

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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Number 5

Why Keep the Sabbath?

In Britain and many other nations, the Sabbath has become very similar to other days, and this is rather a contrast to how God's day was observed in some earlier generations. No doubt there are still differences: fewer people go out to work on Sabbaths as compared with Monday to Friday but, in most cases, this only gives them the opportunity to seek their pleasure away from God, paying no attention to the Fourth Commandment. They are following *their own ways* and seeking *their own pleasures* on God's holy day; they are not calling the Sabbath a delight (see Isaiah 58:13).

But why should the Sabbath be different from other days? The first answer is that God claims it for Himself. The Bible tells us that, "on the seventh day" of the creation week, "God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made" (Genesis 2:2). God rested from His work as an example for us. It was not that He was weary; this statement just means that He left off His work of creating; it was finished. But God's example teaches us that, on the Sabbath, we too should leave off, as far as possible, the ordinary activities of the other six days of the week.

The next verse in Genesis 2 states, "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made". But what is meant by God sanctifying the Sabbath? It means that He set it apart from the other days, for holy activities. When God sets the Sabbath apart from other days, He does so out of kindness to us, not so that we would be unhappy or bored. It is so that we would have the opportunity of getting spiritual good for our souls, in a way that is not possible on other days.

If you find the Sabbath dull and boring because you cannot do what you most want to do, it is because there is something wrong with you. It is because you do not have a taste for spiritual things, as you ought to have. And if you do not love a well-kept Sabbath – a Sabbath that is set apart for the worship of God and to get good for your soul – you should ask God to make you think differently. You should ask Him to change your heart so that

you would enjoy reading the Bible and other good books, praying to God, listening to sermons and learning more about the truths that God has revealed for the good of people's souls.

Yes, on Sabbaths we need food, for example, and some work is necessary in preparing it. But we should avoid doing what is not necessary in this and every other area of Sabbath life. Again some people have to go out to work on Sabbaths, because what they do is work of necessity and mercy – doctors and nurses, for instance. Yet such people should remember that although their main activity comes under the heading of necessity and mercy, yet not everything they may be asked to do is itself a work of necessity and mercy.

We should think of the Sabbath as an opportunity – not least an opportunity to prepare for eternity. Sooner or later, death will sweep us away from this world. Then, if we do not value the rest from the ordinary things of this life that the Sabbath provides, how will we enjoy the rest in heaven which makes it possible to focus entirely on spiritual things in the presence of God? It will be impossible. The Sabbath gives us a special opportunity to seek God's favour, to plead for the forgiveness of our sins and to learn about the way of salvation – salvation through Jesus Christ, the Saviour whom God has provided for guilty sinners like us.

God promises, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord" (Isaiah 58:13,14). For those who have a new heart, who have begun to follow Christ, the Sabbath *is* a delight. They have turned their foot from the Sabbath; they do not trample all over it; instead they respect it; they want to honour it as God's gift to them and they want to honour God as the One who gave it. On the Sabbath they do not want to find their pleasure in following out their own ideas and in speaking about worldly things; they want to obey God.

In 1841 a scientist called Andrew Sinclair was travelling in New Zealand. He was impressed by the change that the efforts of the missionaries had brought about in the lives of many Maoris, through telling them about the gospel. For instance, Sinclair saw everyone in a little village gather together in the open air to pray to God. He often saw a Christian Maori being asked to buy or sell on the Sabbath, or to break another of God's commandments, and they would give this answer, "No; me missionary". They would say this even when the temptation to sin was great and it would have been easy to keep everyone else from knowing anything about what they did. But these Maoris were not only followers of the missionaries; more importantly, they

were followers of Jesus Christ. So they had turned their foot from the Sabbath; they wanted to keep it holy; that was their delight.

How good it is to take the Sabbath seriously and to use it as much as possible for spiritual things! Even our bodies may benefit from a proper rest on the Sabbath— not a rest of idleness but a rest which focuses on the things of God.

May we be able to say, with sincere appreciation of the Sabbath, “This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24). And we should pray that the Lord would bring the people of this generation back to Sabbath-keeping, through the Holy Spirit applying the Word of God to their souls.

The Sons of God: Adoption in Romans 8

7. Assurance of Being the Sons of God

Rev David Campbell

This article contains the last mark of the sons of God drawn from Romans chapter 8. This concludes the second section of this Youth Conference paper. The first section looked at the making of the sons of God and the second section is considering the marks of the sons of God.

6. I want to look at the matter of assurance, as the last point under this section on the marks of the sons of God. It might be suggested that assurance is the theme of the whole chapter and what Paul is aiming at throughout. It is what men like Robert Bruce attained to and it is something true believers should strive for.

In verse 16 we read that “the Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God”. A full and fixed assurance of our interest in Christ is perhaps quite rare among the true people of God. Yet they may attain to it in this life and should seek it diligently through the Word and prayer and wait patiently for it as a mercy from the Lord. I think that most, if not all, true believers will meet with such discoveries of sin and failing in themselves and such opposition from the world and Satan that they will be cast down by doubts about themselves and their relation to the Saviour and to God as their Father. With many this is a common, usual and even familiar experience and one that remains with them for long periods. At such a time they may not know what to do or where to turn for help. When hard providences come on them at such times, they may be very ready to despair.

It may be difficult to express in words how the Spirit bears witness to such troubled believers. Perhaps we can begin with what it is *not*. It is not,

as one commentator puts it, “by visions and voices; not by heats and fancies; nor by direct inspiration, or new revelation of truth”. A mystical and emotional religion which has no firm basis in the truths of the Bible, and in the experience of grace which we are taught in the Bible, is not a reliable or safe religion.

One way in which the Spirit bears witness to the sonship of God's children is by cultivating the fruits of humility, repentance, spiritual hunger, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance in the soul. Then, if we recognise these fruits in ourselves, we are left to conclude that we have been adopted. It is not presumption for a child of God to seek prayerfully to find some of these effects, more or less, in his experience and to conclude humbly that he is a child of God indeed. The old preachers in Scotland used to refer to this as “finding our evidences” and would often include these marks in their application of God's Word in preaching, to encourage the Lord's doubting people.

Then the desires of the soul after God and after holiness is another way in which the Spirit gives testimony to their being God's children. These are the desires expressly identified as those belonging to “newborn babes” (1 Peter 2:2). The Spirit also sheds abroad the love of God in their hearts at times. He gives peace to their conscience by giving them renewed views of the atoning death of Christ. He makes Christ precious to them in His person, His offices, His works, His grace and His faithfulness. He increases faith so that they rest more simply on the finished work of Christ. He also stirs up a stronger love towards the members of God's family and a desire to have fellowship with them. By discovering even some small tokens and evidences of these things in our experience, we are entitled to draw the conclusion, humbly, that we are indeed the children of God.

That testimony, or witness, of the Spirit is always consistent with the Word of God and with the examples of spiritual experience it contains. We ought therefore to be careful to compare our experiences with the Word of God and seek to be honest in doing so. The Spirit uses the Word in the witness He bears to our being the children of God; so this is always a most fruitful and necessary means of obtaining the assurance we are looking for, even if in making the search we meet with many verses that might also alarm us. We are to tremble at God's Word as well as rejoice when it comforts us.

The promises of the Bible may be so strongly impressed on your soul and the examination of your own experience may correspond so plainly with these promises that you come to this straightforward conclusion: that you do indeed have what belongs to the children of God. To quote a commentator:

“By a single [act] of conscience, I may know that I do indeed hunger and

thirst after righteousness; and by a single glance of the eye of my understanding, I may recognise a Saviour's truth and a Saviour's tenderness in the promise that all who [hunger and thirst after righteousness] shall be filled; and without the intervention of any lengthened reasoning, I may confidently give to the general announcement of the gospel such a specific application to myself, as to convey my own distinct and assured hope of a particular interest therein". He then goes on with a note of caution: "Thus there is no whisper of the Spirit distinct from the testimony of the Word".

It is important to take great care in the choice of books we read on the subject of assurance, as on every other subject relating to the marks of the sons of God. Many people today boast of a full assurance which, sadly, is little more than a presumption that has no foundation. Many who claim assurance base it on the error that God loves all people equally, or that Christ died for everyone. This is a false ground for an assurance of our interest in Christ and of our acceptance before God as His sons and daughters. As in most subjects, you should read books that are recommended by godly Christians; you should carefully consider the character of the author and avoid unknown authors and books, or those rejected by godly Christians.

The Old Ploughman

3. Learning About Sin and Salvation

George Medway was a former ploughman from Shropshire. John Dean invited him into his cottage one day and then brought him to church the next Sabbath morning. Under the first sermon he heard from the minister there, he was converted. "I'm in a new world", he announced again and again afterwards. And when they talked together later, the minister was very pleased with the old man's sincere simplicity.

George became a close friend of several people in the congregation, and they showed him great kindness. He was so attached to public worship that he would not allow any kind of weather to keep him away, whether great heat in summer or frost and snow in winter. But it was when singing the praise of the Lord that he was most powerfully moved. He had a passion for music and a strong melodious voice.

Many months passed before the minister was able to spend time with George again. He was anxious to find out what progress George had made, in knowledge and in grace, and they met at John's cottage. "He was still the same man as when I first saw him," the minister recalled, "but he looked at least ten years younger. His voice was firmer, his eyes brighter." He was now able to keep up a long conversation and express himself easily, so that the minister was astonished.

"I suppose you would not like to go back to your native village and live as you used to do?" asked the minister.

"Why, methinks no happy spirit would like to come out of heaven to live on earth again."

"You often think of how you used to live."

"I think of it with sadness and horror. But I knew no better then. What a mercy that I was not taken for death when my poor wife died!"

"What thoughts had you of God?"

"I didn't think about Him much; but when I did, I thought He was a great mighty Being, who never cared nothing at all about what we said or did."

The minister then asked if he used to have any idea of a soul, or that his soul would never die.

"Why, I was always puzzled about it. Sometimes I thought that very wicked people went to hell when they died, especially the rich."

"Had you never any fears about going to hell?"

"No, never. My common thoughts were that, when I died, there would be an end of me – just the same as with the sheep or the horse."

"You believe there is a change in you now, and one for the better?"

"O yes, the Lord be praised! I knew there was a change in me when I was in your vestry the night after I heard that blessed sermon, but I know it better now. I now find it lasts with me, but then I feared it wouldn't. If I had known 50 years ago what I know now, it would have been a good thing for me. I should have been all that long time a power happier in my soul. I wish my poor wife had lived to see this day."

Who brought about the great change that has been produced in you? was the next question.

"Yes, it is a great change, like changing a flint stone into bread, or a bog into a garden. The Bible calls it being called out of darkness into marvellous light. This is a faithful account of it. Darkness, I take it, means ignorance, and light, I take it, means knowledge. I have come from one state to another, and nobody can make me think otherwise. Why, if a blind man sees the sun, he must know that his eyes be opened."

"Very true, but who produced the change which you say you have felt?"

"At first I thought it was you, because I felt it when you were preaching that blessed sermon. But now I know better. Now I know that it is the Lord that gives light to the understanding and grace to the heart. And, praised be His name, I can now say, what Paul said, 'By the grace of God I am what I am'."

"You have felt a great change, but do you feel perfect; or do you feel that your heart is still wicked?"

“O there is a power of sin in my heart. The fallow is ploughed up, but it is not cleared yet. And this puzzles me. I pray the Lord to make me holy, but He hasn’t done it yet. But I had great comfort when Mr Dean read to me the seventh chapter of the Romans. I thought, when he was reading, that the writer of that chapter felt that he had a wicked heart, as I often feel that I have one.”

“I suppose you believe that He who has begun the good work in you will carry it on, and bring it to perfection?”

“Yes, if you remember, you proved that when you preached a sermon the other Sabbath from the gladsome words of Paul. I got them on my heart the next day: ‘Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ’” (Phil 1:6). George meant that he had memorised them.

“Do you remember any illustrations which I brought forward to show the reasonableness of our expecting that the Author of the good work of grace will complete it?”

“Yes, you said that a wise builder, when he has put in the foundation and carried up the house a storey or two, will not leave off and let it tumble to ruins, when he wants to use it. No, he’ll go on till he has finished it. And so I hope the Lord will finish the good work He has begun in my soul. It is wonderful. I sometimes think about it till I get so puzzled that I have to go a walk to get my thoughts back; and then my heart gets warm with gratitude to Him for His great kindness.”

“I suppose you sometimes long to have the good work brought to perfection?”

“Now, on this point I’m a bit disappointed. I thought at first, when I felt the change, that I should soon get free from sin. But now I find, from reading the Bible and from Mr Dean’s talking to me, that I shan’t get free from sin till I get to heaven. The sermon you preached last Sabbath morning brought a power of comfort to my soul; I got the text on my heart and don’t think it will ever get off: ‘We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is’. How wonderful! To see Jesus Christ in His glory so soon as we be dead, and to be like Him! I should like that hour to come.”

The minister was very pleased with what George had to say and was “somewhat surprised to find the rapid progress he had made in learning to read. At the age of 72 he could not tell a letter, but now he could make out, with a little help, several chapters in John’s Gospel, and some other parts of the Bible.” George specially enjoyed Psalms 23 and 103. Every Monday morning he went to John Dean’s cottage and got him to help him to read the previous Sabbath’s texts, and he learned many of them by heart. He could repeat many verses, and recall many of the main points in some of the Bible stories.

Two Sisters

2. Life and Death

Rev K M Watkins

Last month we looked at two sisters who came from the same, disadvantaged background. Spiritually, they were both sinners by nature and practice. But then came a parting of the ways. One sister, the one that was simple-minded, was converted by the Lord's grace. From then on, her desires were for the Lord's house, the Lord's people and the Lord's Christ. The other sister continued as before, dead in trespasses and sins, with no desire for the things of the Lord.

The converted sister's grace could not be hidden. It would be seen, for example, in her sense of personal unworthiness and sinfulness. If conversation turned to criticising people who were not in the company, she would say, "It is worse with myself". What a mark of grace! The true children of God are given such views into their own deceitful and wicked hearts, that they find it hard to believe that others could be as bad as themselves. Indeed, sometimes they fear that no believer in Christ could have struggles with sin like they have. To remember this will curb their criticism of others. When they are feeling that their own sins are worse, how can they be harsh toward others?

Grace was seen especially in the converted sister's attitude to the Bible. She loved the Word of God and could say with the psalmist: "O how love I Thy law! It is my study all the day" (Psalm 119:97, metrical version). Feeding her soul on Scripture was more important than eating her daily meals. Like Job, she could say: "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). She had very few possessions in this world, but that did not matter to her, for she had learned this: "The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver" (Psalm 119:72).

She was not able to read for herself. But that was not going to stop her from hearing the Word of God. As they say, "Where there's a will, there's a way"! This was the way she found: she would always be asking people to read the Bible to her. Visiting her always involved reading the Word of God. When she was a patient in Raigmore Hospital in Inverness, she would beg anyone – nurses, cleaners, her own visitors, even other people's visitors – to read the Scriptures to her.

Two ladies from her congregation went to see her at home one day. They had a beautiful portion from Samuel Rutherford's *Letters* to read to her, which they did. She listened patiently, but as soon as they had finished, she thanked them and said, "Well, that's very nice, but now will you read me *His* Word?" That might be a rebuke to many of us, who know how

interesting other books can seem to be, and how reluctant we can be to turn to the Bible itself.

When worship was taken at her care home, she never missed joining the other residents in the lounge for the joint worship, for as long as she was able. Some residents were confined to their rooms, who could not get to the lounge. Worship would be held with these people, one by one, reading the Bible and praying with each one in their rooms. Soon after entering a resident's room, the door would open and this sister would come in, saying quietly, "The Lord may bless it to my soul". And so she would stay throughout the worship with that resident. The same thing would happen in the next resident's room; she would appear again, saying, "He may bless His Word to me".

What a thirst she had for the Word of God! Wherever the Word was to be read, there she would be, if she could. We are sure this was because the Lord was speaking to her heart through the Bible. The entrance of His Word was giving her light. It was telling her about Christ Himself, whom she loved. She was experiencing from Christ what Ruth did when Boaz spoke so kindly to her, and she responded: "Let me find favour in Thy sight, my Lord; for that Thou hast comforted me, and for that Thou hast spoken friendly unto Thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of Thine handmaidens" (Ruth 2:13). That is what we should be seeking when we read the Word or hear the Word read.

We have not forgotten the other sister, the unconverted one. At the end of their lives, that other sister came to live in the same care home and the two of them shared a room. Both became confined to bed. Never did we see the contrast between the godly and the ungodly as sharply as we did in that room. It was the difference between life and death.

The two different ends of the room were like those two mountains, Gerizim and Ebal, spoken of in Deuteronomy 11:29, when Israel was told, "Thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal". Where our friend was, it was all blessing, with grace expressing itself in desires for Christ and His Word. At the other end, it was all cursing, with sin expressing itself in unbelief. At one end, we heard, "O to be of them!" At the other, even as we were reading the Scripture, we were hearing, "I don't believe a word of it!"

It was as if we were seeing into both heaven and hell. With the one sister were the Lord's praises and the contentment that godliness brings. With the other sister it was the worm of a guilty conscience that never dies. A more bitter, discontented and unhappy soul, we have rarely met.

What will become of *us*? It was God's grace, and God's grace alone, that

made the difference between the two sisters. We need that same saving grace. We must be born again, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Our sinful, unbelieving, Christ-rejecting heart must be taken away and replaced by a believing, Christ-receiving heart. Nothing is more important than this! If we neglect and ignore these things, we will end in a lost eternity. But if we seek and find the grace that is in Christ, who died for His people's sins, we shall be with Him and the believing sister in heaven for ever. Through these two sisters, the Lord says to us all, "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life" (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Do not think that because other people in your family have grace that it will be well with you. The two sisters show that salvation does not come automatically to everyone in a family. It was so with Isaac's family too, for of the two brothers, Jacob was saved and Esau was not. The same can happen in many families: one may be saved and another may not be. God is sovereign in giving grace, for He has said, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Romans 9:15). None of us deserve His mercy. We all deserve His wrath. O then, cry out to Him for mercy while you still may. "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near" (Isaiah 55:6).

A Mother's Care for Her Children

This letter was written by a mother so that her (grown-up) children would read it after her death.

To my darling children: to each one of you as if mentioned by name. I would like to commend you to God's keeping.

I especially beg of you to seek the Lord with all your heart and not put it off another moment. Time is very precious; each day brings us closer to a *never-ending, never-ending* eternity. Please, please don't be distracted by cares at work, disappointment in professing Christians and looking forward to pleasures and excitement in this world.

You will find all that the soul needs in the blessed Saviour – grace to help in every time of need. Use that precious message from heaven as your closest companion: the Scriptures. You will find their words suitable for every possible occasion or condition. Cling to the precious Bible as your best treasure. When all human help and advice fails, the Scriptures will have something to meet your need.

Ask in prayer, for the Saviour's sake, that His precious Word will be blessed to you; that your understanding will be enlightened to understand the

Scriptures in a saving way, not just intellectually; that His Word may come with power to your hearts, enabling you to obey His Word from a true trust in Himself, by the power and blessing of His Holy Spirit. Plead the promises in your petitions to Himself: “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

“Be kindly affectioned one to another” and to your dear father. And may the Lord comfort your hearts in His mercy! “But my God shall supply all your need.”

All my love,
Mum.

For Junior Readers

Whose Wages?

Do you know where Cornwall is? It is the farthest south-west corner of England, where Land’s End is. In the 1700s and 1800s there were a lot of tin and copper mines in that area, and a lot of the men were miners. The mines were not all regulated in the same way, some had better conditions than others, but all miners had to work very hard.

Many of them were rough men, swearers and drunkards. Billy Bray had been one of these men, but the Holy Spirit began to convince him of his sinfulness. Then he began to pray and to seek the Lord. He knew that he had been such a great sinner; so he was afraid that he would not find mercy. But he was encouraged by the promise, “Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you”.

After his conversion, the Lord blessed him with a sense of joy and happiness, and he praised God with his whole heart for what He had done for him. He could not stop telling people about Christ and the way of salvation and God used him to bring other sinners to know the Lord too.

One time he was speaking to a very large group of people, most of whom were miners. He used a very striking illustration which they could all understand. In that area there were two mines: one was very successful and the miners could earn good wages, but at the other the work was harder and the wages were low.

He told them of a man who worked at the poor mine but, when pay day came, he went to the successful mine for his wages. The manager looked at him and asked, “Were you not working at the other mine?”

"O yes," he said, "but I like the wages at your mine better!" Although he pleaded very earnestly, the manager sent him away, telling him that he must come there to work if he wanted to receive his wages.

Then Billy Bray turned to the people and stressed to them that they must serve Christ here, in this world, if they wanted to share His glory afterwards. But if they served the devil here, then they would have to accept his wages, and the Bible tells us that "the wages of sin is death".

What about you? Which master do you serve, Christ or the devil? Should you not seek to make the same choice as the Psalmist who said, "Thou my sure portion art alone / which I did choose, O Lord"? If you serve the Lord in this world you will never regret it to all eternity. *J van Kralingen*

For Younger Readers

The Lame Man's New Testament

A man in New Zealand was visiting sick people. He was a missionary, who went about speaking to people who did not believe the Bible. He wanted to teach them from the Bible and hoped that they would believe in God.

He went to a hut where a man lived who was very lame. He noticed that a New Testament lay beside the lame man. The missionary asked, "Can you read?"

The lame man said, "Yes".

Then the missionary asked, "How did you learn to read?" He knew that the lame man had never gone to school.

The lame man explained that he would creep around and search through the rubbish the people in the other houses threw out. Sometimes he would find half a page from a New Testament. Then he would go home and sew the pieces of paper together. To learn a new word, he would point to it and ask his brother to tell him what it meant.

He went on doing this until, at last, he could read a whole verse from the New Testament. Later he was able to read a whole chapter.

The missionary asked him if he thought that what God said (in the New Testament) was important to him. The lame man's answer was, "It is my pillow". He meant that he was leaning on it; it was

supporting him. It was showing him how he could be saved from his sins, through Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners like us.

I hope that you will learn to feel how important the Bible is. In it God is speaking. As you read it, or listen to somebody reading it to you, you should say to yourself: God is speaking to me; I must listen seriously to this.

And ask God to bless it to you, so that it would be your pillow, what you would lean on. Ask God to show you that you need to be saved from your sins, and to show you Jesus Christ as the Saviour for people like you.

Looking Around Us

Who Is in Control?

The two oldest men Britain were born on the same day in 1908; they both turned 111 on March 29 this year. One of them grew up in Hull and lives in Hampshire; the other was born in Perthshire and went on to work there, in farming, for much of his life. In an interview he was asked for the secret of a long and happy life; he said: “Porridge is helpful and having a job you enjoy”. No doubt porridge is good food, and a job you enjoy will be less stressful than one in which you worry a lot of the time. And we should avoid everything that might shorten our lives. But there is another very important question, How can we escape from eternal death, which is the wages of sin?

The answer is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and to lead our lives in real dependence on Him. Then, whether our lives go on for a long time or not, all will be well, for we will reach the blessedness of heaven when we die. This life is important but it is not everything. We must seek the Lord while He may be found. Tomorrow may be too late.

Who Is in Control?

A lady called Wendy developed dementia early, in her late 50s – she had serious memory problems. Amazingly she later wrote a book about her experiences. In it she made what has been described as “a gentle case for legalised euthanasia”; in other words, she wants people to have the right under the law to be put to death if their suffering increases badly or if their dementia becomes severely worse. She seems to be particularly concerned about a lack of control over herself.

Now no one has a right to take away their own life or let anyone else do

it for them, however difficult their circumstances. Even if we are losing control over ourselves and our circumstances, it should be a great comfort to know that God is in control over everything.

Those who believe in God may have concerns about the future. They may realise that their health is poor and is likely to get worse. They may notice their memory failing and be afraid that it will become much poorer and they will not be able to look after their own affairs. They may reach a stage when they cannot control their own bodies.

All this may seem a great reason for worry. The disciples in the boat with Jesus in the storm were worried about what would happen. They were afraid that the boat would be swamped by the waves and they would be drowned. But, although Jesus was asleep, everything was under control and they should have trusted in Him.

So, because God is in control of everything, we should trust in Him whatever will happen. But the most important thing is to trust our souls to Him; then we can be sure that everything will work together for our good.

Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2018-19

Exercise 3

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 June. These exercises are based on Genesis 24 to Exodus 34 and Matthew 12 to Mark 16.

Senior Section (15 years old and over)

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

Old Testament

The questions are based on Genesis 37, 39 and 50.

1. (a) What reason is given in chapter 37 for Jacob's greater love for Joseph? (1)
- (b) How did he show that he loved Joseph best? (1)
- (c) Give two reasons why his brothers hated him. (2)
- (d) What other sins did their envy and hatred lead them to? (3)
- (e) Find and write out a verse near the end of James 3 that describes the brothers' conduct very well. (2)
- (f) How did they deceive Jacob? (2)
- (g) What reason is given in chapter 39 that Joseph was a prosperous man? (1)
- (h) Find and write out a verse that shows the complete confidence Potiphar had in Joseph. (2)
- (i) What reasons did Joseph give to Potiphar's wife for not consenting to her temptation? (3)
- (j) What showed that God's presence was with Joseph even when he was put in prison? (2)
2. Read Genesis 50:15-21.
 - (a) What were Joseph's brothers concerned about after their father died? (2)
 - (b) How did they show their repentance for how they had wronged Joseph? (2)
 - (c) What assurance did they receive from Joseph? (1)
 - (d) Write out a verse that shows Joseph's belief that God was ordering even their sinful actions for the best? (2)

New Testament

1. Read Matthew chapter 18.
 - (a) Write briefly about Jesus teaching His disciples humility (verses 1-4). (2)
 - (b) Write out a verse that shows the joy Christ experiences in saving a lost sinner (2)
 - (c) Quote a verse which is an encouragement to God's people when His cause is low. (2)
 - (d) What did Peter ask Jesus about a forgiving spirit, and explain what Jesus told him? (3)
 - (e) Explain briefly how the parable of the unjust steward teaches us to be willing to forgive. (3)
2. Read Matthew 19:16-24.
 - (a) Write out three things about the rich young ruler that were commendable (3)
 - (b) What did he say that showed he did not really understand the sin in his own heart? (2)
 - (c) How did Jesus expose his heart sin to him? (2)
 - (d) Write out a verse that shows how great a hindrance riches can be to entering into God's kingdom. (2)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 105 in the Shorter Catechism:
What do we pray for in the fifth petition? (3)

Intermediate Section (13 and 14 years old)

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

Old Testament

1. Read Genesis 27:30-46.
 - (a) Give two reasons for Esau being upset. (2)
 - (b) Which of the Ten Commandments did he plan to break? (2)
 - (c) Give two reasons for Rebekah and Isaac wanting Jacob to leave home. (2)
2. Read Genesis 28:1-9.
 - (a) Where did Jacob go? (1)
 - (b) Give the names of his grandfather and uncle. (2)
3. Read Genesis 32:24-32.
 - (a) What was Jacob's name changed to? (1)
 - (b) Why was he given a new name? (2)
 - (c) Why did he call the place Peniel? (2)
4. Read Genesis 33:1-10. Which verse tells us of the re-union of Esau and Jacob? (2)

New Testament

1. The following quotations are from Matthew 14:22-36:
 - (a) "Be of good cheer . . ." (b) "O thou of little faith . . ." (c) "Of a truth . . .".
 For each of these three quotations:
 - (1) Complete the quotation.
 - (2) Who spoke these words?
 - (3) To whom were they spoken?
 - (4) Why were they spoken? (12)
2. Read Mark 1:34-45.
 - (a) What did the leper say to Jesus? (2)
 - (b) What did Jesus do and say to the leper? (3)
 - (c) What was the amazing result? (2)
3. Read Mark 2:24-28 and Mark 3:1-6.
 - (a) On which day did Jesus heal the man with the withered hand? (1)
 - (b) Which group of people were ready to find fault with Jesus? (1)
 - (c) Give a reason why what Jesus did was lawful. (2)
4. Read Mark 8:1-9.
 - (a) In what way did Jesus show concern for the multitude? (2)
 - (b) Why did he not want them to go away hungry? (2)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 42 in the Shorter Catechism:
What is the sum of the Ten Commandments? (3)

Junior Section (11 and 12 years old)

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

Old Testament

1. The following statements are true of either Jacob or Esau and you will find the answers in Genesis chapters 25 and 27. For each statement, say whether it refers to Jacob or Esau, and write down the chapter and verse numbers which prove your answer.

- (a) He was Rebekah's favourite,
 - (b) He was a cunning hunter,
 - (c) He sold his birthright,
 - (d) He was the elder twin,
 - (e) He deceived his father,
 - (f) His father Isaac asked him for venison,
 - (g) He hated his brother,
 - (h) His father blessed him and said, "Let people serve thee and nations bow down to thee". (16)
2. Jacob left home because he was afraid of his brother Esau. Read Genesis chapter 28.
- (a) What did he use for pillows that night? (1)
 - (b) Describe what he saw in his dream (2)
 - (c) What did he say when he awakened? (2)
 - (d) How did he feel after his dream? (1)
 - (e) What did he do with his pillows? (1)
 - (f) What new name did he give to the place? (If you have a Bible with a margin you will see what the name means.) (1)

New Testament

1. Read the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25: 1-13. How many virgins:
- (a) had lamps,
 - (b) had vessels of oil,
 - (c) went to meet the bridegroom,
 - (d) fell asleep as they waited for the bridegroom,
 - (e) arose and trimmed their lamps at midnight,
 - (f) went in to the marriage with the bridegroom? (6)
2. Say briefly what the teaching of the parable is. (3)
3. Read Matthew 25:31-46.
- (a) What future event do these verses refer to? (1)
 - (b) Who will accompany the Son of Man when He comes in His glory? (1)
 - (c) Who will be gathered before the Son of Man? (1)
 - (d) Who are referred to as "sheep" and who as "goats"? (2)
 - (e) To which of these (sheep or goats) will He say, "Come", and to which will He say, "Depart"? (2)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 38 in the Shorter Catechism:
What benefit do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection? (3)

Upper Primary Section (9 and 10 years old)

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

Old Testament

Read Exodus 20:1-21.

1. Why should we keep the Ten Commandments? (1)

2. Fill in the table below. The First Commandment starts at verse 3.

Which Commandment . . .	Number of Commandment
forbids killing?	
promises long life to those who honour their parents?	
forbids stealing?	
speaks of how we ought to treat God's name?	
forbids adultery?	
commands us to keep the Sabbath day holy?	
forbids us to have any other God?	
forbids lying?	
forbids covetousness?	
forbids making and worshipping idols?	

(10)

3. What must you keep "before your faces" to help you obey His commandments? (1)

New Testament

1. Read Matthew 13:53-58.

Which sin is particularly mentioned here, causing Christ to do "not many mighty works" (1)

2. Read Matthew 14:6-12.

Which of the Ten Commandments did Herod break when he commanded John to be killed? (1)

3. Read Matthew 15:15-20.

Where does all sin begin? (1)

4. Read Matthew 19:16-22.

Which commandment was the young man breaking when he put his love for his "great possessions" before coming to Christ and following Him? (1)

5. Read Matthew 22:36-40.

Write out the two commandments on which Christ said "hang all the law and the prophets." (2)

6. Read Matthew 27:3-5.

Which commandment did Judas break when he went and "hanged himself". (1)

7. Read Matthew 28:19,20 and fill in the missing words.

We are to obey _____ things which Christ has _____ us. (1)

8. Read Mark 2:5-12.

Who only has the power to forgive us our sins? (1)

9. Read Mark 9:43-48.

(a) What is the name of the place where we read there is everlasting fire? (1)

(b) Complete this: It is better to enter into heaven, called here the _____. (1)

10. Read Mark 11:25,26

What should we do to other people that have done us wrong? (1)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write down the answer to Question 42 in the Shorter Catechism:

What is the sum of the Ten Commandments? (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

Jacob was going back home. He was afraid of meeting his angry brother Esau on the way. He prayed and God helped him.

1. Did Jacob feel worthy of the least (the smallest part) of God's mercies?
Genesis 32:10

2. He asked God to keep him safe from Esau: for I f____ him lest he will
____ and smite (hurt) me and the m____ with the c____. (Fill in the
missing words.) Genesis 32:11

3. He reminded God of what God had said to him before: And thou saidst,
I will s____ do thee g____. (Fill in the words.) Genesis 32:12

4. Jacob sent a present to Esau and sent his family over the brook. What
happened when Jacob was left alone? (Fill in the words.) There wrestled a
m____ with him until the b____ of the d____ (early morning).
Genesis 32:24

5. It was an Angel who wrestled with Jacob. He said Jacob was like a prince.
What name was he given instead of Jacob? Genesis 32:28

6. What name did Jacob give to the place where they wrestled?
Genesis 32:30

New Testament

1. Where did Jesus lodge (stay) when he went out of the city?
Matthew 21:17

2. Jesus felt hungry. Could he find anything to eat on the fig tree?
Matthew 21:19

3. The fig tree withered away because Jesus said: Let no f____ g____ on thee
henceforward for e____. (Fill in the words.) Matthew 21:19

4. Were the disciples surprised to see it had withered? Matthew 21:20

5. Jesus teaches us that, with faith, even a mountain of difficulty can be put
away. He said, it s____ be d____. Fill in the words. Matthew 21:21

6. Fill in the words: And all things, whatsoever ye shall a____ in prayer,
b____, ye shall r____. Matthew 21:22

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