

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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Cover Picture: St Peter’s Church, in Geneva, where Calvin preached.
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Number 10

Seeds and Ideas

The seeds were being blown through the air by the wind as I looked outside; they were the seeds of thistles. They would fall somewhere and some of them would grow – many where they were not wanted.

The growth of thistles is part of the curse that God placed on the ground because of human sin. When we see a crop growing in a field – of wheat or barley perhaps, or turnips or cabbages – and then notice thistles and other weeds growing there too, we should think of sin and the difficulties that we meet because of sin. And not only because of other people's sins, not only because of Adam and Eve's sin, but our own sin also. We should remember how much we need to have our sin forgiven and how much we need to be made pure and holy – to have the power of sin taken away.

As I watched the seeds passing through the air, I thought about the harm caused by wrong ideas being passed on from person to person. Your friends at school, at university or at work may talk enthusiastically about the ungodly activity they took part in the previous evening. They may have been watching some film that showed the actors doing what was obviously sinful. And the way it was all described made you feel how enjoyable it would have been for you to have been with them.

But think of your friends' ideas as thistle seeds being blown through the air and landing in your heart, where they may grow. At best, the thistles that grow on good ground are a waste of space. So, when desires to take part in sinful activities take root in your heart and you become involved in these activities, you are wasting time that could be put to much better use, time that could be used to seek good for your soul. More than that, these sinful ideas may encourage you to go on in the way of sin, and rush faster down that broad road that leads to everlasting destruction in hell.

As you receive more and more ungodly ideas from your friends and find these ideas attractive, you become less and less likely to seek salvation and to do what is glorifying to God. Consider the words of God: "He that followeth vain persons is void of understanding" (Proverbs 12:11). God is here warning us that anyone who follows the ideas spread by people whose

minds are empty – not influenced by His teaching in the Bible – lack real understanding; they are foolish. They will suffer the consequences of their folly in a lost eternity if they do not repent. We ought to take our ideas in religion and morals from the Bible, not from those who rebel against God.

Remember this particularly if you follow social media: Facebook, for instance. Do not accept without question what anyone says; test everything against the Bible. Do what you can, in dependence on God, to prevent the seeds of sinful ideas taking root in your mind.

Other sources of sinful ideas are the more traditional media: newspapers, radio and television – and also internet sites. Most people will go to them for national and international news and other information, and they can supply us with much that is helpful. But often what we find is opinions, not facts. And these opinions are mostly godless; they ignore the values we should learn from the teaching of the Bible; they ignore the perfect revelation that God has given to direct us on our way through life – the teaching that shows the right direction to go in so that we may at last reach the blessedness of heaven. Let us always remember that what God says is perfectly reliable, for He knows everything; He understands it perfectly.

Godless ideas go out through the media and spread in every direction; they take root in the minds of large numbers of people. The media mostly assume that there is no God and that many of the Ten Commandments are completely irrelevant. So, they claim, there is no basis for morals – and everyone can live just as they please. Yet the fact is that God *does* exist; all His commandments are still perfectly relevant, and always will be.

The last source of wrong ideas we will look at is education. One of these dangerous ideas is the theory of evolution, which is taught almost everywhere. This is the thought that everything has come into existence through a long series of little changes over a vast period of time. So most people who believe in evolution draw the conclusion that there is no need for a creator and assume that there is no God.

In an education system like this, there is pressure to accept other godless ideas, such as: two men may marry each other, although God says that marriage must be between *one* man and *one* woman (see Genesis 2:24, for instance); and that boys may choose to become girls, or that girls may choose to become boys. Yet the Bible tells us that, when God made human beings, “male and female created He them” (Genesis 1:27). You should ask God to protect you from the godless ideas that are liable to stick in your mind and grow up to influence your way of thinking.

Let us remember that God is all-knowing and all-wise, One who will judge everyone at the last day, and that will include *us* as individuals. Yet this all-

knowing, all-wise God shows mercy to sinners who have gone on rejecting Him and His commandments. He has given His Son to suffer the punishment that sinners deserve. So we are to seek Him and His mercy; to plead with Him to save us, for the sake of His Son, who died for sinners.

The hearts of those who are saved are not like waste ground where the seeds of wrong ideas fall, take root and grow up – preventing the good seed of the gospel taking root in their hearts and growing up to bear fruit to the glory of God. Yet even then such people need to fill their minds with the ideas of Scripture, so that, by God’s grace, they will be protected from the evil ideas that are being blown around us from so many directions.

“I Have Never Thought of Loving God”

This story of an English ploughboy is taken, with some editing, from an article in *The Young People’s Magazine* for August 1936, an article which itself was abridged from a longer account.

Basil was a young lad who was full of life; he was as happy and cheerful as the day was long. This made him a great favourite with everyone. His parents were poor; so he had to start earning his living when he was very young. He went to work for a farmer whose farm was near his home.

At the age of 17 he was in charge of a pair of horses and was doing a ploughman’s work. One day, after unyoking them, he was on his way home for dinner when one of the horses turned round unexpectedly, knocked him down and trampled on his thigh. Basil was badly bruised and was carried on a stretcher to the little hospital in the district.

That hospital was to be his home for 18 months until he was taken to heaven. The first night he was in the hospital he had a high fever and talked of his mother and the things he planned to do for her. He dearly loved his mother and she deeply loved him. Before his accident he used to build many castles in the air of all the things he expected to do for her.

The matron in charge of the hospital used to speak to him about spiritual things. One such conversation made him think for the first time that he was a sinner. This was clear from his question, “Am I a sinner?”

“Yes”, she replied.

“I did not know I had done anything wrong”, was his honest answer.

Then she explained, “But God says, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength’. Have you done this, Basil?”

“No”, he replied. His eyes then filled with tears and he went on: “I am a

sinner, a great sinner, for I have never thought of loving God though I have tried to do what is right and said my prayers regularly". When saying good-night after this conversation he asked, "Read to me and talk to me about Jesus, for I would like to love Him".

During a week of intense agony in his body, the sins of his soul also troubled him. On a Sabbath afternoon he asked the matron to stay with him and then told her he hoped that Jesus was now his Saviour. During the 18 months that followed, Basil gave evidence that there was a real change from death to life. The matron bought him a small Bible and, from that day, it was his counsellor and friend. It was always in his hand or under his pillow until he handed it over, near the end of his life, to the matron, asking her to give it to his brother Edmund.

It was no idle testimony when he said, "God says, 'Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee'; and so He will". He was unhappy when anyone spoke lightly of God's name or His Word. As the months passed by, his sufferings increased in intensity but he bore up wonderfully and lost no opportunity of setting forth the loving kindness of Christ.

A young man was brought into the hospital whose illness was the result of his sins. He detested hearing anything about spiritual things, often putting his fingers in his ears so that he would not hear; at other times he laughed loudly to drown out the words. When he grew worse, he was taken into the room where Basil was. Though he had done everything to steel himself against anything that would touch his conscience, he one day asked Basil: "Can I be saved?"

Basil answered, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

The young man acknowledged that it was Basil's way of life that made him think of his sins. Many a powerful sermon has been preached by that kind of life, and many a good sermon has been spoilt by an inconsistent life.

Basil had been making plans that, when he would get out of hospital, he would tell the young lads of the village what a wonderful Saviour Christ was. But it was not to be; he was never to leave the hospital. On the last day his agony was very severe, but between his groans he was heard praying, as he felt himself sinking in the deep waters, "Precious Jesus, hold me fast".

He asked someone to read from Lamentations 3, and verses 22-37 were read: "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul: therefore will I hope in Him. . . ." He then asked for John 11 to be read to him but he eagerly took the Bible in his trembling hands and read slowly Jesus' words: "I am the resurrection, and

the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

"Yes, Lord, I do believe it," he answered. He then reverently closed the book, kissed its well-worn covers and handed it to the matron, saying, "Give it to my brother Edmund, with my dearest love. A precious friend it has been to me, may it be so to him!"

As he drew near the end, the matron asked him: "Do you find Jesus near you now?"

He opened his eyes as the weakness of death was fast sweeping over him. With a smile he spoke his last words on earth: "Nearer and dearer than ever".

The ploughboy will have no regrets today of the furnace of suffering through which he passed, nor will he have any quarrel with his Lord that saw fit to bring him by this way to the happy place where the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.

John Calvin – His Life and Work

4. Strasbourg

Mr F R Daubney

Last month's section of this Youth Conference paper saw Calvin become one of the ministers in Geneva, where he was a colleague of William Farel. But there was opposition to their scriptural stance, especially as to who should come to the Lord's Supper, and they were sent away from the city.

The friends of Farel and Calvin in Berne and Zurich appealed to the authorities in Geneva, but to no effect. Those in Geneva who raised their voices in support of the Reformers were threatened with death; Geneva now seemed lost to the Reformation. Farel returned to Neuchatel to become pastor to his old congregation there. Calvin was invited to Lausanne and to Basel, but he was eventually persuaded to go to Strasbourg on the French/German border. This city was easily accessible from France, Germany and Switzerland and became a home for refugees from various lands.

There can be no doubt that Calvin's hope was to find in this city a quiet refuge where he might carry on what he believed was his calling: to be a scholar and theologian. But he was persuaded by Bucer, a minister in Strasbourg, to become the pastor of the French congregation of St Nicholas. Here, free from the party differences that had hampered him in Geneva, he established a congregation with a regular Presbyterian order and discipline. In addition, he was appointed a lecturer at the Academy, and men came from far and wide to hear him.

It is evident that Calvin, and many others, cherished the hope that the downfall of the Roman system might be near, and that scriptural truth and simplicity might be near to triumphing. It was a period of conferences and other meetings and Calvin, as a representative of Strasbourg, attended conferences in many cities. He became known among Protestants as "the theologian". He formed a friendship with the Lutheran theologian Melancthon and sought to reconcile the German and Swiss churches, who were divided chiefly by their views on the Lord's Supper. To this end he used his influence with Bucer and with Bullinger, Zwingli's successor in Zurich, but without much success. The big issue was the question of how Christ was present in the Supper, and Calvin thought that there was too much literalism in the Lutheran theology.

It was at this time that he published a "Brief Treatise on the Holy Lord's Supper", in which he spiritualised, intensified and deepened Zwingli's doctrine. He wrote: "The meaning of the words of institution, 'This is My body', 'This is My blood', becomes clear as soon as we are convinced that the entire blessing of this holy supper is dissolved into nothingness unless Jesus Christ is offered in it as essence and foundation. If this is true, the holy supper would nevertheless become a void and superfluous act, were we to deny that in it we are offered real communion with Christ. . . . Bread and wine are visible symbols of Christ's body and blood through which He reveals Himself to us. Our communion with the body of Jesus Christ, in itself hidden from our senses, incomprehensible to our mind, is thereby perceptibly placed before our eyes."

Calvin's life in Strasbourg was one of poverty; the stipend he received was very small. It was at this time he decided it was time to be married. His friends made several recommendations, which all seems a bit cold to us, but it was to Idelette von Buren that he was married in August 1540. Idelette was a widow with two young children who proved to be a loving, faithful and helpful wife. They lived in happiness, marred by their ill-health, and by the death of three children shortly after birth. Although very poor, they never withheld hospitality from friends and disciples. Calvin never revealed much about his wife, any more than he did about his childhood, but it is plain from letters that are preserved that it was a great distress to Calvin when his wife died after nine years of marriage.

In Geneva, Pierre de la Baume, the expelled bishop, was planning to make his return and oust the Protestants. He planned to celebrate mass in St Peter's, where he hoped that Calvin and Farel would become only a memory. Pierre de la Baume's colleague, Cardinal Sadolet, wrote an eloquent letter to the councils and people of Geneva, in which he said many flattering things

about the noble manner of the city and its citizens. He expressed his grief that crafty men, enemies of Christian unity – as he called them – had carried the seed of discord into this “pious and mighty confederation” of Switzerland, and the city of Geneva. The letter ended in an earnest invitation to the city to return to the fold of what he called the true Church. The Council accepted the flattering words but said they wanted to think the proposal over and would reply later.

Those who supported the Reformation were alarmed but none of the pastors felt up to refuting the Cardinal’s words, and their champion was in far-away Strasbourg. The situation was serious because, if the message went unchallenged, the Romanists would triumph. A delegation of citizens was already demanding to be released from the commitment they had given to the Reformed religion in 1537.

The Cardinal, in his message, had spoken of “Christian kindness” as a virtue of Romanism, which was soon exposed as weasel words. One of Geneva’s respected citizens, a man called Curtet, was burned alive in the town of Annecy for preaching God’s Word to a few country people. A week later, a second Genevan, Jean Lambert, was burned at the stake because of his adherence to the truth, his tongue pierced for his refusal to deny his faith and say a Hail Mary. The Romanists walked the streets with their heads held high, confident of their coming victory.

Then, suddenly, there came an open letter from Calvin to Cardinal Sadolet. The whole of Geneva clamoured for a copy. Sadolet’s eloquent words were beguiling but Calvin’s arguments were so superior that Sadolet’s were reduced to rubble. Calvin demolished argument after argument. He concluded by saying, “We demand a peace in which the Kingdom of the Redeemer reigns; you believe that everything which has been won for Christ is a loss for you. May the Lord grant, Sadolet, that you and your people will finally come to realise that there is no other bond of our Church than Christ the Lord, who offers us His communion so that His words and His Spirit unite our hearts and thoughts.”

Those on the side of the Reformation in Geneva believed that Sadolet would not be able to answer. And they were right; he did not reply.

The supporters of the Reformers began to gain ground, and at last the Council and others sent warm invitations to Calvin asking him to return to Geneva. One pastor wrote, “Come, honoured father in Christ, you belong to us. The Lord Himself has given you to us. Everybody sighs for you.”

Calvin was afraid to return to the place which had humiliated him, thinking that there would be battles there, nothing but troubles. “Better the gallows than to return to that place of agony”, he wrote. The deciding factor appears

to have been Farel, who was as insistent as when Calvin first arrived in Geneva. Calvin wrote to Farel, "You have been of unspeakable distress to me with your thundering and lightning. Is it necessary that you make me [seem] so bad and almost renounce our friendship?" Yet he felt in his conscience that he was refusing God's call; so he finally said, "I yield, I surrender!"

He wrote to Farel, "I know that I am not my own master. I offer my heart to the Lord in sacrifice." Calvin did not come this time as the assistant to another minister, nor simply to be a pastor in a city church; he knew that now he came to lead the whole Reformed movement from this city in such a central position.

For Younger Readers

The Best Book

A man went on board a ship and met an old man who worked in a shop. He asked the old man: "Can you read?"

The old man told him that he could read.

The man then asked, "What books do you read?"

The old man answered, "The Bible". It is very important to read the Bible. God has given it to us so that we may learn something about Him and about ourselves.

The man then spoke about seeing pages of the Bible being used in shops to wrap up the things that people were buying. He was not happy about it. And he was right. It was very wrong. That is not why God has given the Bible.

But the man from the shop did not agree. Why not? Because one time, when he bought something, it was wrapped up in a page from the Bible. He read the page and he felt the force of one of the verses on that page. So he went and bought a Bible for himself. Ever since then, he used to read from the Bible every day.

The old man said, "Blessed be God, I would not part with it and the hopes I have of salvation, for ten thousand worlds."

Yes, it was wrong to use pages from the Bible to wrap things up. But God is able to bring good even out of what people do wrong.

See that you make good use of the Bible. It is the best book. Ask God to bless it to your soul. Ask Him to make you believe that He speaks to you through it and that everything He says is perfectly true.

Samuel the Prophet

5. Samuel Anoints Saul as King of Israel

Rev Neil M Ross

This is another part of a paper given at the 2019 Youth Conference. Part 4 dealt with the Israelites asking Samuel to appoint a king over them.

Samuel now began a new period in his life. He was, as he said in his address to the Israelites, “old and greyheaded”. He had overseen the transition of the nation from one ruled by God to one ruled by a king. He told them they could not charge him with any corruption. They fully agreed (1 Samuel 12:3-5). He reminded them again that they wished to have a king in place of God, their King. Yet he assured them that if they and their king obeyed God they would prosper, but if they were disobedient, the hand of the Lord would be against them (1 Samuel 12:14,15).

God continues to work by this timeless principle. Nations that disobey Him must suffer the just consequences of their rebellion, but He will bless those which repent and He will prosper them.

Samuel then told the people that God would now send a thunderstorm to convince them of their great sin in asking for a king. God sent a fearful thunderstorm which was all the more frightening because it happened at an unusual time – harvest time. “All the people,” we are told, “greatly feared the Lord and Samuel” (1 Samuel 12:18). They feared they would die; they confessed their sin; they pled with Samuel to pray for them. “God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you”, answered Samuel, “but I will teach you the good and the right way.” After counselling them again to serve the Lord with all their heart, he left them with the solemn warning, “But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king” (1 Samuel 12:25).

Samuel’s unceasing intercession for Israel reminds us that Christ “ever liveth to make intercession” for His believing people (see Hebrews 7:25). Only they have a right to say about Him, “Who also maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8:34). May you all have a place in the intercession of Christ.

Samuel, in less than two years, had to rebuke Saul, who foolishly provoked the Philistines to attack Israel. This attack struck fear into the hearts of the King and his people. What would God have them to do? Samuel, by God’s direction, instructed Saul to wait for seven days, when he would meet him and the people, offer sacrifices to God and seek His direction. When Samuel arrived as promised on the seventh day, he discovered that Saul himself had already rashly and impiously offered sacrifices to God.

Samuel rebuked the King saying, "Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God . . . now thy kingdom shall not continue" (1 Samuel 13:13,14).

Meanwhile God was patient with Saul and gave him another duty. He commanded him, through Samuel, to destroy the Amalekites utterly. Although Saul conquered the Amalekites, he disobeyed God by sparing their king and many of their animals.

Samuel was unaware of this until God told him: "It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following Me, and hath not performed My commandments" (1 Samuel 15:11). Samuel was greatly saddened by this solemn message about Saul – so much so that he prayed to God all night, no doubt pleading for Saul.

A question arises: How can God, who is unchangeable, repent or change His mind? Matthew Henry's answer is: "Repentance in God is not, as it is in us, a change of His mind, but a change of His method or dispensation. He does not alter His will, but wills an alteration."

Next morning, Samuel went early to meet King Saul, who confidently greeted him with the claim, "I have performed the commandment of the Lord". But Samuel was not deceived – he knew otherwise. Saul tried to excuse himself by saying that the animals taken as spoil were to be sacrifices to God. Samuel's reply was, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

May we learn that, while to disobey God's commandments is serious, to make excuses for doing so is more serious. But it is especially serious to cover our disobedience with excuses of a religious nature, as Saul did.

Samuel made clear to Saul that God had not only rejected him from being king because of his disobedience, but He had also chosen another to take his place as king. As Matthew Henry aptly says, "Those men who are not willing that God should rule over them are unfit and unworthy to rule over men".

Saul seemed penitent when he said to Samuel, "I have sinned", but he was more concerned about Samuel honouring him before the people. He was more concerned about his subjects thinking less of him than about God being displeased with him. Let us beware of giving priority to pleasing our peers instead of seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Saul's confession of sin sounded genuine when he said clearly, "I have sinned", but it amounted to no more than superficial regret. True repentance, which all must have if they are not to perish, is from the heart and is the result of the working of the Holy Spirit. The Bible says, "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent".

Samuel turned to go away, but Saul took hold of his clothing, in an attempt to detain him. When the garment tore in Saul’s hand, Samuel said to him: “The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou”.

The King pled again with Samuel to honour him before the elders of Israel. Samuel yielded, followed Saul, and stood by him as he worshipped God, and thus bolstered his status with the people and prevented them from rejecting his authority. Samuel then called for the king of the Amalekites to be brought forward to be judged and executed in the name of God.

Samuel returned to Ramah, never again to visit Saul to confer with him. Samuel did not rejoice over Saul’s downfall but rather the opposite: we are told that “Samuel mourned for Saul” – mourned over his disobedience and lack of repentance, and that he had been rejected by God.

We can see from this that it is so wrong for people to be smugly glad when they see sinners suffering the consequences of their sinful way of life. One ought rather to display something of the same spirit as the Saviour had when He wept over Jerusalem sinners, who were to reap the sad consequences of their unbelief and rejection of Him. And it ought to be a marvel to ourselves that the Lord is so patient and longsuffering toward us with all our faults and our sins against Him.

For Junior Readers

“Them that Honour Me”

Dan worked in shipbuilding. It was the 1920s; Britain was recovering from the First World War and times were hard. These were years when money was short and a lot of people were out of work. Those who had a job certainly did not want to lose it.

At this time a new boss arrived at Dan’s shipyard. He came from the well-known John Brown’s shipyard, on the River Clyde in Glasgow, and he had a fearsome reputation. He used bad language and was an absolute slave driver who was feared by his workers. The men thought so badly of him that he was given the nickname of “the black devil”.

The first day, when he took over, he sent out an order that all the men in Dan’s team were to work on the Lord’s Day, as there was an important deadline to meet. Dan knew he could not do this. Even before he was converted, he had been brought up to respect the Sabbath. By this time he was attending three services on the Lord’s Day and sometimes he took services.

“The black devil” went into a furious rage when he heard there was a man

in the team who would not obey his order. He exploded one day in front of the workers. "Who is this man?" he barked to the foreman.

"I'm the man, sir," Dan whispered bravely.

"And why will you not work when I say you must?" he shouted.

Dan replied calmly, "Because, sir, I am not only a servant of this shipyard, but also a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I attend to His interests on the Lord's Day. I have to preach three times on Sabbath and I will do so even although I lose my job." You can imagine the shocked silence that followed.

"Sit down, lad," the boss ordered. So they sat down together on the same bench. "Lad," he said, "you know what men call me! Yes, I'm a black devil and sunk as low as hell itself. But it was not always so. 'I'll tell you this,'" he said, before pausing to clear his choked-up throat. He then told Dan that he used to go to a Sabbath school. "Aye," he went on, "and I wish I had never left it. Indeed I wish I had never left it! Boy, listen to me. You go on with your church-attending and your preaching. Never leave that good work. Never compromise, and God bless you, son."

Was it not wonderful that God, in His providence, should soften the heart of that wicked man? So, instead of punishing Dan, he actually encouraged him to do what was right. Truly it is an illustration of the Lord's promise, "Them that honour Me, I will honour" (1 Samuel 2:30). *J van Kralingen*

Looking Around Us

No Place for Serious Truth

A helter-skelter was built in Norwich Cathedral in August, bringing around 20 000 people through its doors over a period of about 12 days. It was intended to give people a different view of the building, especially its roof. About 10 000 of the visitors slid down the helter-skelter, including a bishop who stopped halfway down to preach a sermon from its slide.

He claimed that "God wants to be attractive to us . . . for us to enjoy ourselves, each other and the world around us and this glorious helter-skelter is about just that". No doubt he said much more than was reported, and one is reluctant to quote much, as some of his statements are too close to blasphemy for comfort. At least, as is true of what has just been quoted, they reveal a very flippant view of God.

After preaching his sermon, the bishop was described as having whooshed to the bottom of the slide, when he was given a loud cheer. Yet in a service, when people should be gathering to worship God, such cheering is totally out of place. "These things ought not so to be" (James 3:10).

Did the bishop remind the congregation, in his sermon, that they were sinners before a holy God? Did he tell them that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15)? One very much doubts that he did. Such serious matters are too much out of keeping with the whole tone of the occasion; one fears they would not be allowed to disturb the worldly enjoyment of what went on.

We should value our opportunities of hearing sermons that make plain the truth about sin and salvation, assuming we have that privilege. We should seek to profit by whatever scriptural preaching we hear. And if we come before God in prayer – as we should – we ought to plead with Him to send out men to proclaim the whole counsel of God – what the Bible teaches.

The Ruins of Ziklag

Archaeologists in Israel announced in July that they believe they have found the ruins of Ziklag, the Philistine city where David lived after he fled from King Saul when he became afraid for his life (though he should have stayed in Israel and continued to trust in God for his safety). In the past, as many as 12 sites of ancient cities have been put forward as the location of Ziklag, but this is the first to show evidence that people lived there continuously.

Digging on the site began in 2015 and a large number of articles have been found from the time when people lived in the city. These include bowls and pots made of clay, almost 100 of these pieces of pottery being complete. Some of them are believed to be Philistine and others from Judea. One piece of evidence that points to this site actually being Ziklag is the clear signs of a massive fire, which corresponds to the account in 1 Samuel 30.

It is helpful to find evidence which confirms the Bible, but we should be so impressed by the Bible itself that we receive it as a book that has come from God. *The Westminster Confession of Faith* points to “the heavenliness of the matter [of what it says], the efficacy of the doctrine [the teaching is effective], the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts [no part of it contradicts any other part], the scope of the whole, (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man’s salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof” as what should bring us “to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture” (1:5, with words in square brackets added by way of explanation).

Many ministers and professors in universities and colleges have dismissed what the Bible says – for instance, about David – as nothing more than myths. Yet discoveries like that of Ziklag should make it more difficult to do so. Let us take the Bible absolutely seriously – especially when it calls us to trust in Christ, who is revealed in it as the Saviour of sinners.

Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2019-20

General Information

There will be three exercises, the first in this issue of *The Young People's 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 2019*. Stay in the same 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 congregations (or they may be obtained from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE). It is very important for you to read God's Word every day. The exercises this year are based on readings from cards A and B: *Exercise 1*: Exodus 35 to Numbers 21, and Luke 1 to John 6. *Exercise 2*: Numbers 22 to Joshua 13, and John 7 to Acts 19. *Exercise 3*: Joshua 14 to 1 Samuel 25, and Acts 20 to 2 Corinthians 4.
7. The exercises are 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 complete the first two exercises and of the award and prize winners are published in *The Young People's Magazine* – if your permission is given. Please indicate on your first answer paper if you wish your name to be published, especially if this is the first time you do these exercises or if you have changed sections.

Exercise 1

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 November.

Senior Section (15 years old and over)

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

Old Testament

1. Read Numbers 13.

- (a) What instruction did God give to Moses at the beginning of this chapter? (2)
- (b) What were the spies to report about? (3)
- (c) What evidence did they bring back to show how fertile the land of Canaan was? (3)
- (d) The 10 spies brought back a report that discouraged the people. What did the report say? (2)
2. Read Numbers 14.
 - (a) How did the people respond to the evil report that the spies brought? (verses 1-4,10) (4)
 - (b) What reasons did Caleb and Joshua give for seeing things differently? (verses 6-9) (3)
 - (c) How did God visibly show His displeasure with the people? (1)
 - (d) What did God threaten to do because of the people's unbelief? (2)
 - (e) What arguments did Moses use in pleading with God to spare the people? (verses 13-19) (4)
 - (f) How were the people finally punished for their unbelief? (verses 28-33) (3)
 - (g) Look back to verse 24. Why was Caleb exempted from the punishment suffered by the rest of the Israelites? (2)
3. This story is referred to in Hebrews 3. Find and write out a verse which contains a warning to us in case we fall into the same sin. (2)

New Testament

Read Luke 7:1-10

1. (a) Write down evidence given that the centurion was:
 - (1) a kind master (2) a benevolent ruler (3) a humble man. (6)
 - (b) What reason did he give for believing that Jesus could heal his servant from a distance? (2)
 - (c) Why was it particularly surprising that the centurion should have had greater faith than everyone in Israel? (1)
2. This story is also told in Matthew chapter 8. Find and write out 2 consecutive verses which were a warning to the Jews (and to us) not to be content with outward privileges. (4)
3. Find and write out a verse near the beginning of Hebrews 11 that speaks of the supreme importance of faith in God. (3)

Memory Exercise

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

Intermediate Section (13 and 14 years old)

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

Old Testament

1. Read Numbers 1:1-2 and 42-50.
 - (a) Who did the Lord ask to number the children of Israel? (2)
 - (b) Who had to be numbered? (2)
 - (c) How many was that? (2)
 - (d) Which tribe was not to be numbered? (1)
 - (e) What special work were they given? (2)
2. Read Numbers 21:4-9.
 - (a) Who did the people speak against? (2)
 - (b) List *two* of their complaints. (2)
 - (c) What did the Lord send among the people? (1)
 - (d) What effect did this have on the people? (2)
 - (e) What did they ask Moses to do? (2)
 - (f) What did the Lord command Moses to do? (2)
 - (g) In order to be saved, what did the people have to do? (1)
 - (h) In the same way, what has been provided in the gospel for sinners? (read John 3:14-17). (2)

New Testament

1. Read Luke 15:1-10.
 - (a) Who said "Rejoice with me . . ."? (2)
 - (b) Why were they rejoicing? (2)

- (c) When is there joy in heaven? (1)
2. Read Luke 10:25-37.
- (a) What did the lawyer ask Jesus first? (1)
- (b) Complete the verse: "Thou shalt love . . .". (2)
- (c) How did the priest and Levite react when they saw the man who fell among thieves? (2)
- (d) Who showed compassion to the man? (1)
- (e) Write down *two* of the ways in which he showed kindness to the man. (2)
3. Read John 1:35- 42.
- (a) What did John the Baptist say about Jesus? (1)
- (b) What did Andrew say to his brother Simon? (1)
- (c) Give the meaning of (1) Rabbi, (2) Messias, (3) Cephas. (3)

Memory Exercise

- Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 80 in the Shorter Catechism: What is required in the Tenth Commandment? (3)

Junior Section (11 and 12 years old)

UK answers to *Mrs M Logan, 188 Willowbrae Road, Edinburgh EH8 7QH.*

Old Testament

1. Read Numbers 11. God provided manna from heaven for the children of Israel in the wilderness.
- (a) What did the manna look like? (1)
- (b) What did it taste of? (See also Exodus 16:31) (2)
- (c) How was it prepared for eating? (3)
- (d) Verse 10 says that "the anger of the Lord was kindled greatly; Moses was also displeased". Why was this? (1)
- (e) Describe how Moses felt at this time. How did the Lord help him? (2)
- (f) God provided meat for the people. What was it? (1)
- (g) What happened to them as they were eating it? (1)
- (h) Give one lesson we should learn from this. (2)
2. Read Numbers 21:1-9.
- (a) What were the children of Israel complaining about at this time? (2)
- (b) What did the Lord do to them? (1)
- (c) What cure did God provide, and how were they to use the cure? (2)
- (d) Jesus refers to this cure in John chapter 3. Copy out the verse. (1)
- (e) Who was Jesus speaking to when He said these words? (1)

New Testament

1. Read Luke 8:5-15. The parable of the sower speaks of four kinds of hearers. Complete the table, following the example given.

Type of ground	What happened to the seed?	What does the parable mean?
On a rock	It withered	They believe and fall away through temptation

(12)

2. Read Luke 24:13-53.
- (a) The two on the road to Emmaus were discussing two main events that had taken place in Jerusalem. What were they? (2)
- (b) How did Jesus answer them? (2)
- (c) What did they ask Jesus to do when they reached the village? (1)
- (d) When did they recognise that it was Jesus who was with them? (1)

- (e) Write the verse that tells us the effect this meeting had on them both. (1)
 (f) What did they do immediately after Jesus left them? (1)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 39 in the Shorter Catechism:

What is the duty which God requires of man? (3)

Upper Primary Section (9 and 10 years old)

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

Old Testament

1. Read Exodus 40:34-38. The tent, or tabernacle, has now been finished.
 (a) What filled the tabernacle? (1)
 (b) How did the Israelites know to begin a journey? (1)
 (c) What could be seen during the night? (1)
 2. Read Leviticus 7:37,38.
 Write out the five different types of offerings which were to be offered to the Lord. (5)
 3. Read Psalm 51:16,17.
 What sacrifice should we as sinners offer God? (1)
 4. Read Numbers 21:4-9.
 (a) The Israelites were unhappy. Why? (1)
 (b) God punished them. How? (1)
 (c) What did God tell Moses to make? (1)
 (d) How could a sick Israelite live and not die? (1)

New Testament

1. We read of many people cured by Jesus. Some were cured by Jesus only speaking to them and others by His touch as well. Read the following verses and fill in the table. Write in who was cured and tick the correct box as to how they were cured.

Verses	Who was cured	Jesus only spoke	Jesus spoke and touched
(a) Luke 4:38,39			
(b) Luke 5:12,13			
(c) Luke 6:6-10			
(d) Luke 7:11-16			
(e) Luke 8:49-56			
(f) Luke 17:12-14			

(12)

2. Read John 1:29. None of the animal sacrifices could ever take away sin.
 What name does John give to Him who "taketh away the sin of the world"? (1)
 3. Read John 3:14-16. The names given to Jesus in these verses show He was both God and man. Fill in the blanks:

He is the Son of _____.

He is God's only begotten _____. (2)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write down the answer to Question 21 in the Shorter Catechism:

Who is the Redeemer of God's elect? (3)

Lower Primary Section (8 years old and under)

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

Old Testament

The Lord's presence was with the children of Israel in the wilderness.

1. What covered the tabernacle by day? Numbers 9:16

Fill in the words to answer these questions.

2. What covered the tabernacle by night? The appearance of f ____
Numbers 9:16

3. When did the children of Israel go on their journey?

(a) When the c ____ was taken up from the tabernacle, then a ____ t ____
the children of Israel j _____. Numbers 9:17

(b) Where the c ____ abode, (stayed) there the children of Israel p ____
their t _____. Numbers 9:17

4. Did the children of Israel get up and journey if they thought the cloud
stayed on the tabernacle for too long a time? Numbers 9:19

5. Fill in the words: whether it was by d ____ or by n ____ that the c ____ was
taken up, they j _____. Numbers 9:21

6. Did they always keep this commandment of the Lord? Numbers 9:23

New Testament

The Bible tells us about Jesus as a child.

1. Fill in the words: the child g ____ and waxed s ____ in s ____, filled with
w ____; and the g ____ of God was upon him. Luke 2:40

2. What was the name of the city in Galilee where Jesus lived with his
parents? Luke 2:39

3. Where did they go every year for the Passover? Luke 2:41

4. Did Jesus' parents know that he tarried (waited behind) there? Luke 2:43

5. They went back to Jerusalem, looking for him.

Fill in the words: after t ____ d ____ they found him sitting in the midst of
the d ____ (religious teachers) both h ____ them and a ____ them
questions. Luke 2:46

6. Mary and Joseph were sad because they could not find Jesus. What did
Jesus say to them?

I must be a ____ my F ____ business (work)? Luke 2:49

7. Jesus was speaking about His real Father in heaven. Did Mary and Joseph
understand what He said? Luke 2:50

8. But where did Mary keep all these sayings? Luke 2:51

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