Lord said of Paul: “He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15). The Lord was to show him “how great things he must suffer for [His] name’s sake” (Acts 9:16).

The Holy Spirit blessed the revelation on the Damascus road. Three days of blindness in Damascus were followed by three years, spent largely on his own in the deserts of Arabia, before he was called into the more public arena. Paul did suffer great things for Jesus’ sake. He told the elders of Ephesus, while on his way to Jerusalem: “The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:23,24).

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## The Five Solas of the Reformation

### 4. Grace Alone

*Rev K M Watkins*

This article is based on the fourth part of a paper given at this year's Youth Conference. *Sola* is a Latin word that means *alone*. Five vital doctrines were at the heart of the Reformation 500 years ago: Scripture alone, faith alone, Christ alone, grace alone, God's glory alone. All are denied by Roman Catholicism.

**W**e have seen how the Lord taught Martin Luther the first three “solas” – including the third: that salvation is by *Christ* alone. Salvation comes only through the merit, sacrifice and righteousness of Christ, without any good works of the sinner. Now we see how the Lord taught him the fourth: that salvation is by *grace* alone. The sinner has no will-power or ability of his own to turn himself to Christ in faith and repentance. He is entirely dependent on the grace of God – the almighty power of the Holy Spirit operating in his soul to make him willing and able. That is what salvation by

God's grace alone means, for without it the sinner is completely helpless.

Some things are best learned by experience. Often, the harder the experience, the better the lesson is learned. That was certainly true of Martin Luther coming to understand that salvation is by grace alone. He learned the long and hard way that he was unwilling and unable to turn to God. God had to persuade and enable him to turn from his sins to faith in Christ. Only the grace of God could do it! Thus Luther learned the truth of *sola gratia* – grace alone.

Over a number of years, the Holy Spirit had taken Luther into great depths of conviction of sin, showing him his guilt for sin that he had done. The Spirit so shone the light of God's law into Luther's conscience that he found no good thing dwelling within him. On the contrary he found the complete opposite: a heart that was totally depraved in all its ways – "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9).

Luther also found that he was unable to put matters right. He knew that he should love God. But however hard he tried, he could not do it. He found within himself a stubborn unwillingness to do what he knew was right. He was unwilling to love God. And he was unable to do anything to change it. Not only did he feel the weight of guilt for spending his whole life in enmity to God, but also he found that he was unable and unwilling to do anything to turn his life around. This made him desperate. He wrote: "I was myself more than once driven to the very abyss of despair, so that I wished I had never been created. Love God? I hated Him!"

The gospel was good news for a guilty sinner like Luther. It announced a free and full salvation to anyone who would believe on Christ. But Luther could not believe. He would not believe. He was sinfully unwilling to comply with the gospel of faith alone in Christ alone. He was unwilling to submit to the righteousness of Christ. Within his heart there was a hardened resistance to God's appointed way of saving sinners. His will was so enslaved by his sinful nature that every effort at change came to nothing. He remained the same sinner still.

This is what the Bible teaches. It asks: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" (Jeremiah 13:23). The answer hardly needs to be given. It is too obvious. Of course not! A man with a black skin cannot make it white, just as a white man cannot make his skin black. A leopard cannot change its spotted coat into the stripes of a tiger.

It is equally impossible for sinful people to make themselves good. The Bible continues: only when black men make their skin white and leopards change their spots into stripes, "then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil". Those who are unconverted, still in their sins and living an evil

life, cannot change their hearts and lives to become good people. They cannot convert themselves! In Christ's words, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6).

This was not what Luther had been taught by the Roman Catholic Church. The Romish system told him that, through his own free will deciding to use God's grace, he did have the ability to believe and to work the works of God. To Rome, sin is just a leaning (or inclination) in the soul that can be resisted if a sinner chooses to use God's help. In reality, as Luther found in his own experience and, as the Bible teaches, sin has total dominion over an unconverted man's soul. It controls everything he thinks, wants, chooses and does, leaving him helpless to deliver himself.

Therefore, if we really are left to the freedom of our own wills, none of us would ever be saved. We need a power to come from outside of ourselves, to *enable* us to believe in Christ. We need to be made willing by another power operating upon us, to *persuade* us to come to Christ. That power is the power of the Holy Spirit, when He makes us new creatures by the new birth. Then – and only then! – we repent and believe the gospel. *The Shorter Catechism* calls this "effectual calling" and says that it is "the work of God's Spirit, whereby . . . renewing our wills, He doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ" (Answer 31).

Thus salvation is all of grace. It happens only because of God's work in the soul. He makes His people willing in the day of *His* power (see Psalm 110:3). Even faith is a gift from God's free grace: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the *gift* of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9). So is repentance: "God . . . *granted* repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18). Thus salvation is all of the Lord. None of it is from man. It is all of grace. Nothing but grace. Grace alone!

All of this Luther learned by personal experience. For him, salvation had to be by grace alone, for his own will was in bondage to sin, impenitence and unbelief. Only effectual calling – "the work of God's Spirit" in sovereign grace – could rescue him from that.

Leading up to the Reformation, a Dutch scholar called Erasmus had been very helpful. He had criticised many of the abuses of the Roman Catholic Church and had published the New Testament in Greek. Yet he always remained a Roman Catholic at heart. In 1524, he wrote a book called *Discussion Concerning Free Will*, in which he asserted the Romanist doctrine of free will. He argued that people are able of themselves to accept or reject the help that God provides for all. This was a denial of the fourth sola, grace alone.

Luther responded with a book of his own. In *The Bondage of the Will*, he



proved the inability and unwillingness of sinners to submit to God. He wrote: “Our own will, especially our corrupt will, cannot of itself do good”. The sinner’s will is in bondage to his own corrupt nature, and can never choose what is spiritually good. The sinner cannot by his own power choose to believe in Christ for salvation. It has to be by the all-powerful operation of God’s sovereign grace.

Luther saw the crucial importance of the fourth sola. This was why he wrote to Erasmus: “You, and you alone, have seen the hinge on which all turns, and aimed for the vital spot”. This was the real issue all along. In salvation, does God do all? If so, it is by grace alone. Or does God do His part by providing some grace and the sinner his part by spinning faith out of his own free will, so that when these two are put together there is salvation? If so, salvation is not by grace alone, but it is a co-operative effort, partly of God and partly of man. Luther’s answer was clear, and it was the same as the answer of Scripture: “It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy” (Romans 9:16).

Why does one sinner believe and another not believe? Not because of the different ways they use their free will, but because in sovereign grace God persuades and enables the one to embrace Christ, while in His justice He leaves the other to his unbelief. Who made the difference? Not the believer by his own free will, but God by His sheer grace. Paul reasoned with the Corinthians: “Who maketh thee to differ from another? What hast thou that thou didst not receive?” (1 Corinthians 4:7). For all is of grace.

Either salvation is all of grace and nothing but grace, or it is not of grace at all. But “by grace are ye saved”! (Ephesians 2:8). The fourth sola – grace alone – is the truth. Therefore, cry to the Lord to work His grace in you, to bring you to faith in Christ!

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*For Junior Readers*

## **The Friend of God**

**D**o you know who is called, in the Bible, “the friend of God”? Both the Old Testament and the New Testament speak of him as God’s friend. Perhaps you will look up the verses: in Isaiah 41:8 God speaks of “Abraham my friend”; James 2:23 says, “Abraham . . . was called the Friend of God”; and in 2 Chronicles 20:7 Jehoshaphat was praying to God and mentions “the seed of Abraham Thy friend”. Is it not wonderful to be God’s friend?

I am sure you like to have friends; most people do! But it is important to have good friends, friends who will be a good influence on you, friends who

are loyal to you, who will stick by you through good times and difficult times. Perhaps some of you have been hurt by people who you thought were your friends but then turned against you. That is not a nice experience.

It is important to have friends who have a good influence on you, who do not lead you astray or tempt you to do things that are wrong. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15 that “evil communications corrupt good manners”; so bad language and rude conversation will have a very bad effect on you. And gradually you might begin to think or even say bad things too. James warns us that “the friendship of the world is enmity with God” (4:4). So it is something we have to beware of; we should not want our friends to turn us against God.

So who is the best friend to have? The Bible tells us: “A friend loveth at all times”, no matter how things are with you. The Bible also tells us that “there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother”. So who is this special friend who will love you at all times and who will be closer to you than even your brothers or sisters? It is the Saviour, who befriended sinners when He lived in this world? And more than that, He died for sinners.

Will you not seek to have Him as your friend? You can talk to Him in prayer and tell Him your needs. If you are sad or lonely, tell Him, and ask Him every day to help you do what is right. Above all pray,

“All mine iniquities blot out, Thy face hide from my sin.  
Create a clean heart, Lord, renew a right spirit me within.”

*J van Kralingen*

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### For Younger Readers

## God's Lights

Susan was a little girl. She was in lying in bed. It was time to put out the light in her room and go to sleep. In her house, they had no electric lights – just lamps that burned oil to give some light.

Susan was afraid of the darkness after her lamp was put out. Then she looked through the window and saw the moon shining brightly.

“Is the moon God's light?” she asked her mother.

“Yes,” Susan's mother told her, “the moon and stars are all God's lights.” It was God who made them.

Then Susan wondered if God would go to sleep and put out His light too. “No, my dear,” her mother told her, “God's lights are always burning.”

And Susan answered, “While God is awake, I’m not afraid”.

Of course, God never sleeps. He is always awake. God always sees everything. No one who trusts in Him ever needs to be afraid.

Do you know this verse from Psalm 121? If not, it is a verse for you to learn.

Thy foot He’ll not let slide, nor will  
He slumber that thee keeps.  
Behold, He that keeps Israel,  
He slumbers not, nor sleeps.

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## God Is My Salvation

### 2. The Great News

Eily grew up in Dublin, the Irish capital. Her mother wanted Eily to learn the Irish language and Eily and her teacher became firm friends. They talked sometimes about religion, but they had yet to learn that they needed Jesus Christ as the one Mediator between God and men.

One day after the Irish Civil War broke out in 1922, Eily came home from school to find that her teacher friend had left a message for her. He was, her mother told her, going to “stand by the boys”, although he opposed the war. That meant joining the rebels against the Irish government; they wanted Ireland to have no more connection with Britain and the British King; they wished Ireland to be a republic. Her teacher friend called again, late in the afternoon. He looked worried but had a cheerful smile as he left to face possible death in the fighting.

Eily “felt that the whole world was dead and that life was grey and bitter”. She wondered if God really cared; indeed she questioned if there really was a God. She was yet to learn that God does exist and that He cares for all His children. At this crisis in her life, Eily clung to her rosary, like other members of her family “and prayed dumbly”.

Her teacher friend was soon taken prisoner, but he wrote regularly to Eily. After some months she began to notice a change in his attitude; he seemed to have lost interest in his cause. As time went by, Eily more and more wanted to enjoy herself among the crowds who were seeking to be entertained in worldly ways. She needed to learn what Solomon learned: “Vanity of vanities . . . all is vanity” (Ecclesiastes 1:2) – as long as one remains away from Christ.

Eily’s mother sympathised strongly with the republican cause and she entertained, in her home, anyone who supported it. One night some young

men came to the house; they wanted to hide guns and ammunition there until they would return to collect them. Eily's mother was reluctant, but in the end she agreed. Eily was concerned about the risk the family were running and found it difficult to sleep that night. Suddenly she was wakened by loud knocking and men's voices downstairs. Soon soldiers were shining a torch in her face. The soldiers turned the house upside down looking for the guns; even some floorboards were torn up. At last the soldiers found the guns and Eily took responsibility. Of course, she did wrong in telling a lie, but she knew that if her father, the family breadwinner, was arrested, the family would not be able to buy food.

So Eily was arrested and, before long, she was placed between two soldiers on one of the lorries waiting outside. She was taken to a prison and, after some questioning, she was brought to a small cell, which was empty apart from a small bed.

Every Saturday a priest came to hear the prisoners' confessions, and he returned on the Sabbath to say mass. But the Republicans had a problem: the Roman Catholic bishops had decided that the priests should not pronounce anyone forgiven after confession, unless they were willing to keep all the laws of the Irish Government. So some of the prisoners stopped going to confession. Others continued to go but laughed at the idea of obeying a priest over a political issue. The more fundamental problem – which probably no one saw as a problem – was that the priest had no power to forgive sin; only God can do so.

Eily found the whole matter very confusing, especially because the priests were now refusing to forgive those whose cause they had blessed not long before. She kept going to confession, but it all seemed so empty to her. She looked for certainty in religion but could find none, for she had no access to the Word of God, the only source for what we need to know in our spiritual difficulties.

After several months, Eily was released one December evening and received a warm welcome when she reached home. Then she remembered her teacher friend: after 18 months in prison, how much longer would he have to spend there? But she now found his letters strange, for he seemed to have lost all his religion.

Almost at the end of the year, there was a pleasant surprise: her teacher friend was released and came to visit. Eily found him so different. "We were astounded," she recalled, "for who could dare to turn his back on the Church of his fathers, or [what she then called] the Holy Catholic Faith?" So the friendship between them was broken. "Our teacher", said Eily, "passed out of our lives, as I thought, for ever."

Some months later, Eily was going out one evening when the teacher appeared again at their door. She described what happened next: “Gathered together in our sitting room that night we heard some news which to us seemed extraordinary. In fact, to our unaccustomed ears it sounded impossible. Standing with his back to the fireplace, his eyes glowing with young enthusiasm, the teacher proclaimed to us his great news. He had found the truth in the New Testament. He was no longer trusting in a Church or any human power for salvation. He had found Christ. He had experienced new life in the risen Saviour.

“In some such words as these we heard for the first time in our lives the gospel message. There was a ring in the teacher’s voice which we had never heard before. There was a joy radiating from him which was something quite new and wonderful.

“This to me sounded real – the most real thing I had ever heard in my life. Here was no fantastic ‘new’ religion, such as was springing up around us among the younger circle ever day, where Communism and such like was the fashion at the time. This was no new theory but a heart-felt experience. Here was one who had found new life and peace and a great joy.”

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## Looking Around Us

### Help From St Barbara?

A huge new tunnel is being dug on Glasgow’s south side to help carry away the area’s sewage. It is to cost £100 million.

Those who dig tunnels are very conscious of the danger of accidents. So what they do? Pray to God? Sadly, they are much more likely to acknowledge St Barbara. She is said to have lived about 300 AD and is the patron saint of miners. (Various dates are given for her life; she may never have existed.)

There is a statue of St Barbara at the entrance to the new sewage tunnel in Glasgow, and people have noticed tunnellers giving a nod, for good luck, in the direction of the statue as they make their way to work. An engineer on the project, who used to work on the Channel Tunnel, said, “I’m not religious, but I wouldn’t dream of going underground without paying my respects [to St Barbara]”.

This is, of course, pure superstition – doing something that has no real connection with the outcome people are looking for. Another example is to cross one’s fingers in the hope that things will turn out well.

St Barbara, even if she existed, can have no influence over underground accidents or anything else. There is no point in giving her a nod on the way

to work; she cannot prevent accidents; she can keep no one safe – no more than crossing one's fingers can have any effect on the future.

But we should remember this Bible verse: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:6). It tells us who we should commit our safety to – and everything else in the future

Tunnellers should acknowledge God as the One who can protect them from accidents and help them in their work. This is a dangerous world, and we should all acknowledge God wherever we go and whatever we do. He can keep us safe – from outward dangers and, more importantly, from spiritual dangers. He can protect us from temptations, and from carelessness about our souls. We should ask Him to do so and to bring us safely at last to heaven.

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## What the Bible Says About Itself

### 2. It Speaks in God's Name

*Charles Hodge*

Last month's article pointed to the evidence that shows where the authority of the Bible lies. This series is taken, with editing, from *The Way of Life*.

Someone may object that people are not competent to judge this evidence. **S**if it requires much learning to judge the excellence of what people produce and decide if it is genuine, who can pretend to know God well enough to judge what is worthy of His power? This objection has no force because the excellence of what God does is largely moral, and His goodness carries its own evidence with it.

To appreciate evidence of this kind needs only right moral attitudes. Where these exist, the evidence that goodness is goodness cannot be resisted. It is not because the Bible is written with more than human skill that we believe it is divine. Most people are not good judges of these matters. But this evidence is within the grasp of the humblest child of God. First, there is nothing inconsistent with what God would do. There is nothing out of keeping with right thinking or with goodness. You cannot claim for any book but the Bible that God gave it.

Yet it is the positive evidence in the Bible that gives power and authority to its claims. When the mind is enlightened by the Holy Spirit, it sees the holiness of the Bible; it realises how exactly the rule of duty prescribed in the Word of God agrees with the duty enforced by conscience, how the account it gives of human nature coincides with human experience, how fully it meets our whole case as sinners. The mind also feels how powerfully the truths there presented purify, comfort and sustain the soul; so belief in

the Scriptures must necessarily follow. Then the idea that such a book is a lie or a forgery must involve a contradiction.

The human mind is made in such a way that it must accept evidence, when that evidence is clearly seen. We cannot see someone's goodness and yet believe him to be a deceiver. And we cannot see the excellence of the Scriptures and yet believe them to be one enormous falsehood. The Bible claims to be the Word of God; it speaks in His name, it assumes His authority. How can these claims be false and yet the Bible be so holy? How can falsehood be an element of perfect excellence? The only possible way of shaking our confidence in someone's testimony is to show that he is not a good person. If his goodness is admitted, we must have confidence in what he says, especially when all he says is confirmed in our own experience. Thus also it is impossible to notice the excellence of the Scriptures – to see that they correspond to our experience and needs and yet suppose they are false.

When the woman of Samaria reported to the men in her town that Jesus had told her all that ever she did, many of them believed. But after they had themselves listened to His teaching, they said to the woman: "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (John 4:42).

No Christian can be surprised at what they said, or think that their faith in Christ, founded on what He said, was unreasonable. We can well believe that there was such a display of goodness in the Redeemer's face, manner and teachings as to bring about confidence. Those who were rightly affected by it believed all He said: that He was the Christ, that He came to seek and save the lost, to lay down His life for His sheep and to give Himself a ransom for many. They saw the Saviour's goodness, the holiness and power of His teaching, and that they corresponded with their nature, experience and needs. Can we doubt that these would provide a sufficient ground of faith?

Everyone has this knowledge who reads the Bible. There the Saviour stands in excellence that cannot be approached. He tells everyone who will listen words of eternal life; He tells where He came from, why He came, and the purpose of His death. He offers pardon and eternal life to those who come to God through him. His claims correspond perfectly with how He behaved. Not to believe Him is to believe He is a deceiver. But we know what goodness is, and we know that goodness cannot deceive; we know that God cannot lie.

It makes very little difference whether we personally saw and heard the Saviour, or whether we read in the Bible about His character and teaching. The evidence lies in His goodness and in the nature of His teaching. It is the same to us who read, as it was to those that heard the Saviour. So the same violence is done to proper thinking and to duty, if we reject it, as was offered

by those who believed not because they were not of His sheep – those on whom the powerful influence of the grace and truth, which were in Him, made no impression.

Does anyone ask how we know that the Bible is not a forgery? But to ask this supposes either that the authors of the Bible were fools, which we can no more believe than that the famous scientist Isaac Newton was an idiot; or that they were wicked, which no man can believe who knows what goodness is. Wherever the Bible goes, it shows those who pay attention to it that its writers were neither deceived nor deceivers.

It may be asked, If the Bible contains such clear evidence of its divine origin, why are there so many unbelievers? But two things are necessary if evidence is to produce conviction. (1) People must pay attention to the evidence; otherwise it might as well not exist. Of the millions of people in Christian countries, few give any serious attention to the Scriptures. So it should be no surprise that such people have no real faith. (2) The evidence must really be grasped. To the extent that people are corrupt, they are blind to the evidence of the perfect holiness of the Scriptures. It may exist in all its force and they do not notice it; it is like light shining on the eyes of the blind.

Another part of this evidence is how the Scriptures match people's religious experience. Those who do not have this experience cannot see this. A further part of the evidence comes from the power of God in subduing sin, in purifying the desires, in spreading peace and joy through the heart. Those who have never felt this power cannot appreciate this evidence. So the fact that such a large proportion of mankind have no real faith in the Scriptures should not lead us to assume that good evidence is lacking. This fits in with what the Bible teaches about the sinful state of man.

What is the standard of excellence by which I have the authority to decide that what I call goodness is really goodness? We know that kindness is better than hatred, truth than deceit, humility than pride. Similarly we know that Christianity is better than Hinduism, and the blessed Redeemer than Muhammad. No judgement can be more sure, no confidence more firm.

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## **Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2017-18**

### **General Information**

There will be three exercises, the first in this magazine, the second next February and the third in May. Search the Scriptures, and may the Lord bless His Word to you so that it may 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 2017*. 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 the Bible readings from cards C and D.
7. The exercises are now also 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 *Miss Naomi Clemence*, 67 Cloberhill Road, Glasgow, G13 2LB. The correctors should have your answers before the end of November. This set of exercises is based on Job 27 to Psalm 128, and Luke 1 to John 6.

#### Senior Section (15 years old and over)

UK answers to *Mrs J Hicklin, 29 The Green, Edinburgh, EH4 5AF*.

##### Old Testament

1. Jesus spoke about what was written in the Psalms concerning Him (Luke 24:44). When you answer the following, give the Scripture references from the book of Psalms (prose version):
  - (a) Quote a sentence from each of Psalms 40, 110 and 145, one referring to the Saviour's office as prophet, another to His office as Priest, and the third to His office as King. (6)
  - (b) From Psalm 41, quote a verse about His betrayal. (2)
  - (c) From Psalm 118 quote words about His rejection. (2)
  - (d) Give the numbers of two Psalms (often sung on communion occasions) in which the Saviour's sufferings are described in the minutest detail. (2)
  - (e) Read Psalm 16, 68 and 98. Give the numbers of the verses in which we read about
    - (1) His resurrection, (2) His ascension, (3) His second coming. (6)
2. Look at Psalm 116. The Psalmist is expressing love and praise to God.
  - (a) State *two* reasons the psalmist gives for praising God from verses 1-8. (2)
  - (b) State *two* things, from verses 13-19, that the psalmist resolves to do as a result of his experience of God's kindness. (2)

##### New Testament

1. Read Luke 15.
  - (a) What do you understand by a parable? (1)

- (b) What did the Pharisees accuse the Saviour of? (2)
- (c) Write briefly about the two parables which illustrate the "joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth". (6)
2. (a) How did the prodigal son become so poor? (2)
- (b) What occupation was he obliged to follow? (1)
- (c) How do we know how hungry he felt? (2)
- (d) Explain how the thought of home came into his mind. (2)
- (e) What did he plan to say to his father? (2)
- (f) Describe his reunion with his father and the reception he received. (3)
- (g) What was the elder brother's reaction and the father's explanation? (2)
3. Complete the following quotation from Luke 18: "And the publican, standing afar off . . .". (2)

### Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 21 in the Shorter Catechism:  
Who is the Redeemer of God's elect? (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 Psalm 119.
- (a) Who are described as "blessed"? (2)
- (b) What special advice is given to a "young man"? (2)
- (c) What people have "great peace"? (2)
- (d) What was "sweeter than honey" to the psalmist? (1)
- (e) How many times a day does he praise the Lord? (1)
- (f) What does he love more than gold? (1)
- (g) Why do "rivers of water" run down from his eyes? (1)
- (h) How many times are the words "teach me" used? (3)
- (i) Why do you think the Psalmist repeats them so often? (2)
2. Quote what is said about "the Lord" in the following:
- (a) Psalm 23 (1)
- (b) Psalm 27 (3)
- (c) Psalm 28 (2)
- (d) Psalm 91. (2)

### New Testament

1. Read Luke chapter 12.
- (a) Why did the rich farmer decide to build greater barns? (2)
- (b) How did he plan to change his way of life? (3)
- (c) How did this prove a foolish decision? (2)
2. From your reading about the Prodigal Son in Luke 15 answer the following:
- (a) What did the younger son ask his father for? (2)
- (b) What did he then decide to do? (3)
- (c) How did he occupy his time "when he had spent all"? (2)
- (d) When he "came to himself", what thought struck him? (2)
- (e) What did he then plan to do? (2)
- (f) In what way did his father welcome him back? (3)
- (g) What two reasons did the elder son give for wanting a feast for himself? (2)
- (h) What three lessons can we learn from this parable? (3)

### 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. (a) Psalms 103 and 104 begin with the same 6 words. Write them out. (2)
  - (b) Read Psalm 103 and complete this sentence: The Lord pitieth them that fear Him in the same way as \_\_\_\_\_ (5 words). (2)
  - (c) Whose days are as grass? (1)
- You will find the answers to the following questions in Psalm 104.
- (d) God causes grass to grow for cattle. What does He cause to grow for man's use? (1)
  - (e) Which bird uses fir trees for her house? (1)
  - (f) Which animals use the hills for a refuge? (1)
  - (g) Which animals take refuge in the rocks? (1)
  - (h) Where are there innumerable creeping things? (1)
  - (i) What does the psalmist say shall be sweet? (1)
  - (j) How many times in the 2 psalms (Psalm 103 and 104) can you find the words: "Bless the Lord" or "Bless ye the Lord" or "Bless thou the Lord"? Give the verse references. (3)

**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. In Luke chapter 24 from verse 13 we read about the two who were walking to Emmaus.
  - (a) We are told the name of one of them. What was it? (1)
  - (b) What were they discussing and why were they sad? (2)
  - (c) What did Jesus talk about after He joined them and how did they feel then? (We are told about their feelings in a later verse) (2)
  - (d) What argument did they use when they asked Jesus to stay with them rather than continue His journey? (1)
  - (e) At what point did they recognise Jesus? (1)
  - (f) What did they do at once after Jesus left them? (1)

**Memory Exercise**

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 86 in the Shorter Catechism: What is faith in Jesus Christ? (3)

**Upper Primary Section (9 and 10 years old)**

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

**Old Testament**

The following questions are all taken from the Book of Psalms.

1. Who is the blessed man? Find an answer in each of these:
  - (a) Psalm 1:1,2, (b) Psalm 32:1, (c) Psalm 34:8, (d) Psalm 112:1. (2,1,1,2)
2. Who are the blessed people? Find an answer in each of these:
  - (a) Psalm 33:12, (b) Psalm 84:4, (c) Psalm 89:15. (2,2,2)
3. Why is God blessed? Find an answer in each of these:
  - (a) Psalm 66:19,20 (b) Psalm 72:18. (2,1)
4. Write out the prayer for a blessing in Ps 67:1. (1)

**New Testament**

1. In Luke 2 we read of three different times when God was praised and blessed.
  - (a) Read verses 8-14. Who praised God and what did they say (2)
  - (b) Read verses 15-20. Who praised God? (1)
  - (c) Read verses 25-32. Who blessed God and what did he say? (2)

2. Read Luke 6:20-23. List the four sorts of people whom Christ says are “blessed” and, for each sort, tell how they are blessed. (8)

3. Read Luke 24:50-53, which tells of Christ leaving His disciples to go up to heaven. What was the last thing He did in this world? (1)

### Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write down 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)

### Lower Primary Section (8 years old and under)

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

### Old Testament

The Lord wants us to praise Him. Psalm 113 is a psalm about this.

1. How many times can you see the word “praise” in verse 1? (Psalm 113:1)

2. He is to be praised all the day long. Fill in the missing words:

From the r\_\_\_\_\_ of the s\_\_\_\_\_ unto the going d\_\_\_\_\_ of the same the Lord’s n\_\_\_\_\_ is to be praised. (Psalm 113:3)

3. Although the Lord is so high above us all, yet He bends down to b\_\_\_\_\_ (see) the things that are in h\_\_\_\_\_, and in the e\_\_\_\_\_. (Psalm 113:6)

The Lord can do wonderful things.

4. He raiseth up the p\_\_\_\_\_ out of the d\_\_\_\_\_. (Psalm 113:7)

5. He maketh the b\_\_\_\_\_ woman to keep h\_\_\_\_\_ and to be a j\_\_\_\_\_ m\_\_\_\_\_ of children. (Psalm 113:9)

6. Psalm 117 is a short psalm, also full of praise. How many times can you see the word “praise” in this psalm? (Psalm 117)

7. Write out the last words of the psalm. They begin with “Praise”.

P\_\_\_\_\_ y\_ t\_ L\_\_\_\_\_. (Psalm 117:2)

### New Testament

1. The angel said to Zacharias that a son would be given to him and his wife. What was his wife’s name? (Luke 1:13)

2. What would be the name of their son? (Luke 1:13)

3. They had no child before, because Elisabeth was b\_\_\_\_\_ and they b\_\_\_\_\_ were now well stricken in y\_\_\_\_\_ [old]. (Luke 1:13)

4. The angel said, Fear n\_\_\_\_, Zacharias: for thy p\_\_\_\_\_ is h\_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 1:13)

5. Would there be happiness when the child was born? (Luke 1:14)

6. In a more wonderful way, Mary was to have a Son: that holy thing which shall be b\_\_\_\_\_ of thee shall be c\_\_\_\_\_ the S\_\_\_\_\_ of G\_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 1:35)

7. Who was this Son? (Luke 1:31)

8. Mary praised God. She said, My soul doth m\_\_\_\_\_ the L\_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 1:46)

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