

The Young People's Magazine

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

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” Ecclesiastes 12:1



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Volume 83

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Number 10

God Removing Sin

The poster hanging outside a church shows a hand holding a pencil. On the pencil is a rubber, which is being used. The slogan informs the passer-by: "Every mistake you've made erased through Christ".

One does not want to be too critical, but it is important to be more accurate than this. Christ does not erase all our mistakes, even of those who trust in Him. For example, if a young believer in school spells a word wrongly while writing an essay, the pupil cannot expect that Christ will erase the mistake in some miraculous way.

No doubt what is meant is not mistakes but *sins*. And however unwilling people are today to speak about sins, it is important to use the right word. What is different about *sins*? Not all mistakes are sins; it is not usually sinful to spell a word wrongly, though it is sinful to do things carelessly. The word *sin* means more than wrongdoing; it describes doing wrong *against God*. It may involve doing wrong against someone else, but if you use the word *sin* you imply that wrong has been done against God. That was why David confessed, "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Samuel 12:13). He had done wrong against other people, but the most significant matter was that he had done wrong against God. He had sinned.

When we think about doing wrong, we must always remember that He is our Creator, and so He has a right to tell us how we should live. He has a right to tell us what we should do and what we should not do. So when we do something that God's law forbids, we sin. And when we do not do something that God commands us to do, we sin. To sin is more than to make a mistake; we are sinning *against God*.

No doubt what the poster is trying to say is that, when people sin, God is able to forgive their sins, to wipe them away. When He does so, He will no longer act against sinners because of their sins; He will not punish them.

But how is that possible? It is because Jesus, the Son of God, came into the world to suffer instead of sinners – to take their punishment on Himself. What punishment did they deserve? The Bible tells us: "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). So the just punishment for sin is death. As sinners we

deserve eternal death. And so Jesus Christ, as the Substitute for sinners, must suffer what amounted to eternal death, if sinners are to be delivered from punishment, if they are to be forgiven.

Think of John's vision of the Day of Judgement, when he saw the books opened, when people "were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Revelation 20:12). The idea is that God is writing down everything that all the people in this world are doing and saying and thinking. Of course, the books are a picture of God's perfect memory of everything that happens in people's lives. God will use all the information He has about a person's life – and, remember, He knows everything – to judge him or her on the last day.

Now think of the Philippian jailer, for instance. He committed very many sins throughout his life, and God had a perfect memory of them all – He knew all his sinful deeds and words and thoughts. Then, following the earthquake that shook open the doors of the prison, he was awakened to a sense of his danger as a sinner. He asked Paul and Silas, two of his prisoners, "What must I do to be saved?"

They gave him the right answer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house", and they went on to speak to him "the word of the Lord" (Acts 16:31,32) – especially about Jesus and what He did and what He was still doing. The man believed, and all his sins were forgiven. You can say that all his sins were blotted out from God's books. It is as if God had erased the record of all his sinful actions, words and thoughts.

The jailor believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, as the One who died in the place of sinners. The jailor was forgiven for the sake of Christ, and because of what Christ had done instead of him. Christ had suffered in the jailor's place; Christ had taken the guilt of his sins and had suffered the punishment that was due to them. So when the jailor believed, all his sins were erased from God's books. God will never punish the jailor for his sins.

Yet probably some results of the jailor's sins were never erased in this life. He may have had painful memories of sins he committed while he was unconverted – maybe he made Paul's and Silas' feet sore and uncomfortable when he secured them. Perhaps he never got rid of these memories while he lived. Again, an ungodly man might suffer a severe injury, like the loss of a leg, because of some foolish action while he was drunk. Even if he is converted, he will have to live without that limb for the rest of his life.

After David sinned so seriously, he had to experience many troubles as a result of his foolishness. This was what God brought about in order to chastise him; it made the memory of his great sin all the more vivid till he died. But why did God keep that unpleasant memory alive in David's mind?

It was so that he would have an increasing hatred of his sin and would be so much less likely to repeat it. Only when he reached heaven would such results of sin come to an end; only then would they be rubbed out.

Pray earnestly that God, for Christ's sake, would forgive your sins, that He would erase them from His books. Then you will not have to hear them charged against you on the Day of Judgement and suffer God's punishment in hell for ever. Ask Him too to restrain you from sinning, so that memories of your wickedness will not haunt you for the rest of your life.

Why We Go to Church

3. The Blessings of Being There

Rev D W B Somerset

Last month's section of this Youth Conference paper began by looking at "how the Bible commands church-going". This was followed by four reasons *why the believer wants to go to church*. This final article begins with three further reasons, to conclude Part 4 of the paper.

5. *Believers go to church because they want to learn about the things of Christ.* To learn is a natural human desire, and this applies not only to outward things but also to spiritual things. It is not just that the Word of God is being expounded – we trust that there will be something to learn there from the preaching of the Word – but that God is opening the treasures of knowledge whenever there is public worship. We are likely to get old views of Scripture revived in our souls, and new views of verses of Scripture or of doctrines that we have never had before. "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law" (Psalm 119:18). The thriving Christian does not want to miss these occasions.

6. *Because they want to be stirred up.* Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) said that, in his day, people needed "not so much have their heads filled as their hearts stirred" in the worship of God. It was a religious age in New England and they had a good knowledge of doctrine, but they needed to be stirred up to more godly and religious lives. All Christians need a better understanding of doctrine, but they need also to be "renewed in the spirit of their minds" (Ephesians 4:23). Their prayer is, "Quicken us, and we will call upon Thy name" (Psalm 80:18). The preacher too is hoping for the same thing: he has prepared roughly what he is going to say, but he is hoping that he will get clearer views of his text and will feel the truth and importance and excellence of these things all the more during the course of his address, before God and the angels and his fellow-men.

7. *Because they may have an opportunity of helping others.* Paul longed to see the Romans because he wanted to teach them: "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me" (Romans 1:11-12). Note how he, as it were, corrects himself: it is not only to edify them but himself. Christians help each other and themselves by speaking together. They support and comfort and counsel each other. Richard Baxter said that many people came to him for spiritual advice, and he often found the advice that he gave them helpful to himself. It is often easier to see spiritual things clearly in other people's lives than in our own: David could see the great sin in Nathan's parable when he could not see his own sin. It is a Christian privilege to be useful in Christ's service.

There may be other reasons as well, but in a recent issue of the *British Church Newspaper*, the editor, Dr Napier Malcolm, comments that it is a normal thing for a human being to go to church. Everybody in the world ought to be going (health permitting). It is no wonder that so many people are lonely, depressed, isolated and feel unloved when they are depriving themselves of this particular aspect of their lives. They have never made church attendance central to their lives, or at least given it the place that it deserves. Those that do go to church are very much less likely to feel lonely or depressed. The Apostle Paul was certainly not lonely, as we can see from his list of friends in Romans, chapter 16.

As so often, spiritual duties (like keeping the Sabbath) turn out to have incidental benefits in ordinary life. As well as any spiritual benefits that they may get, churchgoers typically have a much wider circle of people they know than they would otherwise have. They meet people of different ages and backgrounds and races and difficulties, and this widens their perspective on human life. They have more interests because they have met more people. They are developing more and more points of contact with other human beings. When their own health is failing, they are still interested in the prosperity of the Church and are thinking about that, and praying for that, and they do not feel the lack of purpose which affects some old people.

5. Conclusion. In closing then, we come back to our question at the beginning of this paper: Should parents be taking their children to church? If Christ is risen from the dead, then the answer is obviously, Yes, because the Christian religion is true; and other reasons can be given as well. Christian parents want to have their children with them; they want them to grow up with a knowledge of Christianity; they want them to form good habits, one of which is attending church; they want them to come to the knowledge of Christ, which is ordinarily through hearing the preaching of the Word.

The attempt to keep children from church is just a device to kill off the Christian Church: “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:14). These were children that had been brought to Christ by others.

We should want to go to church: when Hezekiah was healed, he said: “What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord?” (Isaiah 38:22). For Hezekiah, being in good health meant going to God’s house. Doeg the Edomite was “detained before the Lord” – he did not want to be there (1 Samuel 21:7). The people of Amos’s day were asking, “When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? And the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat” (Amos 8:5). But the Psalmist was saying: “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord” (Psalm 122:1). Our attitude to the public worship of God says a lot about the spiritual state of our souls.

The Poor Weaver

Although he was poor and experienced many other troubles, the weaver was always cheerful. He did not always have work to do, but when he had, he laboured at his loom from early in the morning till late in the evening. Yet he did not get much money for the cloth he wove; so it was always difficult to pay the rent for his house and all the other bills for himself, his wife and his children.

Then his wife died and his sister looked after his house and family. While he was diligent in his work, she was not; while he took the Bible as his guide, she despised religion; while he was patient, she complained a lot and could get very angry. He found this very difficult and would have been thankful that the noise of his loom partly drowned out his sister’s rowing voice.

Yet, whatever happened, the weaver always found some comforting verse in God’s Word to strengthen him. He was also a man of earnest prayer. Even while he experienced various difficulties, he recognised that God was always showing him mercy. So he was reconciled to his troubles; he realised that “all things work together for good to them that love God” (Romans 8:28). When things went well, he praised God; when things were difficult, he went to pray. He used to say, “All will be well by and by”. Here was a man who submitted to God, whatever He sent in providence, and certainly all was going to be well when he would reach heaven.

The two most valuable things the weaver owned were his big Bible and his loom. The Bible was valuable because God spoke to him through it, and the loom because that was how he earned some money to buy what he

needed. One evening, while the weaver was hard at work upstairs at his loom, his sister went out and left the front door open. Someone noticed that the door was ajar, sneaked inside and stole the Bible.

"What will you do now?" his sister asked the weaver, and she seemed to be more glad than sorry about what happened.

"This I will do," the weaver answered meekly, "buy a small one till I can afford to get a large one. Blessed be God that we live in a land of Bibles!"

Not long afterwards, a fire broke out in his workshop and his loom was very badly damaged. Then his sister asked if his new Bible would buy him a new loom.

The weaver told her: "If it will not do that, it may teach me, Mary, to bear the loss of the old loom with submission" – he meant submission to God. He added, "When a part of our blessings are taken away, we must value more highly those that remain". And he was thankful that people treated him as an honest man. This meant that, although he no longer had his own loom, he had friends who trusted him and they would lend him one.

Before long the weaver not only had a small Bible, but he also had a loom on hire. But further troubles followed: the demand for woven cloth fell away; so he was no longer making enough money to live on. No doubt he prayed about the matter and committed his situation to the Lord.

And the Lord did not fail him. When his situation had become very difficult indeed, he heard that an old uncle had died and had left him a small house not far away from where he lived, and also £20 – probably worth well over £2000 in today's values. The poor weaver was very thankful, recognising that he owed this blessing – and every blessing – to his Father in heaven, to whom he had been praying.

He referred to his uncle's kindness as he spoke to his sister. But she had a very different point of view and said that he should have left them more than he did (perhaps he left Mary some money too).

Her brother then told her: "Mary, Mary, think how little we deserve and how much we possess. I wish you could see that 'all things work together for good to them that love God'." The weaver was looking at life in the light of what the Bible teaches.

The grocer at the corner of the street wanted to buy the uncle's house, and the weaver was very willing to sell it to him. Then the grocer found out that the house needed much more money spent on it to bring it into a good state of repair. It was very disappointing for the weaver but he accepted the situation. This was in contrast to Mary, who complained bitterly and said, in mockery, "This is among the things that are to work together for good, I suppose". But it is wicked to use God's Word to mock His people.

The weaver too must have felt disappointed when the grocer refused to buy the house, but it could soon be seen that this was indeed among the “all things” that worked together for the good of the weaver as a man who loved God. Soon a railway company wanted to buy it, not for the house itself, but for the ground it was built on; they needed it because they wanted to extend a railway. So the weaver was paid twice as much for the house as the grocer would have given him. Now the weaver was able to buy a new loom and also the house in which he lived, as well as other things.

Some time later he visited a bookstall and saw offered for sale the very Bible which had been stolen from him. (The thief obviously did not want to read the Bible; he only wanted to get a little money by selling it.) The weaver praised God for His goodness, for he could now buy back the copy of the Bible that he so much valued.

But he also prayed that, now that he had quite a lot of money, God would keep him as humble as when he had been very poor. One wonders if Mary could now accept that “all things work together for good to them that love God”. She could hardly do so if she continued in unbelief – rejecting the salvation that God has provided in Christ. Yet we can be sure that this godly weaver was praying that his sister would be converted, and one should not be surprised if that prayer were answered too.

The Reformation in Europe

2. Luther and Zwingli

Last month's part of this Youth Conference paper saw Martin Luther become a professor at Wittenberg in Germany. He was troubled by the sale of indulgences, which promised forgiveness of sin in return for money. He wrote his 95 theses about indulgences and nailed them to the church door. Eventually this brought him into conflict with the Pope.

In 1520 the Pope issued an official document – known as a bull – which condemned Luther's teaching as a poisonous virus. It listed 40 points in his writings which were claimed to be errors; again Luther was summoned to appear in Rome within 60 days or be put out of the Church. In fact, the bull only reached Wittenberg on the sixtieth day. Some of Luther's supporters made a bonfire onto which they threw various volumes of Roman doctrine and church law. Luther himself was present and placed a printed copy of the Pope's bull in the flames. Within a month, the Pope put Luther out of the Church; he was, in other words, excommunicated.

The Elector continued to insist that Luther must be tried in a German court.

So the Reformer was called before the next meeting of the Parliament of the Empire in the city of Worms – the meeting's proper title was the Diet of Worms. At its head was the Emperor, Charles V, who was also King of Spain. Luther duly appeared; he was promised that he could travel safely, but he knew perfectly well that these promises were not always kept. He told the Elector: "Had I then known that as many devils were lying in wait for me as there were tiles on the roofs, I should nevertheless have leaped into their midst with joy".

The Diet began on 17 April 1521. All that Luther was allowed to say was to answer two questions. The first had to do with his writings, which had been placed on a table; it was: "Are these your books?" Luther agreed they were. The second question was: "Will you recant?" In other words, Would he turn back from the positions that he had taken up against Rome? The Diet was surprised when he asked for more time to consider; but it was such an important matter "of faith and the salvation of souls", Luther said, "and because it concerns God's Word". He was allowed one day.

The next day, Luther pointed out that there were some books no one disagreed with. Other books challenged the papal system; to take back these opinions would only encourage, he said, Rome's "lawless and unrestrained kingdom of wickedness". In a third group of books Luther admitted that he had spoken too strongly against some individuals. But here was his most important point: If the Diet could prove from the Bible that he was in error, he would happily give up his views and would be the first to throw his books into the fire

He added later: "I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not take anything back, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me! Amen." This was said in Latin, and he added in German: "Here I stand. I can do no other." Some of the Spaniards present shouted, "To the fire! To the fire!" Yet the Emperor announced that he would keep his promise and he let Luther go back safely to Wittenberg, but then he would be subject to severe punishment.

As Luther set out for home, he was guarded by 20 horsemen. Then, when passing through a forest, he was surrounded by armed men and taken away. People did not know what had happened to him. But the armed men were friends and they brought him to the Wartburg Castle, where he remained in hiding for 10 months.

Yet his time there was by no means wasted. He began to translate the Bible. In under 11 weeks he had reached the end of the New Testament – taking it from the original Greek language into very readable German. He

still needed to revise his translation to improve it but, when it was published in September 1522, he had fulfilled his hope that the people “might seize and taste the clear, pure Word of God itself and hold to it”. He went on to translate the Old Testament and the whole Bible was published in 1534.

The Scriptures were central to Luther’s thinking; indeed they were central to the whole Reformation. No longer were ordinary people in Protestant areas forbidden to read the Bible for themselves, on the pretence that they could not understand it. Only the Church, it was claimed, could do so – but that claim ignored the power of the Holy Spirit to enlighten the mind of sinners so that they might understand the Scriptures. To give the Bible to the people was one of the most wonderful blessings of the Reformation.

While Luther was in hiding, divisions broke out within the church in Wittenberg. The main reason was that Andreas von Karlstadt, another of the professors in the University, began to celebrate the Lord’s Supper without wearing priestly garments, and he gave both bread and wine to the people. He also objected to the worship of images and the use of musical instruments during church services.

Luther felt that he must return to Wittenberg at once in case things got completely out of hand; he believed that he had to persuade people through preaching, from the Scriptures, before the Reformation could advance further. To that extent, Luther was no doubt right, but there ought to be a willingness to take the process of reformation absolutely as far as God has revealed, in Scripture, His will for how people should live and worship.

Meanwhile the Reformation was taking root in parts of **Switzerland**. Most prominent in the early part of the Swiss Reformation was Ulrich Zwingli, who became a preacher in the main church in Zurich in 1518. When he arrived, he told the congregation that he was going to preach through the Gospel of Matthew and then move on to the other books of the New Testament.

But in 1519 the plague hit Zurich, and Zwingli caught the infection. When he was brought back from the brink of death, he was a different man. Having had to look into eternity, he was brought to rely on God’s mercy alone for salvation. He no longer believed that people should trust in the sacraments or in prayer to the saints; he saw that to do so was gross idolatry.

Zwingli gave himself to preaching the Word of God. He expected that the people would then demand the work of reformation to proceed according to the Scriptures. He declared that Christ, not the Pope, is the head of the Church, and that Christ rules His Church through the Scriptures, not through the Pope. This was to demolish the Pope’s claims and power.

Zwingli also taught that Christ’s death on the cross was a sacrifice that did

not need to be repeated, in opposition to what the Roman Church claims to do in the mass. (Roman Catholic teaching on the mass is highly dangerous because it implies that the death of Christ was not sufficient for the salvation of sinners.) Zwingli criticised prayer to the saints; he taught that purgatory does not exist. On the other hand, he showed his people that sinners must trust in Christ alone for salvation, not in their own good works.

It is easy to assume that Zwingli followed Luther's teachings. Roman Catholics told him: "You must be Lutheran, because you preach just as Luther writes". He answered, "I preach just as Paul writes. Why not call me a Pauline?" He went on: "I will not be called by Luther's name, for I have read little of his teaching. I will have no name except that of my captain, Christ, whose soldier I am. Yet I value Luther as highly as anyone alive." God, it would seem, was working in the hearts and minds of both men at the same time. He was also working in the hearts and minds of many other men who became Reformers in various parts of Europe, though most of them are not nearly so well known as Luther and Zwingli.

For Junior Readers

Mr Nyi

Mr Nyi lived in the city of Ningbo on the east coast of China. He was a business man in the town, a dealer in cotton. He was interested in religion, but the religions of China were all heathen religions and he had never heard the good news of the gospel.

One evening he was passing the door of the house where Mr Taylor and Mr Jones, the missionaries, were based. He heard a bell ringing and saw some people going in, as if they were gathering for a meeting. Hearing that it was a place where foreign teachers spoke about their religion, he decided to go in himself to see what he could learn. The young missionary was reading these words of Jesus from the Gospel of John:

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. 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. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved."

As Mr Nyi sat there listening, for the very first time, to the gospel being explained, hope began to dawn in him. The Holy Spirit, who had opened the heart of Lydia many centuries before, opened his heart that very evening. He

realised that old things had passed away and that all things had become new. What a wonder!

When the meeting ended, Mr Nyi got up to speak to the missionary. “I have long looked for the truth,” he said, “as my father did before me, but without finding it. I have travelled far and near, but have never discovered it. In Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism [various false religions in China], I have found no rest; but I do find rest in what we have heard tonight. From now on I am a believer in Jesus.” His words had a deep effect on the other people gathered that night, for Mr Nyi was well known and respected in the community.

His conversion brought great joy to the missionaries and he became a useful member of the little church in Ningbo, always ready to help them when he could. He very much appreciated the gospel.

One day he asked Hudson Taylor, “How long have you had the glad tidings in England?” The young missionary admitted that the gospel had been known there for hundreds of years.

Mr Nyi was astonished! “What!” he exclaimed, “Is it possible that you have known about Jesus so long and have only now come to tell us? My father sought the truth for more than 20 years,” he continued sadly, “and died without finding it. O why did you not come sooner?”

What about you? You have Bibles of your own, family worship in your home and the gospel preached to you every week – but do you believe it? Has your heart been opened to receive it? You should pray:

“Show me Thy ways, O Lord; Thy paths, O teach Thou me:

And do Thou lead me in Thy truth, therein my teacher be:

For Thou art God that dost to me salvation send,

And I upon Thee all the day expecting do attend”(Psalm 25:4,5).

J van Kralingen

The Wrong Question

Asahel Nettleton was a preacher in the United States. One day he met someone who thought he had a very difficult question. He no doubt thought that, by asking it, he could make Nettleton look awkward. So he asked the preacher: “How came I by my wicked heart?” Probably Nettleton had been speaking in a sermon about the corruption of the human heart.

But Nettleton pointed out to him that there was a more relevant question: “How shall you *get rid* of your wicked heart?” The preacher emphasised, “You have a wicked heart,” which makes “you entirely unfit for the kingdom

of God, and you must have a new heart, or you cannot be saved"; he could never get to heaven. So the preacher insisted, "The question which now most deeply concerns you is: 'How shall you obtain it?'" – a new heart.

But the man avoided Nettleton's question; he put all the stress on his own question: "I wish you to tell me how I came by my wicked heart".

Nettleton again refused to answer. I am sure that he could have given the man a good explanation, first referring to the Fall of our first parents in the Garden of Eden. Then he could have quoted what David said of himself: "I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5), and this was the man's position. Then the preacher explained why he would not answer the man's question: it was because, even "if I could do it to your entire satisfaction, it would not help you in the least towards obtaining a new heart". What Nettleton was most anxious about was, he told the man, "that you should become a new creature and be prepared for heaven".

The man showed no interest in Nettleton's question; he probably did not want a new heart and dreaded the thought of being holy; he did not want to be sincerely religious. He kept on pressing his own question.

So the preacher told him that he was like a man who was drowning while his friends were trying to save his life. When he again came up to the surface of the water, Nettleton pictures him asking, How did I come to be here?

One of his friends might answer, That question does not concern you now; take hold of the rope.

Nettleton imagines the man asking again: How did I come to be here?

And the friend answered, I shall not stop to answer that question now.

Nettleton pictures the drowning man replying, "Then I'll drown". There could be no hope for a man who would act so foolishly and refuse to catch hold of the rope that had been thrown out to rescue him.

So there can be no hope for anyone who keeps on asking questions – though they might be relevant at some other time – but avoids facing up to what is most important at this time. That is to get a new heart so that he may live a godly life and be prepared to enter heaven when death comes.

You have probably often being warned that you need to be born again, to have your sins forgiven, to seek the Lord while He may be found, to call upon Him while He is near, and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not waste precious time in demanding that all your questions be answered and all your difficulties solved before you focus your mind on the great matters of salvation. You may look for answers to your questions and solutions to your difficulties at another time, but for now remember the words of Jesus: "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

Looking Around Us

A Huge Salary Payment

Someone in Australia recently received 100 times his normal salary when he was paid recently. The man had nearly half a million Australian dollars (£284 900) transferred into his bank account. It happened because a decimal point was accidentally put in the wrong place. The mistake was reported by the auditor-general, who put it down to two different human errors.

Mistakes will happen, though some of them, as in this instance, are more serious than others. How important then to seek God's blessing on whatever we are doing, asking Him to keep us from making mistakes!

So what did the man do with the unexpectedly-large payment? The news report states that "the worker resisted temptation and duly returned the money.

It is good that the man was honest. But we are open to temptation in all sorts of situations. So we ought to pray to God every day, or oftener, that He "would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted" (*The Shorter Catechism*, Answer 106).

For Younger Readers

The Road to Heaven

Mr Benn was ill for a long time. At last it was clear he was going to die. The last evening he was alive, he called all his children about his bed.

He told them he was going to be taken away from this world to a better one. He meant that he was going to heaven. And he hoped that they would all follow him there.

He reminded them that they all knew what the road to heaven was. He had tried hard to teach them about it. He asked them about the road to heaven: "Where is it to be found?"

They all answered at once: "In the Bible".

He then told them that they also knew what to do when they were not sure if something was right or wrong. "Ask your Bible", he told them. The Bible tells us what is right and what is wrong.

Make sure you listen to what your parents teach you from the Bible. God speaks to us through the Bible. So it is very important for us to listen to what He tells us.

Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2018-19

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 2018. 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, as is anyone in any section who has special needs.
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.
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 D and A: Exercise 1: Jeremiah 47 to Daniel 4, and 2 Corinthians 5 to Hebrews 13. Exercise 2: Daniel 5 to Malachi 4, Genesis 1-23, James 1 to Revelation 22 and Matthew 1-11. Exercise 3: Genesis 24 to Exodus 34 and Matthew 12 to Mark 16.
7. The exercises are 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.
8. The names of those who have completed the first two exercises and of the award and prize winners have been published in *The Young People's Magazine*. Because of changes to data protection laws, this is no longer possible, unless permission is given; and so prizes and awards for 2018-19 were not printed. Please indicate on your answer paper if you wish your name to be published in future.

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.

Senior Section (15 years old and over)

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

Please note the request in point 8 in the General Information section.

Old Testament

The questions are based on Daniel 1-2.

1. (a) What qualities did Nebuchadnezzar look for when selecting trainees to stand before him? (2)
 (b) Why did Daniel refuse to eat the king's meat? (1)
 (c) Look at verses 8 and 12. How did Daniel show respect for the authority of the king, while still refusing to do what was against God's law? (2)
 (d) What was the test proposed? (2)
 (e) How did God reward Daniel and his friends for their faithfulness? (1)
2. (a) In your own words explain why Daniel and his friends were to be killed. (3)
 (b) How did Daniel respond to the king's decree in verses 15-16? (2)
 (c) What did the four friends pray for together? (1)
 (d) How did Daniel respond when the vision was revealed to him? (1)
 (e) Find and write out a verse in which Daniel shows humility
 (1) in his prayer (2) when he spoke to the king. (4)
 (f) Describe the king's dream in your own words. (6)
 (g) What do you think was the kingdom represented by the stone cut out without hands? (1)
 (h) How did the king react initially to Daniel's interpretation? (3)
 (i) How was Daniel rewarded? (2)

New Testament

1. Read Philippians 2.
 (a) What virtues are recommended in verse 3? (2)
 (b) What two aspects of Christ's humiliation are given in verses 6-8? (2)
 (c) How did God reward Christ for this? (3)
 (d) Write out 2 consecutive verses that speak of God's sovereign work within the soul and man's responsibility with regard to it? (3)
 (e) How does Paul teach the Philippians in verses 14-16 that they are to shine as lights in a dark world? (3)
 (f) Why was Paul sending Timothy to the Philippians? (1)
 (g) Why were they to receive Epaphroditus with so much gladness? (1)
 (h) Look back at verses 4-5. In what way were Timothy and Epaphroditus good examples of the Christian living Paul is commending? (2)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 27 in the Shorter Catechism: Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist? (3)

Intermediate Section (13 and 14 years old)

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

Please note the request in point 8 in the General Information section.

Old Testament

1. Read Daniel chapter 1 verses 11-21.
 (a) Give the names of the "four children". (4)
 (b) What did they eat and drink? (2)
 (c) For how many days did they do that? (1)
 (d) What effect did this have on them? (2)
 (e) How many times better were they than all the magicians and astrologers? (1)
 (f) What extra gift did God give to Daniel? (1)
2. Read Lamentations chapter 3 verses 22-40.
 (a) Who is the Lord "good to"? (2)
 (b) What three things are "good for a man"? (3)
 (c) Which two verses tell us of the Lord's "compassion"? (2)
 (d) Which verse tells us that no living person should complain? (1)
3. Read Ezekiel chapter 3.
 (a) How many times is Ezekiel called "son of man" in this chapter? (2)

- (b) Complete the verse which begins: "Son of man, I have made thee . . .". (2)

New Testament

1. Read Colossians chapter 3.
 - (a) List three evils Christians should "put off". (3)
 - (b) List three graces Christians should "put on". (3)
 - (c) What should they "put on above all things"? (1)
 - (d) Why should we especially forgive one another? (1)
 - (e) Write out the verse which tells us to be "thankful". (2)
 - (f) In what way should we sing "to the Lord"? (1)
 - (g) What are children commanded to do? (1)
 - (h) Why should they do this? (1)
2. Read 1 Timothy chapter 6.
 - (a) What is "great gain"? (1)
 - (b) What is the "root of all evil"? (2)
 - (c) Who gives us "richly all things to enjoy"? (1)
 - (d) What was Timothy told to "avoid"? (2)
 - (e) What was he told to "keep"? (1)

Memory Exercise

- Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 63 in the Shorter Catechism: What is the fifth Commandment? (3)

Junior Section (11 and 12 years old)

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

Please note the request in point 8 in the General Information section.

Old Testament

1. Read Daniel chapter 1.
 - (a) When Daniel and his friends were taken captive into Babylon, the prince of the eunuchs changed their names. What name did he give to Daniel? (1)
 - (b) Who had brought Daniel into tender love with this man? (1)
 - (c) What made the prince of the eunuchs afraid that he would "endanger his head to the king"? (2)
 - (d) For how long did Daniel ask to be allowed to have the food he chose? (1)
 - (e) What did he ask to be allowed to eat and drink? (2)
 - (f) What was the result at the end of the time when he ate this food? (1)
 - (g) When the king spoke with Daniel and his friends he found them ten times better than whom? (2)
2. Read Ezekiel chapter 9.
 - (a) What did the six men who came from the higher gate have in their hands? (1)
 - (b) One man among them was dressed differently. Say how he was dressed and what he had by his side. (2)
 - (c) What was this man asked to do when he went through Jerusalem? (2)
 - (d) When his companions followed, they were to kill some people but not everybody. How would they know which persons they were not to kill? (1)
 - (e) Was Ezekiel killed? Look at verse 8 and write down 3 words to prove your answer. (2)
 - (f) God was angry with the people of Jerusalem because of their sin. Look at chapter 8 verse 16 and mention one sin they were guilty of. (1)

New Testament

1. Read Philippians chapter 4.
 - (a) We are to be careful (full of care) for nothing. What should we do instead? (1)
 - (b) What passes all understanding? (1)
 - (c) Write down 4 things we should think about. (4)
 - (d) Paul says "I can do all things". How was this possible? (1)
2. Read Hebrews chapter 4.
 - (a) Why did the word preached not profit those that heard it? (1)

- (b) What is sharper than a two-edged sword? (1)
- (c) Write out the verse that tells us that God sees everything. (3)
- (d) Who is the "great high priest"? (1)
- (e) What 2 things are we encouraged to ask for at a throne of grace? (2)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 11 in the Shorter Catechism:
What are God's works of providence? (3)

Upper Primary Section (9 and 10 years old)

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

Please note the request in point 8 in the General Information section

Old Testament

1. Read Lamentations 3:22-27. Use these verses to match the words on the left with the correct words on the right.

- (a) The Lord's mercies are new every morning to the seeking soul.
- (b) The Lord is my portion great is Thy faithfulness.
- (c) The Lord is good wait for the salvation of the Lord.
- (d) It is good for a man I will hope in Him. (4)

2. Read Ezekiel 36:25-28, which tells us of God's precious promises to His people.

- (a) What will He sprinkle on them?
- (b) What will He cleanse them from?
- (c) What new thing will He give to them?
- (d) What will He take from them?
- (e) What will He put within them?
- (f) What does He promise to be to them? (6)

3. Read Daniel 3:26-30.

- (a) Who were in the burning fiery furnace? (1)
- (b) Write any two things which were so special about them when they were taken from the fire? (2)
- (c) Who said, "There is no other God that can deliver after this sort"? (1)

New Testament

Read Hebrews 11: 1-8

1. In verse 6 we read about faith. Fill in the missing words:

- (a) We must _____ that God actually is.
- (b) We must _____ to Him.
- (c) We believe that He rewards all who diligently _____ Him. (3)

2. Faith pleases God. In the table below, write either the name of the person who pleased God or the reason why he pleased Him, whichever is missing.

Name	Reason
Abel	
	He saved his household by building an ark
	He obeyed God by going somewhere he did not know

(3)

3. Now read about Moses in verses 23-27.

- (a) What did Moses "refuse"?
- (b) What did he choose?
- (c) What was better than the treasures in Egypt?

(d) What did he do “by faith”?

(4)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write down the answer to Question 86 in the Shorter Catechism:

What is faith in Jesus Christ?

(3)

Lower Primary Section (8 years old and under)

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

Please note the request in point 8 in the General Information section.

Old Testament

Ezekiel chapter 36 tells us about God’s mercy to His people.

1. Fill in the words: I will take you from among the h _____ and g _____ you out of all c _____, and will b _____ you into your own l _____.

Ezekiel 36:24

2. What would God sprinkle on the people to make them clean?

Ezekiel 36:25

3 Fill in the words: from all your filthiness, and from all your i _____, will I c _____ you.

Ezekiel 36:25

4 God promises two new things in verse 26. What are they?

Ezekiel 36:26

5 God promises more blessings: And ye shall d _____ in the l _____ that I gave to your f _____.

Ezekiel 36:28

6 Would they be His people?

Ezekiel 36:28

New Testament

In Philippians chapter 4, we see how the Lord can help us.

1. In verse 6 we are told to bring every single thing to God in prayer. Fill in the words: Be careful (anxious) for n _____; but in everything by p _____ and supplication with thanksgiving let your r _____ be made known unto G _____.

Philippians 4:6

2. The peace of God . . . shall keep your hearts and m _____ through C _____ J _____.

Philippians 4:7

3. Read the pleasant things in verse 8. “If there is any virtue and any praise.” What are we to do? See the end of the verse.

Philippians 4:8

4. Fill in the words: I have l _____ in whatsoever state I am therewith to be c _____.

Philippians 4:11

5. I can do all t _____ through C _____ which strengtheneth m _____.

Philippians 4:13

6. My God shall s _____ all your n _____ according to his r _____ in glory by Christ J _____.

Philippians 4:19

The 2019 Youth Conference in New Zealand will be held, God willing, on January 16-18, at the Hunua Falls Camp in the Auckland Region. Please e-mail Rev Jett Smith as soon as possible to tell him if you intend to attend (jett.daniel@gmail.com).

Price £1.00