

# 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:** In Chamonix, in Southern France. See page 87.

## The Young People’s Magazine

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# The Young People's Magazine

Volume 83

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## **“I Obtained Mercy”**

**S**aul of Tarsus, later the Apostle Paul, had lived a very careful life. He was “blameless” in trying to keep the law of God – that is, as far as anyone else could see, looking at him from the outside. But what God saw was very different. He could look into Saul’s heart and see his thoughts. Were they really holy? Did they really glorify God? No, they did not.

Something very important had happened some years before Saul first arrived in Jerusalem, from the city of Tarsus in what today is the south-east of Turkey. God sent His Son into the world to do all that was necessary if sinners were to be saved from the awfulness of a lost eternity. God’s Son, who took human nature when He came into the world, was the Messiah whom God had promised in the Old Testament. And Saul, just like every other Jew, was looking for the Messiah to appear. But, like so many of his nation, Saul did not recognise Jesus as the Messiah when He came. They did not consider properly the evidence of, for instance, the wonderful miracles He did, including giving blind people their sight (see Isaiah 42:6,7).

Saul was so “mad” (his own word) against the followers of Jesus that he “persecuted them even unto strange cities” (Acts 26:11). But, by rejecting the Messiah, refusing to believe in Him, being unwilling to trust in Him for the salvation of his soul, Saul was committing a very serious sin. He was guilty of sin that was much worse than the sins he so prided himself on being free from. He confessed later that he had been “a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious” (1 Timothy 1:13); he was persecuting the followers of Christ and doing them harm.

Saul came to know what he deserved for these great sins: that God would punish him for ever. Did God do so? No, He did not. As the Apostle Paul, he added to the confession of his sins quoted in the last paragraph: “But I obtained mercy”. Instead of punishing him, God showed him kindness that he did not deserve.

Christ met him as he was on his way to Damascus to persecute another group of Christ’s followers. The Holy Spirit worked in his heart to subdue his rebellion and make him willing and able to trust in Christ as the Messiah,

the Saviour whom God had sent into the world to save sinners like him. When Saul did arrive in Damascus, he was a changed man, which was shown by the fact that he now really prayed. His prayers had changed. No longer were they the prayers of a man who believed he could earn his own salvation. They were now the prayers of a man who knew he had real spiritual needs which only God could supply – needs which God could supply for the sake of Jesus Christ.

But what about us? We may not have persecuted Christ's followers; yet we have sinned. Especially we have refused, at least in the past, to believe in Christ. So what do we deserve? Nothing but God's wrath and curse for ever.

What then do we need? We need the same work to be done in us as was done in Paul on the way to Damascus. No, it cannot happen in quite the same way. We cannot expect Christ to meet us exactly as He met Paul, but He can speak to us through the Bible.

He makes it clear that each of us has sinned. And how can we escape from the guilt of our sins, and the punishment that must follow our guilt? Think of God's kindness in saying to us: "I have found a ransom" (Job 33:24).

What does He mean? We must remember that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). We owe God a great debt for every sin we commit, and we cannot pay it; we cannot even begin to pay it. It is altogether beyond our power. Think then of the wonderful kindness of God in telling us: "I have found a ransom". He sent His own Son to take the place of sinners, to bear their guilt instead of them, to suffer their punishment. In doing so, Jesus Christ was paying the price that was necessary to set sinners free – free from guilt and free from the power of sin.

A ransom might be paid to set someone free who has been kidnapped. That would be a great mercy for the one who is set free. When God accepts the ransom paid by Christ instead of a sinner, that is indeed a great mercy. The jailer in Philippi heard the gospel call, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31) and, by God's grace, he obeyed. Then he too could say, "I obtained mercy". Lydia too, just outside the same city, heard Paul preach the gospel. And "the Lord opened" her heart, so by faith "she attended unto the things which" Paul spoke (Acts 16:14). Then she too could say, "I obtained mercy".

God has been good to you in putting you within reach of the gospel message. He is telling you: "I have found a ransom". What kindness! Do not reject your opportunity to find salvation for yourself. You too are told: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved". And if you do believe and are saved from your guilt, from the punishment of your sins, what reason you will have to say to the glory of God: "I obtained mercy"!



# Challenges in a Godless World

## 5. A Uncompromising Challenge

*Matthew Vogan*

Last month's section of this Youth Conference paper spoke of the stealthy challenge we face today from secularism, which is an attempt to live without any kind of religion. Secularist messages are hard to identify; they no longer stand out clearly because they have become normal.

The fourth aspect of the challenge that a godless society presents is an *uncompromising* challenge. Secularism will not compromise, rather it expects the Church to do so. How should the Church respond to the onslaught that we have described in other articles? Sadly, the bulk of the professing Church has bought into the lie that *they* must change their beliefs, principles and practices in order to respond to this challenge. They have said, Society is secularising and so the Church needs to secularise too. This movement began in the 1960s and 1970s but has grown ever greater since then.

The effect of this has been to apply secularism to the Church. What is sacred is made smaller and replaced by what is secular in certain areas, to varying extents. They are saying, We need to drop the holy – it isn't popular; people don't want that. But they forget that worldly people have never wanted that. It has never been fashionable.

We can see straight away that this approach is man-centred, not God-centred. It focuses on what people in general will find appealing and what will repel them. Some Christians may claim to have God-centred doctrine but, when it comes to aspects of the way they live, they are really man-centred. The standard which they use is not so much Scripture alone – what God requires and what pleases Him – but human opinions. They are constantly asking what will attract people or, on the other hand, what they would find too confusing and off-putting.

This is often most obvious when it reaches into the area of worship. How should we worship God? What sort of language should we use to address God in prayer and praise? What sort of language should we use to translate God's Word? How should we dress when we appear before God in public worship? There was a sudden change, from the 1960s onwards, in the way that these matters were addressed. The bulk of the professing Church answer all these questions by giving weight to what people in general will think of them and how they will respond to them. Sometimes they will make a weak appeal to slogans derived from Scripture but in the main their reasons are not God-centred but man-centred.

“Secularism is like chlorine bleach, it takes the real colour out of everything”, said American writer J G Vos; and like bleach it also corrodes everything. This is a memorable comparison. Since secularism focuses on what is temporary, earth-bound and within easy reach, it tends to debase and downgrade things to its own level. It brings them down to a trivial level. It works like a bleach, flattening out colour and giving everything the same unremarkable appearance. Applied to the Church and its worship, this means that it does not look and sound much different to secular activities. Aspects of what is sacred and supernatural are removed or downgraded.

The idea in many churches is that God must be addressed as we would address anyone else. The Bible must be rewritten to something more like a newspaper or a secular book. Churches may apply different strengths and solutions of the bleach of secularism, but the effect is the same, to a greater or lesser extent. It also keeps corroding. Those who introduce aspects of secularism may wish to restrain its influence in certain areas or to certain degrees, but it keeps on working whether they like it or not. Other people will want it to go further. It is an uncompromising challenge, it keeps wanting to reduce what is sacred.

Back in the 1960s, when liberals were throwing out of their theology everything that was supernatural, Evangelicals decided not to do this. Instead they began to allow the secularist cultural revolution to transform their worship and living. They began to make Christian things more like the world, supposedly to attract the world to the gospel. Actually this was more to suit themselves, not the world. It is a highly dangerous agenda.

In secularism, God is either optional or not very important; He is certainly not central. When secularism enters Christian thinking, the idea develops that the value of religion is that it helps modern life to go that bit better. We noticed a minister whose social media profile listed his likes in the following order: live music, a football team, politics, his family, Jesus. What does that say to the world and what does it say to the Church? It makes Christ seem like an add-on extra to “the real business of life” – doing what we want.

Secularism influences most churches today in what we might call the race to the bottom, in terms of membership standards – in other words, the lifestyle and behaviour that is considered acceptable for those who profess faith in Christ. People who began to make changes said, Draw the line of separation from the world here. They make a distinction between what is acceptable and not acceptable, but only on the basis of their personal taste and opinion, not on the basis of Scripture. Culture then moved on, and so others moved the line of separation.

Secularism is uncompromising and it begins to corrode standards further.

It moves on to attack basic biblical morality and the gospel itself. And some have given in to secularism to such an extent that they no longer resist. The latter can happen in a subtle way where Churches still claim to hold to a general Evangelical ethos. Their gospel message slowly becomes a psychological pep-talk about personal fulfilment that no humanist would find offensive.

Secularism is essentially sin, and sin will always push as far as it can – it is an uncompromising and destructive force. Indeed nothing is more destructive than sin, because it is the cause of what is destructive.

Churches under this influence thus become involved in constant change. They are brand-defined and brand-obsessed in an anxious appeal to the consumerist mentality that dominates our society. They feel driven to appeal to what is secular, modern and contemporary because others are doing so. In the process, the culture is shaping the Church. The Church needs the biblical conviction to say that the Church exists for God and His glory, that Christ is its only king and head and that He only can determine its beliefs, its worship and its practice. It needs to turn to Scripture alone for this.

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## The French Stonemason

### 2. Comfort at the Cross of Christ

The stonemason had lived for years without any serious thought about religion. But suddenly he became concerned about what he should do to be a good Christian. He took advice from the local priest, who told him to keep the commandments of the Roman Catholic Church, like attending mass and saying lots of prayers. But nothing did him any good; he became increasingly concerned about his sins. The first article appeared last month; this is the last.

The poor man did not have a Bible and did not know anything about salvation by grace, through Jesus Christ. So he thought that there was nothing better for him to do than visit the priest oftener and tell him all the secrets of his heart without keeping anything back. He did so, but the result was no more satisfactory. The priest had no idea what advice to give to the mason. He accused him of being obstinate and blamed him for being depressed. “What can I say to you?” he would sometimes ask. “Do not try to be wiser than the Church. I have told you enough of what is required of Christians; conform to this and it is enough. If you go further, it will be pride and presumption on your part, and you must bear the consequences.”

Wearied with these useless visits, the priest decided to speak to the mason’s wife. “Your husband takes religion too seriously,” he told her one day. “He troubles his mind unreasonably. He ought to keep quiet and not raise new

difficulties always. Your husband goes beyond all my parishioners in devotion, and yet he is not satisfied. What should I do if the other members of my parish caused me half the embarrassment and anxiety that he gives me? I fear his health will suffer. You know how dangerous it is to dwell too long on one idea. Try to divert your husband's mind. Lead him on Sunday to the village festivals. He needs this more than he needs my ministry."

Clearly this man had nothing better to offer the mason. He did not himself know the way of salvation – through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came into the world to save sinners. And he did not value the Sabbath as a day to be set aside to seek God and to worship Him.

The mason's wife was glad to hear the priest's advice to her husband. She too was tired of what she thought was her husband's obsession with religious duties. At first, she had been pleased to see him more willing to practise his religion; but she agreed with the priest that it was all too much now. After having been to mass, she felt, he could spend the rest of the Sabbath enjoying himself. She hurried home to tell her husband about her conversation with the priest.

How did the mason react? He was utterly disgusted. He concluded that the priest's religion was nothing more than a means of deceiving people, that they did not themselves believe what they were teaching, that it was no more than a trick to get money. From that moment he never went near his priest.

When the mason lost all confidence in the priest, he said to himself, "What use is it for me always to turn back to these things? There is no remedy. The priests know no more about them than I do. They laugh at the readiness of honest men to believe. I might be tormented for 10 years without knowing more than on the first day. It is best for me to return to my past carelessness and attend to my worldly business, without troubling myself with my sins. I see now that it is impossible to be a good Christian, as I wish to be." So he tried to turn his attention away from religious ideas. But he was in danger of falling into total unbelief and, at last, into a lost eternity.

Suddenly the mason heard that some strangers had come to a nearby town and were speaking about a new religion. The rumour was that they were followers of the Count of St Simon, people who were interested in politics and business rather than religion. The mason wanted to find out what these people were teaching. "Perhaps", he said, "these St Simonians will do more for me the priest; and in any case I shall lose nothing by hearing them."

One day, after his work was finished, he went to the nearby town. He reached the house where these teachers held their meetings; he entered and sat down among the large crowd and listened carefully to the preacher. It was just what the mason needed, for the preacher proclaimed the gospel, not

the ideas of St Simon. He was reading his text as the mason entered, who heard for the first time the words of Matthew 5:8: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God”. The preacher tried to explain what this purity of heart means, something that must accompany salvation. He showed his hearers what the true evidences of holiness are. He spoke about the deep corruption of the human heart, adding that no one can fulfill God’s law in all its purity and in all its extent.

As the sermon went on, the mason became more and more interested. He recognised his own character and his own experiences in what the preacher was saying. “It is myself,” he thought, “whom this stranger is describing in his sermon. I have never seen him, and how has he been able to penetrate into the secrets of my soul?” The mason was not the first person to have asked such a question, but the preacher knew what the Bible teaches about the human heart.

But this preaching made the mason feel very depressed. The more he understood the requirements of Christian morals, the less he felt able to meet them. “This is the rule of my duty,” he said to himself. “How pure and holy! I have broken this law a thousand times; I feel it now, and what shall I do? What man can obey the whole will of God? Ah, I am too weak to bear so heavy a load.” But Satan was busy tempting him when he added, “The priest was right when he advised me to dismiss all these thoughts and to return to the pleasures of the world”.

The mason returned home under the influence of these unbelieving thoughts. He planned to forget all that he had heard and felt about religious things and to go on in carelessness. But God had spoken to his heart and was going to work further. The mason could not bear his misery; he knew he needed something. He did not know what he needed, but he was sure it was absolutely necessary. The more stern the justice of God appeared to him, the more he hungered and thirsted for deliverance.

The thought went through the mason’s mind that he ought to go to another of these meetings in the nearby town, to see if he could perhaps find a remedy for his trouble. The preacher knew so well what the plague of his soul was. “Who knows?” he asked himself; “perhaps the men who show so well what is our duty may teach us how we can do it – or at least may point out some way for us to escape from our trouble.”

He went and entered the place where the service was held. His soul was troubled. He listened, to a different preacher, who spoke on the text: “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matthew 11:28,29).

These words spoken by Christ, and the explanations which the preacher gave comforted the workman and rejoiced his heart. He had now come to the Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness; he was at the cross of Christ. He had begun to understand the love of God which led to His justice being satisfied and pardon being offered to the sinner.

The mason obeyed the call of the Lord and returned home blessing the Saviour who had suffered for him. His wife, his neighbours and the priest soon noticed the change that had taken place in the mason, which was as complete as it was rapid. He soon had to meet with much opposition; he had to bear the cross of Christ; but he remained firm amid insults. He openly professed the true religion, and showed by his example the truth of the words: Christ "is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

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*For Younger Readers*

## **"Tell the Truth"**

A boy had to go to court and stand before a judge to give evidence; he had to tell what he knew about something that had happened. He was just 12.

The two sides in the court were arguing about whatever it was that had happened. A lawyer was helping the people on one side of the argument. He was asking the boy a lot of questions. Then he said, "Your father has been talking to you and telling you how to testify, hasn't he?" The lawyer wanted to go on to suggest that the boy was not telling the truth.

"Yes", the boy answered.

"Now just tell us how your father told you to testify", the lawyer said to him.

"Well," the boy told him, "Father told me that the lawyers would try and tangle me in my testimony." They would try to get him mixed up in what he said. The boy went on: "But if I would be careful and tell the truth, I could tell the same thing every time."

So everyone in court could believe what the boy said. The lawyer could not trick the boy into saying what the lawyer wanted him to say. It is always good to tell the truth. It is what God tells you to do. Ask God to help you tell the truth always.

*For Junior Readers*

## An Invitation from the King

Perhaps some of you know where the town of Brighton is. It is on the south coast of England. In the 1800s it was a popular holiday place by the seaside for rich people. It was not too far from London, and even some kings and queens would spend time there. They would stay in the Royal Pavilion, a grand building built for King George IV.

After his death, his younger brother William became king. During his reign he visited Brighton regularly. While he was there he would entertain his guests at the Royal Pavilion; they might be important people who also were on holiday in Brighton. You can imagine what an honour it would be to receive an invitation to dine with King William and Queen Adelaide.

Lady Colquhoun of Luss and her husband, Sir James, and some of their family were among those who used to visit Brighton. They travelled by steamboat down the coast from Scotland as that was a much easier journey in the days before there were good roads. In January 1832 her brother, Sir George Sinclair, was also with them.

One day an invitation card was delivered to where they were staying. It was addressed to Sir George and it was from the Royal Pavilion, inviting him to dine with King William! No doubt there was some excitement among the family at this honour. But there was one problem – the day the invitation was for. It was the Lord’s Day.

How do you think Sir George reacted? Would it not be very rude to refuse such a special invitation from the king of his country? But what other King did he have to take into account?

What about the King of kings, the God of the whole earth? What does His law say? The Fourth Commandment tells us to “remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy”? *The Shorter Catechism* explains, “The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days: and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God’s worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy”.

In the light of God’s law, Sir George did not hesitate for a moment. He sent a very polite and respectful refusal to the King. In his reply he explained that he was convinced that the whole of the Sabbath Day should be for God – not only a part of it. Sir George also said that his conscience would not allow him to accept the kind invitation. No doubt he was anxious not to offend King William, but he was much more concerned not to break God’s holy law!

But King William did not take offence. Instead, on the Monday morning, a royal messenger arrived with another invitation for Sir George, this time to dine with the King that evening!

As Lady Colquhoun noted in her diary, the result proved God's promise, "Them that honour Me I will honour". Is that not a good lesson for you to remember when you are being pulled in the direction of the world by your friends? Always put God first, and you will never be the loser!

*J van Kralingen*

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## Justification

### 3. It Is an Act of God's Free Grace

*Rev Roderick Macleod*

Last month's part of this Youth Conference paper focused on justification (1) as an act – it is not a process; (2) as an act *of God*; so it displays His glory.

**T**he grace of God that justifies sinners is a kindness so deep and so free that it cannot be measured. No matter how long redeemed sinners have been in heaven, they will still be discovering new and fresh wonders in God's "free grace". The objects of God's *mercy* are those who are viewed as in great misery, under the curse of the law and in need of relief. The objects of God's *grace* are those who are unworthy of relief – full of the demerit of "a seed of evil doers" who betray a principle of heart-enmity towards God's Word and ways.

One author says that "grace, in its proper sense, always presupposes unworthiness in its object". He goes on to say that, whenever the blessed God communicates anything valuable to any of Adam's fallen offspring, it can only be of grace to the extent that the person to whom it is given is considered as unworthy. For as soon as any degree of worthiness appears, the idea of grace ceases and that of fairness takes its place. Daniel had no other plea when he approached God saying, "We do not present our supplications before Thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies" (Daniel 9:18). The Publican came "to the throne of grace" confessing and praying: "God be merciful to me a sinner" and he "went down to his house justified" (Luke 18:13,14).

God brought refreshing water from the rock that Moses smote. "He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths" (Psalm 78:15). The grace that justifies sinners is a flood that rises out of the unfathomable depth of the goodness of God, who gave His beloved Son for the salvation of lost men. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His



only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). *So* is a little word, but the Holy Spirit lays great stress on little words, as in the text just quoted (you should consider it carefully).

The grace that justifies sinners is a river that rises out of the great depth of the suffering of Christ when He was smitten by the awakened sword of avenging justice. Paul looked into this great deep when he told the elders from Ephesus: “Feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). Yes, that is a mysterious saying, which speaks of the blood of a person who is God by nature and name. That a divine person cannot suffer in the divine nature is a truth to be defended most vigorously. But that this divine Person, the Son of God, did once suffer in our nature is a truth that ought to be asserted most strongly. Paul calls it glorious grace, because it is a display of the kindness of God, which is full of divine glory.

Paul speaks of the riches of grace because, when God gave His own Son, He gave One who is equal to Himself. He was emptying, as it were, the treasury of heaven to make bankrupt sinners rich for eternity, although in themselves they are ripe for hell. In the justification of a sin-laden, guilt-weary sinner, the grace of God swells higher and mightier than anything that might hinder his deliverance (Romans 5:20). It is full of goodness, making black sinners whiter than the snow (Isaiah 1:18) and bankrupt sinners rich (Ephesians 1:7; 2:7). It dispenses blood-bought mercies most freely to undone sinners (Ephesians 2:8).

God is under no obligation to justify any sinner. The fact that He saves anyone is explained by the fact that He is full of grace. The fact that He saves one, and not another, demonstrates that He is *free* to do so according to the counsel of His own will. It is a soul-ruining heresy to think that anyone could ever put God under an obligation to justify him on the ground of his own righteousness. So much is God *not* under debt – is *not* obliged – to justify any sinner that “it is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed” (Lamentations 3:22).

Grace is free in the sense that its benefits are freely offered to us in the gospel: “whosoever will” may “come and take of the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17). Can we do nothing? The God of all grace will do everything for us: “He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:19). Can we bring nothing but sin? Grace will bring what we cannot bring and blot out sins we cannot blot out: “Thou hast bought Me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled Me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied

Me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins” (Isaiah 43:24,25).

Grace is free in the sense that it cannot be purchased by us – God gives it “without money and without price”. The price has been paid by Christ and it is now dispensed freely at the throne of grace. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:5-7).

What great things God accomplishes by setting up a throne of *grace*! The dead are made alive: “Even when we were dead in sins, [He] hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace ye are saved” (Ephesians 2:5). Banished sinners are accepted “to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:6). More could be said of the achievements of grace, but this is the point we aim at especially: it is by grace that sinners are justified: “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom 3:24).

*A word of encouragement to the anxious soul.* Satan tries to make awakened souls stumble at the doctrine of God’s sovereignty. He may make them afraid to pray lest they discover that they are not embraced in the sovereign freeness of grace. This temptation foully misrepresents the free grace of God. The awakened sinner ought to dwell rather on the fact that the God of all grace hates putting sinners away: “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Ezekiel 33:11).

Think of the fact that God calls sinners to return to Him: “Seek ye Me and ye shall live” (Amos 5:4). You are afraid of the throne of judgement, but there is a throne of grace, where all fears are dismissed. Bring the great need of your sin-laden, lost soul to “the throne of grace that [you] may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16)

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## Peace in Death – in India

Many have enjoyed great peace at the time of death. During life they were not distressed at the thought of dying, and they left this world filled with hope, and happy in mind. Among them were former Hindus and Muslims, but all had taken refuge in Jesus Christ. I will give some instances.

First, I mention a Hindu. His name was Koilas Chondro Mookerjea. He came to Christ while in a Christian school. At the age of 24 he was attacked by a fatal disease. When he knew he must soon die, he was filled with heavenly hope and joy and cried, "I am so happy! My mind is at perfect peace. My sickness is over now. I am altogether glad."

A friend asked Koilas: "How is it you enjoy such peace?"

He replied, "This agony I am suffering is the Lord's will. If I recover, He will be glorified. And if I die, I know for certain the Lord Jesus will give me a place at His feet." This was the root of his peace: he knew God was his Father, and that God did all for his good; that Jesus was his Saviour, and that the blood of Jesus had removed his sins.

Dorshi, another believer, said at his death: "I have found the Saviour with much difficulty. How far I wandered for happiness! At last I found the Lord Jesus Christ and, leaving all, I took refuge in Him."

When he was dying, one of the first Christians in Bengal said, "Life is good, but death is better. My soul is always joyful. Peace! Peace! I enjoy such peace, now."

Another believer, Nondo Kishor, said, "I do not fear because I am dying. I am ready to die. I am a great sinner, but the blood of Jesus has washed my sins away. Peace reigns in my heart. Jesus died for me." He who knows his sins are forgiven has no fear of death. That terrible enemy is turned into a friend. Death is the doorkeeper that opens to let him into his Father's house.

There was another named Krishna Das, who said, "I am well. I am going to my Father's house. Blessed be the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners! Blessed is he!"

Krishna Pal, the first Christian in Bengal baptized by the missionary William Carey, was asked on his deathbed, "Krishna, do you love the Lord?"

"He answered, "Yes, but He loves me far more than I can love Him".

Soojat Ali was born a Muslim. He became a believer in 1824 and departed to a better world in 1865. He served the Lord faithfully all these years. Hindus, Muslims and Christians all respected him. When he was dying, a friend asked him, "Is Jesus near?" He replied, "The Lord has promised to be with His people at such a time as this. He is faithful. He is here." His last words were: "The door of heaven has opened to receive me".

An old woman was asked, "On whom is your hope?"

She replied, "I am a great sinner, but the Lord Jesus is my hope". Afterwards she said to her son: "Why do you grieve for me? I have no grief. Look to Christ. Did He not suffer for us?"

Children also enjoyed peace in death through the Lord Jesus. Simon, an orphan seven years old, was dying. A preacher said, "Simon, are you afraid?"

He answered, "No, I am going home. What is there to fear?"

Then he was asked: "Where is your home?"

Lifting his hand to point up, he said, "Look, there is my Father's house!"

Again he was asked: "Are you a sinner?"

"Yes," he replied, "I know I am; but my Father sent His only Son to die for sinners. He is calling me. What have I to fear?"

Jooma was an orphan girl five years old. She died happy, saying, "Jesus will save me! Jesus will save me!"

Hemangini was another orphan girl; on her dying bed she said, "Victory! Victory to the name of Jesus!"

Adapted from *The Sword and Trowel*

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## Looking Around Us

### The Bible in China

China claims that it promotes religious freedom. Its Government has issued a new policy document which states that it "supports all religions in upholding the principle of independence and self-management". This is scarcely honest, for it goes on to say that the Government wants believers ultimately to "serve the overall interests of the nation". And because these interests are decided by a government of atheists, it is most unlikely that they will in any way favour Christianity. Indeed this document states that faiths must "adapt themselves to the socialist [that is, communist and therefore ungodly] society".

In spite of what it has said about religious freedom, the Chinese Government has banned people from buying the Bible from major online sites such as Amazon China. A BBC editor has described this as an "attempt by China's communist leaders to seize greater control"; they want to be able to exert control over everything that happens in the country. In recent years, the Government did nothing to prevent the Bible being sold through the internet, but officially it only allowed Bibles to be distributed through churches under the control of the state.

Some Chinese trying to buy a Bible through Amazon could only find Bible study guides, but they were able to find the Koran on sale. Perhaps this means that the Chinese authorities see Christianity as a greater threat than Islam. It is a fact that true Christians recognise another and higher authority than their government. This was why people in Thessalonica complained of those who were "saying that there is another king, one Jesus" (Acts 17:7). He is the One we should obey whatever a government may say.

We should be very thankful that, in the UK and elsewhere, we are free to buy a Bible whichever way is most convenient for us. But are we making

good use of it? Do we read it regularly? Do we seek God's blessing on our reading? Do we value the teaching that God gives us in that precious book?

Jesus said, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39). Make good use of your freedom to learn from the testimony the Bible gives about Jesus.

## Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2017-18

### Exercise 3

All answers from *overseas* should be sent to *Miss Naomi Clemence*, 67 Clobberhill Road, Glasgow, G13 2LB. The correctors should have your answers before the end of June. These exercises are based on Isaiah 41 to Jeremiah 46, and Acts 20 to 2 Corinthians 4.

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

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

#### Old Testament

In Isaiah we have many prophecies about the coming of Christ the Messiah. Read Isaiah 42.

1. Look at Matthew 12. Find and write down the references for four verses that confirm that Isaiah 42 is speaking about Christ. (2)
2. In Luke 2 give the reference for a verse where Simeon refers to Isaiah 42:6 in his prayer to God. (1)
3. In Isaiah 42:1 Christ is called the Servant. Find and write out a verse in Matthew 20 where He refers to Himself as serving. (2)
4. We also read that God put His Spirit in Him. Find and write out a verse in Matthew 3 where we read of God's Spirit coming upon Jesus. (2)
5. Give a reason from Isaiah 42:6-7 for the Lord calling and upholding Him? (1)
6. Right out a verse in Isaiah 42 where we read about:
  - (a) God being zealous for His own glory (2)
  - (b) God defeating His enemies (2)
  - (c) God guiding people unsure of the right way. (2)
- In verse 21 God speaks of magnifying His law, but God's people were in a low condition.
7. What reason is given for the people being in this state? (1)
8. Did the people benefit from the chastisement they were experiencing? (1)
9. What lesson can we learn about what use we should make of trouble in our own experience? (2)

#### New Testament

Read Romans 8.

1. Describe those who are said to be free from condemnation. (2)
2. Look at verse 3. Why could the law not free from condemnation? (1)
3. What test does Paul give to determine whether we are "after the flesh" or "after the Spirit"? (2)
4. What reason does he give for saying that those in the flesh cannot please God? (2)
5. Look at verse 15. In what spirit are we to obey God? (2)
6. In your own words, say what encouragements are given to believers who are suffering, in:
  - (a) verse 18 (b) verse 28 (c) verse 37 (d) verses 38-39. (8)
7. Paul refers to the book of Isaiah several times in Romans 9. Write down the verse(s) in chapter 9 where each of the following are quoted:
  - (a) Isaiah 29:16 (b) Isaiah 10:22 (c) Isaiah 1:9 (d) Isaiah 8:14. (12)

#### Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 33 in the Shorter Catechism: What is justification? (3)

### Intermediate Section (13 and 14 years old)

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

#### Old Testament

1. See Isaiah chapter 42, verses 5-20.
  - (a) Which verses tell us about "graven images"? (2)
  - (b) What happens to those who trust in "graven images"? (2)
2. See Isaiah 45.
  - (a) Complete the verse which begins with the words, "I am the Lord". (2)
  - (b) How many times is "and there is none else" found in this chapter? (2)
3. See Isaiah 53.
  - (a) Write down two other words which mean *sins*? (2)
  - (b) In what way are we like sheep? (2)
  - (c) Who is compared to both a lamb and sheep? (1)
  - (d) In what way is He like them? (1)
4. See Isaiah 55.
  - (a) Write down words which show that the gospel invitation is free? (2)
  - (b) Complete the verse which begins: "Seek ye the Lord". (2)

#### New Testament

1. Why was Paul "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ"? (Romans 1:1-17). (2)
  2. What can we learn from Romans 10:12? (1)
  3. What are Christians warned against in Romans 12, verses 3 and 16? (2)
  4. How should we treat our neighbours? (Romans 13) (2)
- All the other questions are from Acts 27:14-38.
5. What was Euroclydon? (1)
  6. What did the angel of God say to Paul? (2)
  7. How many times did Paul (in these verses) tell the men "to be of good cheer"? (2)
  8. Each time he gave a reason for all in the ship to be "of good cheer". What were they? (2)
  9. How many people were in the ship? (1)
  10. In order to lighten the ship what did they cast into the sea? (2)

#### Memory Exercise

- Learn by heart and write 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 Isaiah chapter 55.
  - (a) Who are invited to the waters? (1)
  - (b) What is promised to those that hear? (1)
  - (c) When should we seek the Lord? (1)
  - (d) When should we call upon Him? (1)
  - (e) In what way are God's thoughts and ways different from our thoughts and ways? (1)
  - (f) What effect do the snow and the rain have on the earth? (2)
  - (g) What similar effect will God's word have on our hearts if we receive it? (2)
2. Read Jeremiah chapter 36. God commanded Jeremiah to write down in a book all the prophecies He gave him.
  - (a) Who wrote these words for Jeremiah and then read them to the people? (1)
  - (b) Why could Jeremiah not go to the Lord's house and read them himself? (1)
  - (c) Who read the book to King Jehoiakim? (1)
  - (d) What did the king do with the book? (2)
  - (e) What punishment came on the king for this wicked deed? (3)

#### New Testament

1. Read about the shipwreck in Acts chapter 27.

- (a) What was the tempestuous wind called? (1)
- (b) In verse 21 Paul says, "Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me and not have loosed from Crete". Find the verse earlier in the chapter where Paul gave this advice, and write it out. (3)
- (c) Who said to Paul, "Fear not, thou must be brought before Caesar"? (1)
- (d) How many people were in the ship? (1)
2. 1 Corinthians 15 is a long chapter. It tells us about the certainty of the resurrection. Can you find answers to these questions in the chapter?
  - (a) How many "brethren" saw Christ at one time after He rose from the dead (verses 1-9). (1)
  - (b) Who does Paul say saw Him "last of all"? (verses 1-9). (1)
  - (c) Who became the firstfruits of them that slept by the resurrection of the dead? (verses 12-20) (1)
  - (d) What is the last enemy that shall be destroyed? (verses 21-28) (1)
  - (e) Corruption, dishonour, weakness and a natural body are words used to describe the body of a believer as it is laid in the grave at death. Write out four words used to describe the same body when it is raised again at the resurrection (verses 40-44). (4)
  - (f) Verse 45 mentions the first Adam and the last Adam. Who is the last Adam? (verse 47 will help you.) (1)

### Memory Exercise

- Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 2 in the Shorter Catechism: What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him? (3)

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

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

### Old Testament

1. Read Isaiah 55:1-8.
  - (a) How many times do we read the word "come" in these verses? (1)
  - (b) Who is saying, "Come unto me"? (Read to the end of the section to make sure.) (1)
  - (c) What are we to "forsake"? (1)
  - (d) Give four blessings promised to those that obey the command, "Come unto me" (verses 3 and 7). (4)
2. Read Isaiah 58:13,14.
  - (a) The Lord here calls the Sabbath "My \_\_\_\_\_ day". Fill in the blank. (1)
  - (b) What 3 things should we not do on this day? (3)
  - (c) The Sabbath day should be a \_\_\_\_\_ to us. We should \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves in the Lord. Use the same word to fill in both blanks. (1)

The word is used twice in the Bible verses you are to use for this question. (1)

- (d) Look up Exodus 20:8 and write out the verse. (1)

### New Testament

1. Read Acts 26:12-23, which tells part of Paul's speech to King Agrippa. Now read the following sentences and say whether they are true or false.
  - (a) Paul was going home from Damascus when he saw a vision.
  - (b) Paul had been persecuting Jesus.
  - (c) The Lord was calling Paul to work as a minister.
  - (d) Paul was sent with the gospel only to the Jews.
  - (e) Paul was an obedient servant of the Lord.
  - (f) Paul was able to carry on with his gospel ministry because of help from God. (6)
2. Now read verses 27-29. Was King Agrippa persuaded to be a Christian? Answer yes or no. (1)
3. Read Acts 28:23-31.
  - (a) The first and last of these verses tells us about Paul's preaching. Write any 2 things about his preaching. (2)

- (b) Write out the verse which tells us if everyone “believed” what they heard. (1)

### Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and copy out the answer to Question 58 in the Shorter Catechism:

What is required in the Fourth Commandment? (2)

### 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. Isaiah chapter 53 tells of Jesus (who is both God and man) coming to suffer as the Saviour for sinners.

1. Fill in the first part of verse 1. W\_\_ hath believed our r\_\_\_\_?

2. Fill in the words: He shall grow up before him as a tender p\_\_\_\_, and as a r\_\_\_\_ out of a d\_\_\_\_ g\_\_\_\_. (Isaiah 53:2)

3. Would people think that there was beauty in Him? (Isaiah 53:2)

4. He was a man who knew sorrows and grief. The chapter tells us that we hid as it were o\_\_\_\_ f\_\_\_\_ from h\_\_\_\_. (Isaiah 53:3)

5. He suffered instead of His people.

But he was w\_\_\_\_ for our transgressions, He was b\_\_\_\_ for our iniquities: the chastisement of our p\_\_\_\_ was upon him: and with his s\_\_\_\_ we are h\_\_\_\_. (Isaiah 53:5)

6. He died and rose again to take away sins. He s\_\_\_\_ b\_\_\_\_ th\_\_\_\_ iniquities. (Isaiah 53:11)

7. Fill in the last part of the last verse.

and he b\_\_\_\_ the s\_\_\_\_ of m\_\_\_\_ and made intercession for the t\_\_\_\_. (Isaiah 53:12)

#### New Testament

Saul (also called Paul) told about his conversion in Acts chapter 22.

1. Saul (Paul) was on a journey to Damascus to persecute (hurt) good people. Where did the great light shine from? (Acts 22:6)

Fill in the missing words.

2. Saul f\_\_\_\_ unto the ground. (Acts 22:7)

3. A voice said, Saul, Saul w\_\_\_\_ persecutest t\_\_\_\_ m\_\_\_\_? (Acts 22:7)

4. Saul answered, w\_\_\_\_ art t\_\_\_\_, L\_\_\_\_? (Acts 22:8)

5. Who was speaking to him? J\_\_\_\_. (Acts 22:8)

6. Saul (Paul) said, What s\_\_\_\_ I do, L\_\_\_\_? (Acts 22:10)

7. Jesus saved Paul from his sins. A good man called Ananias said to Paul, The God of our f\_\_\_\_ hath c\_\_\_\_ t\_\_\_\_. (Acts 22:14)

8. Thou shalt be his w\_\_\_\_ unto all m\_\_\_\_ of what thou hast s\_\_\_\_ and h\_\_\_\_. (Acts 22:15)

Price £1.00