

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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“Holy in Living, Happy in Dying”

François du Jon was born in Bourges, a city in central France, in 1545. Later in life, he was better known as Franciscus Junius, the Latin form of his name. He was, for the last 10 years of his life, a professor of theology at the University of Leiden, in the Netherlands.

When he was young, a friend argued François into becoming an atheist. Another influence on François was a heathen writer of long ago who claimed that God has no care for other beings. For some time, François was foolish enough to defend these false ideas, but God showed His care for François, even when he was going on in a course of sin and unbelief.

François was at that time in Lyon, where some violent incident took place. It seemed likely that he would at least suffer serious injury, but he was preserved from the danger. As a result of this deliverance, François realised that there is a providence. It is not clear whether he was at first willing to believe that providence is *God's* providence or not, but his father persuaded him to start reading the New Testament carefully and seriously.

He began to read the first chapter of the Gospel of John. God was indeed caring for François, for he had only reached part of the way through that first chapter when he became impressed with what he was reading. He realised that there was something divine about it. He saw that the authority and majesty of the Scriptures was far above what human powers of speech could produce. He said, “I shuddered with horror at myself; my soul was astonished; and I was so strongly affected all that day that I scarcely knew who, what or where I was.

What had happened? How could François, who had been so determined in arguing in favour of atheism, have changed so much that he was now impressed by the Bible? It was the Holy Spirit working in his soul. That is not to say that he was already converted, but the Spirit was beginning a work of grace in him. François may already have been influenced, though he would not yet have admitted it, by what other people said when they were arguing against him. But no human arguments will convince anyone unless they are applied by the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit may bless the efforts of individuals as they try to influence others for good, but the most important matter, if someone is concerned to know if God really exists, is to make use of the Bible. How good it was that François became willing to submit to his father's advice about reading the Word of God! To this extent, he obeyed his parent, and the Lord blessed him in doing so. How important it is for young people to be ready to follow the advice, and the example, of parents who read the Bible, believe its truths and submit to its authority!

We should also listen to the preaching of the gospel, when the good news about salvation from sin, through Jesus Christ, is presented to sinners. Yes, preachers are themselves sinners and their knowledge is not perfect – while the Bible is absolutely perfect. So the Bible is totally reliable; it can never put anyone wrong. But God has appointed men to be a means of bringing the gospel to people all over the world, to explain and apply the truths of Scripture to them; indeed the Bible tells us that “it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Corinthians 1:21).

Later in life, François exclaimed, “Thou, O Lord my God, didst remember me in Thy wonderful mercy, and didst receive a lost and wandering sheep into Thy flock”. François was praising God for His goodness to him after he had sinned so seriously in rejecting God and becoming an atheist. God was good to him in making him willing to read the Bible and in giving the Holy Spirit to bless the truths of the Bible to him.

God is able to bless the Bible to you and He is able to bless faithful preaching to you – preaching that is faithful *to the Bible*. So you should pray that God would not leave you to drift away from the Bible and from going to church. Preachers cannot reach your soul, but the Holy Spirit can reach it and apply to you what you read in the Bible and what you hear preached in church. Ask God to give you the Holy Spirit, so that He will apply the truth of His Word to your soul.

It has been said of François du Jon that “he was holy in living” and “happy in dying”. His holy life pointed to the change that had taken place in his soul; it showed that he had become a sincere follower of Christ Jesus. God also called him to be a preacher of the gospel and latterly, in Leiden, he taught other men who were to become ministers.

You may not become a minister; that may not be God's will for you. But you should be earnestly asking God that He would make you one of His own sheep. Christ is calling you: “Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:22). If you look to Him for salvation – if you trust in Him – God will make you more or less holy in living and He may make you happy in dying also.

The Soldier's Doubts Removed

The lad belonged to the Isle of Man but now lived in the south of England. He was 17 when he went to spend an evening with a young friend. The friend's father did not believe the Bible and he tried very hard to make the visitor disbelieve the Bible too. He tried to make the teenager believe that what he was saying was "true wisdom and knowledge" and that those who believed the Bible were blinded by what ministers taught. The teenager felt proud at the thought of gaining this knowledge and becoming wiser than Christians. Then, he felt, he would be able to sin freely.

Looking back, he compared the way the man dealt with him to the way Satan dealt with Eve in the Garden of Eden. When he got home, the teenager found that his sisters had already gone to bed, but he was longing to tempt them as he had been tempted. It is not clear whether he was successful when, the next day, he made the attempt to get them to disbelieve the Bible.

He joined the army and was sent to a place called Mohill in the north of what is now the Republic of Ireland. He did all he could to make other young men as unbelieving as himself and, sadly, he was successful with many of them. He wanted to be thought a clever fellow, and to make others laugh by making fun of Christ and the religion of the Bible. He confessed afterwards that this was done "out of sinful pride and vanity". He "greedily devoured" all the unbelieving books he could lay his hands on.

"The fact is," he wrote later, "I did not wish to be convinced of the truth of the Bible and the Christian religion". He was an unbeliever because of his love of sin; after rejecting the Bible he felt he had no reason to believe that his sin would be followed by any dangerous consequences – like eternal punishment. He also wished he could have been a complete atheist, but he could not quite bring himself to believe that there was no God.

He remained a deist, like the man who had led him into his present unbelief (a deist was someone who believed that, after God created the world, He paid no more attention to it). Yet the soldier could not really shake off the truth that God is all-powerful, all-knowing, present everywhere, holy, righteous and true. He could not get rid of the fact that there will be a judgement day, and a heaven and a hell, although he denied them to others. Because of this inconsistency in his thinking, he was often "miserably wretched" – when he was not caught up in worldly entertainments.

In spite of how he spoke to others, his conscience would not go quiet in the face of some arguments. For instance: "If Scripture is true, all my disbelief and rejection of it can never make it false, and it never has been proved false". Again: he knew that "its doctrines are grand and good, and most worthy of

God” and that they led to much good, while the teachings of deism produced much evil.

The real reason why he rejected the Bible was what it says about hell. He confessed, “Anything is better than an eternal hell, and if there really is such a place of punishment, I know I deserve it”. He realised that, if it was true that an eternal hell exists, “my disbelief, or rather my trying to disbelieve it, but in vain . . . cannot make it less true”. Another argument always upset him: “If the Christian religion is false, the Christian will lose nothing by it . . . but if Christianity is true, the Christian will gain everything by it and the rejecter of the Bible will lose everything”. It was an argument that made him very frightened. When he considered it, he knew that, if he went on disbelieving the Bible, he was likely to be in hell for ever. He said, “I was often miserable beyond description, but through shame and pride, I never told my feelings to anyone”.

Some time after the soldier arrived in Mohill he met a woman who was a true Christian. She was very kind to him, and took an interest in his welfare, both for this life and for the next. When he got to know her well, he began to respect her Christianity, and even to admire it; so he could no longer oppose Christianity or make fun of it. He then felt able to tell her all about himself and how miserable he was.

The woman did all she could to influence the soldier's thinking. She treated him as Paul directed Timothy. Timothy was to be “in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (2 Timothy 2:25). And the soldier did acknowledge the truth: “In a short time I found I had no doubts left of the truths of the Scriptures and that I believed them in my conscience” – as he did before his friend's father spent the evening persuading him to give up his belief in the Bible.

The woman went on teaching him, and the soldier recalled, “I gradually became more and more sincerely anxious to become a true Christian, such as I knew she was; and to believe with that holy saving faith, of which she used to speak and which she proved from Scripture to be the gift and work of the Holy Spirit on the mind. As yet, however, I could not understand in the slightest degree the real meaning of the nature or power of faith, or of spiritual things generally. All was darkness, mystery and a puzzle to me, both as to understanding these things, or feeling their power on my soul.” The woman encouraged him to pray and read the Bible and pointed him to the words of Matthew 7:7: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you”.

After this, his army unit moved away and the soldier was allowed to go

to the Isle of Man to spend several months with his relations there. He attended the ministry of a schoolmate of his, R Browne. This minister spoke a lot about the sin and misery of all mankind, about the new birth and everyone's need of it, about the blood and merits of Christ and the mercy of the Father, who sent His Son to save the chief of sinners. Browne preached powerfully and the soldier felt that power. He said, "I gradually became influenced, I trust, by the truth as it is in Jesus".

As he heard and read these basic truths of Christianity, he "learned to pray earnestly to Jesus Christ, under a sense of guilt, now deeply felt, for pardon and salvation". He believed that the good work of grace, his being born again and turned to God, began at that time. He was led to see how sinners may be justified: when all their sins are pardoned, God accepts them as righteous, and they are given a right to eternal life – only "for the sake of the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, who died, the just for the unjust, to reconcile us to God, through the mercy and sovereign grace of God the Father". The soldier went on: "I now saw clearly that a repenting, believing sinner is completely and for ever justified, through faith, without the deeds of the law. . . . I was only amazed at myself in being so sinfully blind and obstinate as not to understand and receive them before, and that I could have been so long bewitched as to resist or oppose their plain and obvious meaning."

Here are a few lessons to be learned from the experience of the soldier.

1. It is dangerous to listen to the arguments of those who deny the Bible and what it tells us about God. No matter how convincing they might sound, they are wrong. God speaks the truth when He tells us that we are to worship Him and obey Him. Ask Him to protect you from all the unbelieving ideas that swirl around you in this rebellious age.

2. Notice how miserable the soldier was when he was under the influence of these false ideas. How much more awful it would have been for him to go to hell under their influence, and then to find it impossible to return to God. This life is the time for sinners to return to God.

3. Even if you accept that the Bible is true, you too are under the danger of a lost eternity unless you repent and believe the gospel. Seek the Lord urgently. Submit to the one way of salvation, through Jesus Christ. Obey the call, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved". Ask God to make you able and willing to do so.

4. Do not resist the authority of God speaking through the Bible. Remember how dangerous it is to continue in unbelief, seeking to get as much as you can from your worldly, ungodly ways for as long as you can. Christ calls you to come to Him *now*, before it is too late. Do not delay. Very many have perished because they delayed too long to seek the Lord.

The Covenanters: What They Teach Us

2. Covenants – by Individuals and Nations

Rev Caleb Hembd

Another section of a paper given at a New Zealand Youth Conference. Last month's section gave an example of the persecution that Covenanters suffered and began to answer the question, What is a covenant?

2.1. Personal Covenants. When the Holy Spirit was poured out in Scotland in the 1500s, many people realised that the Bible speaks much about the covenant. They also saw that God's covenant with His people required them to make a covenant with Him and vow to serve Him with all their heart. Often extreme danger and distress moved them to make these covenant vows. In Psalm 66, the Psalmist solemnly promises,

"I'll bring burnt off'rings to Thy house; to Thee my vows I'll pay,
Which my lips utter'd, my mouth spake, when trouble on me lay"

(verses 13-14, metrical).

The Bible also speaks of God's people making a covenant with Him after being convicted of serious backsliding. In Jeremiah 50, the prophet foretells a moving scene. The children of Israel and Judah (who had been terrible backsliders and bitter rivals) will journey together to Zion to seek the Lord their God. They will say to one another, "Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten" (verses 4,5). After all their sin and strife, they will unite in binding themselves to their Redeemer for ever.

Scottish Christians also read about those who would personally sign a covenant with their hand when dedicating themselves to the Lord: "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel" (Isaiah 44:5). This led them to make written covenants that they would sign after a time of earnest prayer and fasting. These covenants had the effect of steeling their resolve to cleave to the Lord and strive to advance His cause, no matter what the cost. A similar thing happens at a wedding. A man and woman make vows to each other and then sign a marriage contract in the presence of witnesses. The result is a life-long commitment to be fully devoted to one another.

One lady in Scotland wrote the following covenant: "I here give my hearty consent, Lord Jesus, to Thy coming in and taking possession of my soul, and to Thy casting out of everything there that stands in opposition to Thee. I desire to take Thee for my all, to be ruled and governed by Thee, [submitting]

to whatsoever shall be Thy way of dealing with me. Give me Thyself, and this shall be all my desire.”

It should be stressed that these covenants, when sincerely made, were simply acts of faith and repentance that can be found in every born-again soul. In his classic book, *The Christian's Great Interest*, William Guthrie observes that covenanting is only “the formal expression of what the heart did before practise”. So someone does not need to make a formal, written covenant to be saved. Yet personal covenanting can be very useful. With God's blessing, it is a means of promoting the Christian's spiritual well-being and comfort.

Even children would write covenants. Listen to this covenant written by some young girls in 1683 – just before a time of fierce persecution: “This is a covenant made between the Lord and us, with our whole hearts, and to give up ourselves freely to Him, without reserve, soul and body, hearts and affections, to be His children, and Him to be our God and Father . . . that we stand to this covenant, which we have written, between the Lord and us, as we shall answer at the great day; that we shall never break this covenant which we have made between the Lord and us: that we shall stand to this covenant which we have made; and if not, it shall be a witness against us in the great day, when we shall stand before the Lord and His holy angels.

“O Lord, give us real grace in our hearts to mind [remember] Zion's breaches, that is in such a low case [state] this day; and make us to mourn with her, for Thou hast said [that] them that mourn with her in the time of her trouble shall rejoice when she rejoiceth, when the Lord will come and bring back the captivity of Zion. . . .”

The document concludes: “We shall declare before the Lord that we have bound ourselves in covenant, to be covenanted to Him all the days of our life, to be His children and Him our covenanted Father”.

One of the girls who signed this covenant was only ten years old.

2.2. National Covenants. Christians in Scotland noticed that the Bible records not just individuals in covenant with the Lord, but also whole nations. On one occasion, the Kingdom of Judah made a national covenant after a time when the nation had been backsliding. When King Asa had removed abominable idols from the land, “all Judah and Benjamin . . . gathered themselves together” and “entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul” (2 Chronicles 15:9-12). Great blessing followed this national covenant: “All Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought Him with their whole desire; and He was found of them: and the Lord gave them rest round about” (2 Chronicles 15:15).

As a result, groups of Christians in Scotland began to band together and make covenants with God. They would promise to reform themselves, their families and the Church, according to the Bible. They would swear in the name of God to defend every truth in it to the utmost of their power. The covenanting movement grew until, in 1581, the whole nation entered into a covenant with the Lord. All classes of people came together to vow that they would lay down their lives, if necessary, to defend the true religion. This same covenant was renewed, with additions, in 1638 – the high-water mark of the Scottish Reformation. Scotland had become just the second nation in the history of the world to enter into a national covenant with the Most High.

Children Walking in Truth

3. Reasons for Rejoicing

J C Ryle

Ryle directed this sermon to children; probably he was including young people. But everyone, young and old, should be able to read it with profit. It is taken, with editing, from Ryle's *Home Truths*, volume 5. In last month's article, Ryle continued to answer the question, "When can it be said that children walk in truth?" His four answers were: they "know the truth about sin"; they "love the true Saviour of sinners and follow Him"; they "serve God with a true heart"; they "really try to do things right and true in the sight of God"

2 John 4. *I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth.*

2. Now I will go on to the second thing I promised to speak of. I said I would try to show you *some of the reasons why John rejoiced to find this lady's children walking in truth*. Let me set about it. The text says, "I rejoiced greatly". Now why did he rejoice? There must have been some good reasons. John was not a man to rejoice without cause. Listen and you shall hear what those reasons were.

(1.) For one thing, John rejoiced because *he was a good man himself*. All good people like to see others walking in truth, as well as themselves. You may have heard how the angels in heaven rejoice when they see one sinner repenting. Some of you, no doubt, have read it in the fifteenth chapter of Luke. Well, good people are like the angels in this: they are full of love and compassion. And when they see anyone turning away from sin and doing what is right, it makes them feel happy.

Good people find walking in truth so pleasant that they would like everybody else to walk in truth too. They do not wish to keep all this pleasantness to themselves, and go to heaven alone. They want to see all about them loving

Jesus Christ and obeying Him: all their relations, all their neighbours, all their old friends, all their young ones – indeed all the world. The more they see walking in truth, the better they are pleased. John was a good man and full of love to souls, and this was one reason why he rejoiced.

(2.) For another thing, John rejoiced because *it is very uncommon to see children walking in truth*. I am very sorry to tell you there are many bad boys and girls in the world. Too many are careless, thoughtless, self-willed and disobedient. Nobody can rejoice over them.

I hear many fathers and mothers complaining about this. I hear many teachers speak of it. I am afraid it is quite true.

There are many children who will not give their minds to anything that is good. They will not do what they are told. They like to be idle and to have their own way. They love playing better than learning. They do things which God says are wicked and are not ashamed. And all this is very sad to see.

John, you may be sure, had found this out, for he was an old man as well as an apostle, and he had seen many things. He knew that even the children of good people sometimes turn out very badly. I dare say he remembered Jacob and David, and all the sorrow their families caused them. And no doubt he knew what Solomon says in the book of Proverbs: “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child”.

So when John saw this lady’s children not, like others, turning out badly but walking in the way they should go, he might well feel it was a special mercy. I do not at all wonder that he rejoiced greatly.

(3.) For another thing, John rejoiced because *he knew that walking in truth would make these children really happy in this life*. John was not one of those who are so foolish that they do not like much religion and who imagine that it makes people unhappy. John knew that the more true religion people have, the more happy they are. John knew that life is always full of care and trouble and that the only way to get through life comfortably is to be a real follower of Jesus Christ and to serve Him.

Children, remember what I say this night: if ever you would be happy in this evil world, you must give your hearts to Jesus Christ and follow Him. He says, “My son, give Me thine heart”. Give Him the entire charge of your souls, and ask Him to be your Saviour and your God; then you will be happy. Have no will of your own; only try to please Him. Then your life will be pleasant.

Trust all to Christ, and He will undertake to manage all that concerns your soul. Trust in Him at all times. Trust in Him in every condition: in sickness and in health, in youth and in old age, in poverty and in plenty, in sorrow and in joy. Trust in Him, and He will be a Shepherd to watch over you, a Guide

to lead you, a King to protect you, a Friend to help you in time of need. Trust in Him, for He says Himself, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee". He will put His Spirit into you and you will have a new heart. He will give you power to become a true child of God. He will give you grace to keep down a bad temper, to be no longer selfish, to love others as yourself. He will make your cares lighter and your work easier. He will comfort you in time of trouble. Christ can make those happy who trust in Him. Christ died to save them and He ever lives to give them peace.

John was well aware of these things. He had learned them by experience. He saw this lady's children were likely to be happy in this world. No wonder he rejoiced.

For Junior Readers

The Open Door

Many years ago a Christian pastor from France was visiting Britain. His hosts enjoyed his company and his profitable conversation. But there was just one of his habits that they objected to: every time he entered or left the sitting room he left the door open! In our climate, that caused draughts and made it difficult to keep the room warm. When the family eventually mentioned this to their visitor he explained the reason for his habit.

At home, he said, while working in his study, reading and writing, he never shut his door. In the house were his wife and little children and he did not wish there to be any barrier, such as a closed door, between him and them. He loved to hear their voices and was never disturbed by them. In this way he could answer their slightest call for help.

Does this not make you think of Jesus, who said, "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved"? Sin has closed our door of access to God. But in mercy He has opened this door at very great cost: the sacrifice of His own dear Son. And He never says to anyone: "Seek ye Me in vain". Indeed He has promised, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out".

Should you not make more use of this open door which God the Father has set before us? Do not be so distracted by your daily studies and your other activities that you forget to go to Him in prayer to ask for help, or to go to the Bible to look for advice.

You would find that things would go better for you if you made more use of this open door. Or when you have disobeyed some command or done something wrong, where else should you go but to the ever-open door to

confess your sin and to ask for forgiveness! Be careful also that you do not join any group of people which you know might offend the Saviour, or get involved in any such activity.

If you have never yet entered in by “the door” Christ Jesus, be sure to start obeying the call, “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near”. Remember that there is a day, which Christ Himself spoke about, when the door of gospel opportunity will be finally shut for ever!

(Adapted by *J van Kralingen*)

For Younger Readers

On a Stormy Night

It was winter, late in December. A very strong wind was blowing outside. It was so strong that it wakened a man and his wife, who were sleeping in their bed. They lived in a lighthouse whose light was flashing out in the dark night to warn passing ships of some danger. The lighthouse was built on wooden posts that were driven into the sand under the sea. So the man and woman felt they were in great danger as the sea threw wave after wave at the lighthouse. The whole building shook terribly as each huge wave hit it, and they were afraid that the building would fall down into the sea.

What could they do? They could pray to God. I am sure they did that, but I know that they read the Bible together. Actually, only the woman could read. And she had to speak loudly into her husband’s ear, because the storm made so much noise.

From the Bible they could learn again that God is in control of everything, even of a very great storm. That was a comfort to them. And the God who controls storms brought down the wind as daylight came. God has much to teach us from the Bible, and we should be ready to listen to it.

A Prison Sabbath School

Several men gathered one Sabbath at the main door of a prison near Boston in the United States. They had come to teach prisoners in a Sabbath school. None of the prisoners were forced to attend; yet about half

of the 300 men in the jail came along to the chapel to learn from the Bible. When the prisoners had sat down in the chapel, the teachers were brought in.

The prison chaplain opened the Sabbath school with prayer. He then explained to the teachers that the plan to be followed was to hear the prisoners read the Bible and then to explain to them what they had read. The teachers were spread about around the room, and each of them was given a small class. One of them took a class of three convicts.

He opened a New Testament and let them read one after the other. They read slowly and with hesitation, and he found it interesting to watch the expression on their faces as they came across the various truths of the passage they read, which they treated as good news. They read the parables of the lost sheep and the lost piece of money in Luke 15. It seemed to the teacher as if the whole chapter was written particularly for prisoners.

One of those prisoners showed great interest in these parables. He said that the Bible appeared like a very different book to him now from what it did in the past.

"How did it formerly appear to you?" asked the teacher.

"I used to despise it", the prisoner answered. "I used to wonder why so much was made of the Bible. It seemed to me that I could write as good a book myself."

"Well, have your views of it changed now?"

"Yes," he said, "I am fully persuaded it is the Word of God now."

"What caused you to disbelieve it formerly? Was it the influence of bad company?"

"To be frank, it was ignorance. I had not studied it. I had read a little here and there, but not attentively or with a right spirit."

"What led you to change your views of it?"

"I did not change my views until I came to this institution. I had some days of solitary confinement when I first came, with no book but the Bible. And when I first began to reflect, I recollected that a Christian family, whom I once lived with, seemed to enjoy more real and substantial happiness than any other persons I ever saw; and this led me to think there might possibly be something in religion.

"So I thought I would examine the Bible in earnest, and I found it a very different book from what I had supposed. I took a very strong interest in it, and at last a minister preached a sermon here from the text, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' And that, I hope, led me to the Saviour." The prisoner went on to tell the visitor that he hoped that he was truly converted. He realised the danger of imagining he believed in Christ when that was not so.

The teacher told the prisoner that he was glad to hear what he said. He

then went on: "I hope you will persevere in Christian duty and find the Bible a source of happiness to you as long as you live".

The prisoner said that when he first came to the prison he thought it was rather hard to be shut up there for so long. But he went on: "My time is, however, almost out. In a few weeks I shall go away. But if I have really been led to see and forsake my sins, I shall never have any reason to regret coming here."

Then the chaplain announced that the time was up. So the teacher could not talk much with the other two men. But one of them told him that he had been brought up by godly parents, and used to read the Bible when he was a child. Yet he did so only to please his parents; he confessed that he paid no attention to it. But since he became a prisoner, he found the Bible to be "a very different book".

The teacher found out afterwards that there was good reason to hope that all three of these prisoners had really repented of sin and found peace with God. Clearly the Bible is the best cure for crime, if it is blessed through the Holy Spirit working in the soul of a criminal. Indeed, the Bible is the best cure for every kind of sinner, however respectable they may appear to be. What we need, more than anything else in this world, is to be convinced that we are sinners and to believe the gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ coming into the world to save sinners.

Looking Around Us

Politicians and Prayer

Some years ago, a prominent politician was mocked, after he acknowledged that he prayed to God about the decisions he had to make. It was good that he did acknowledge God in this way. There is no doubt that God can answer prayer. But, sadly, very few of those who work on newspapers and other news media have enough Christianity to move them to pray.

Joe Biden has been elected the next president of the USA and, by the time this magazine appears, he should have taken up his duties. As a Roman Catholic, we might expect him to pray. But who would he pray to? Would he pray to God? Or would he pray to the Virgin Mary, treating her as a mediator between him and God? But Mary cannot hear him, and God never appointed her as a mediator between sinners and Himself. Christ Jesus is the Mediator; it is He who has been appointed to present our petitions to God.

Back in 2013, when Biden was Vice President, he visited Brazil. The US ambassador to Brazil was Thomas Shannon Jr, who met Biden at the airport.

Biden realised that Shannon, like himself, was the parent of a serviceman in a war zone. Before leaving Brazil, Biden pulled a small rosary out of his pocket and handed it to Shannon, saying, "This got Beau [Biden's son] safely out of Iraq. I hope it gets your son out of Afghanistan."

A rosary is a string of beads, and Roman Catholics say a prayer or recite a form of words as they pass their fingers from bead to bead. The Bible does not tell us to use a rosary. And as it does not, we should not use one. A rosary cannot keep anyone safe. And anyone putting their trust in one is foolish, and is sinning against God by despising the means that He has provided for us to bring our needs before Him – prayer through Jesus Christ.

Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2020-21

Exercise 2

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 March. These exercises are based on 2 Kings 7 to 2 Chronicles 18, and James 1 to Revelation 22, Matthew 1-11.

Senior Section (15 years old and over)

UK answers to *Mrs J Hicklin*, 22 Lasswade Road, Eskbank, EH22 3EF.

Old Testament

1. Read 2 Chronicles 1.
 - (a) Where did Solomon go at the beginning of his reign and what did he do there? (2)
 - (b) When did God appear to Solomon and what did He say? (2)
 - (c) What did Solomon ask for? Why do you think this was a request that pleased God? (2)
 - (d) What did God promise to Him? (3)
2. (a) What did Solomon decide to do that is recorded at the beginning of 2 Chronicles 2? (2)
- (b) What did he ask Hiram king of Tyre to do to assist him? (2)
- (c) What reasons did Solomon give for making the temple so ornate and expensive? (see verses 5-6) (3)
- (d) How did Hiram's response show that he had respect for the God of Israel? (3)
3. (a) In 2 Chronicles 3-5 we read a detailed description of the temple and its furnishings. Despite all the rich furnishings and elaborate ceremonies, the temple worship was basically inadequate. Why was this? Read Hebrews 9:1-12 to help you. (2)
- (b) What is required to obtain "eternal redemption for us"? (2)

New Testament

Read James chapters 1-3.

1. Who is the Epistle addressed to? (2)
2. Why should they rejoice in temptation? (see verses 3-4, 12) (3)
3. Look at verses 21-27. Find 5 marks of true believers given in these verses. (5)
4. What sin is condemned at the beginning of chapter 2? (2)
5. What reasons does James give to support his argument? (3)
6. What is the royal law according to the Scripture? (1)
7. Look at verses 9-11. What argument does James give to answer those who might consider this a small sin? (2)
8. What do you think James means in verse 17 when he says, "Faith without works is dead?" (2)

9. What examples does James give to show how true faith is never alone? (4)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 44 in the Shorter Catechism:

- What doth the preface to the ten commandments teach us? (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 2 Kings 18:1-8.
 - (a) Name Hezekiah's mother and father. (2)
 - (b) How old was he when he began to reign? (1)
 - (c) Give four reasons for saying that he was a good King. (4)
2. Read 2 Kings 20:1-11.
 - (a) What was Isaiah's message to Hezekiah? (3)
 - (b) On hearing the message what did Hezekiah do? (3)
 - (c) In what practical way did Isaiah help Hezekiah? (2)
 - (d) What sign did Isaiah give to Hezekiah that he should recover? (2)
3. Read 1 Chronicles 22.
 - (a) List four materials which David prepared for the building of the temple. (4)
 - (b) Which verse tells us that David had wanted to build an house for the Lord? (1)
 - (c) Why did the Lord not allow him to do this? (2)
 - (d) Who was chosen for this great work? (1)
 - (e) What does this teach us? (2)

New Testament

1. Read Matthew 1:18-2:25.
 - (a) How many times did the angel of the Lord appear to Joseph in a dream? (3)
 - (b) Give the meaning of the names: (1) Jesus (2) Emmanuel. (2)
 - (c) How were the wise men from the east guided? (1)
 - (d) When they saw "the young child" what did they do? (2)
 - (e) What gifts did they bring? (3)
2. Read Matthew 6:19-34.
 - (a) Where should we lay up treasures for ourselves? (1)
 - (b) Give two reasons for doing this. (2)
 - (c) Which verse warns us against serving God and the world at the same time? (1)
 - (d) Which three cares do we spend much of our time thinking about? (3)
 - (e) What are we commanded to seek first? (2)
 - (f) What promise is given to those who obey this command? (1)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 22 in the Shorter Catechism:

- How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man? (3)

Junior Section (11 and 12 years old)

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

Old Testament

1. Read 2 Kings chapter 22
 - (a) Josiah sent Shaphan with a message for Hilkiah the high priest. What was the message? (2)
(See verses 3-6)
 - (b) What did they find in the temple? (1)
 - (c) What did Shaphan do with what they found? (1)
 - (d) What effect did this have on Josiah and why did he do this? (See verses 11,13) (2)
 - (e) List four reasons why Josiah was promised he would not see all the evil that God was

- going to bring. (See verse 19.) (4)
2. Read 1 Chronicles 28. Give the number of *one* verse that tells us that:
- (a) David was not allowed to build the temple because he had been a man of war: verse _____. (1)
 - (b) God chose Solomon to be king after David: verse _____. (1)
 - (c) David gave Solomon the pattern for the temple: verse _____. (1)
 - (d) David encouraged Solomon to be strong in the Lord when building the temple: verse _____. (1)

New Testament

1. Read James chapter 4 and then complete the following sentences.
- (a) We are enemies of God when we
 - (b) The devil will flee from us when we
 - (c) God will draw nigh to us when we
 - (d) The Lord will lift us up when we
 - (e) We should add "God willing" to our plans because (5)
2. Read Revelation 21:10-27, where heaven is described as a beautiful city.
- (a) How is the street of the city described? (1)
 - (b) Why was there no temple in the city? (1)
 - (c) Write down the words which tell us why the city had no need of the sun nor the moon. (1)
 - (d) Who will enter this city? (1)
3. Read Matthew 2.
- (a) What led the wise men to the place where Jesus was born? (1)
 - (b) Write out the verse that tells us that the chief priests and scribes knew that Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem. (1)
 - (c) How did the wise men know not to return to Herod after finding Jesus? (1)
 - (d) Some verses in this chapter refer to Old Testament prophecies. Look up these Old Testament verses and match them to a verse in Matthew chapter 2.
- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Jeremiah 31:15 | Matthew 2: _____ |
| Hosea 11:1 | Matthew 2: _____ |
| Micah 5:2 | Matthew 2: _____ |
- (3)

Memory Exercise

- Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 43 in the Shorter Catechism: What is the preface to the ten commandments? (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 the verses in the first column and then fill in the rest of each line in the table below by giving the answer to each of these questions:
- (a) What was the name of the King?
 - (b) What was the age of the King when he began to rule?
 - (c) What was the age of the King when he finished his rule?
 - (d) Did he do what was right before God? Answer Yes or No
- (6)

Verses	Name of King	Age at start	Age at end	Did he rule well?
2 Kings 11:21 2 Kings 12:1-3				
2 Kings 14:1-4				
2 Kings 18:1-3				

2. Read 2 Kings 24:8-15 and 2 Kings 25:27-30.

- (a) Was King Jehoiachin a good King?
 - (b) Which King came to fight against Jerusalem?
 - (c) Which country were Jehoiachin and his family taken to?
 - (d) Where was Jehoiachin put?
 - (e) Which King was later kind to him? (5)
3. Read 1 Chronicles 10.
- (a) What are the names of King Saul's sons? (verse 2) (1)
 - (b) What did the brave men of Jabesh-gilead do? (verses 11,12) (2)
 - (c) What were the two special sins which caused Saul's death? (verses 13,14) (2)

New Testament

1. Read James 4:13-17.
- (a) What is our life likened to?
 - (b) What should we say when making plans for tomorrow?
 - (c) How is sin described? (3)
2. Read 1 Peter 1:24,25.
- (a) What is our life likened to?
 - (b) What will last for ever? (2)
3. Read 1 John 2:15-17.
- (a) What should we not love?
 - (b) What is to come to an end?
 - (c) Who will last for ever? (3)
4. Read Revelation 22:7 and 14.
- Who are the "blessed" people that will enter heaven? (2)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write down the answer to Question 85 in the Shorter Catechism:
 What doth God require of us, that we may escape His wrath and curse due to us
 for sin? (3)

Lower Primary Section (8 years old and under)

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

Old Testament

The Assyrians were attacking Jerusalem. The Assyrian army captain Rabshakeh and King Sennacherib sent messages and a letter to good King Hezekiah to make him think that God could not save Jerusalem.

1. What two things did Hezekiah do after reading the letter?
 He s _____ it before the Lord. (2 Kings 19:14)
 and he p _____ before the Lord. (2 Kings 19:15)
2. Fill in these words from Hezekiah's prayer.
 O L _____ our G _____, I beseech thee, s _____ thou us. (2 Kings 19:19)
3. Did God hear Hezekiah's prayer? (2 Kings 19:20)
4. What did God promise Hezekiah?
 For I will d _____ this city to s _____ it for mine o _____ sake. (2 Kings 19:34)
5. Who killed thousands of Assyrians? The a _____ of the L _____.
 (2 Kings 19:35)

New Testament

John the Baptist preached in the wilderness of Judaea.

1. What did he say? R____ ye: for the kingdom of h____ is at hand.
(Matthew 3:2)
2. What were his clothes (raiment) made of? (Matthew 3:4)
3. What was his belt (girdle) made of? (Matthew 3:4)
4. What did he eat as well as locusts? (Matthew 3:4)
5. What was the name of the river where he baptised people? (Matthew 3:6)
6. When Jesus was baptized, the Spirit of God came down on him. Jesus saw the Spirit of God descending like a _____. (Matthew 3:16)
7. What did the voice from heaven say?
This is m_ beloved S_, in whom I a_ well p____. (Matthew 3:17)

Overseas Names for Exercise 1

Senior Section: *Auckland:* Rachel Campbell, Nathanael Newton. *Bulawayo:* Taklanda Moyo. *Connecticut:* Nathanael Mack. *Fountain Inn:* Phinehas Kerr. *Grafton:* Ronnie Zuill. *Santa Fe:* Julia Smith. *Singapore:* Naomi Chai Shi.

Intermediate Section: *Auckland:* John Campbell, Amelia Smith. *Bulawayo:* Miles Mabetha. *Carterton:* Aaron Verheij. *Chesley:* Kara Zekveld. *Fountain Inn:* Ehud Kerr. *Grafton:* William Marshall. *Mahala Zuill.* *Santa Fe:* Jenna Smith.

Junior Section: *Auckland:* Peter Campbell, Timothy Newton, Aaron Smith. *Bulawayo:* Lastgirl Bhebhe, Gugulethu Ndlovu, Mikeila Nyakai, Gugulethu Nyoni. *Carterton:* Blake Verheij. *Fountain Inn:* Othniel Kerr. *Gisborne:* Shona Hembd. *Grafton:* Shyla Hawkins, Levi Kidd, Eve Zuill. *Santa Fe:* Cameron Smith, Olivia Smith. *Münster:* Clara Rösner.

Upper Primary Section: *Auckland:* Joseph Campbell, James Newton, Owen Smith. *Bulawayo:* Elson Lunga, Tsumbedzo Mbedzi, Gift Moyo, Moreblessing Nyakai, Nyasha Sibanda. *Carterton:* Chelsea Verheij. *Chesley:* Angela Tuinier. *Fountain Inn:* Isabel A Kerr. *Gisborne:* Brooklyn Hembd. *Grafton:* Elijah Zuill. *Santa Fe:* Alexander Smith, Charlotte Smith. *Sydney:* Ethan Macdonald.

Lower Primary Section: *Auckland:* David and Marion Campbell, Keith Smith. *Carterton:* Lana de Boer, Ruby Verheij. *Chesley:* Daniel Kuiper, Meleah Tuinier. *Fountain Inn:* Tala-Linn and Zerubbabel Kerr. *Gisborne:* Ashley and Preston Hembd. *Grafton:* Harrison Kidd. *Münster:* Conrad Rösner. *Santa Fe:* Adele Smith, Anastasia Smith. *Sydney:* Abigail, Hugh and Lachlan Macdonald, David and Sarah Steel.

2021 UK Youth Conference Update

This year's Youth Conference was arranged for April 7-9, God willing, at Strathallan School, Forgandenny, Perth, PH2 9EG. At the time of sending this Magazine to the printer, this arrangement still holds. But a further assessment will be made later as to whether it will be safe to hold the Conference. If the Conference goes ahead, the papers intended for 2020 will be given this year.

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