

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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Influence

An influencer is someone who has the power to affect what people decide to buy. This power may flow from the person's knowledge about what is being sold – a computer or a book, for instance – as they air their views on social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube. Or their power may flow from the influencer being well-known as a celebrity that lots of people admire. They may have no great knowledge, but people will pay attention to them and to their views because of how well known they are as singers or footballers, for instance.

Some influencers may have just hundreds of followers, but others may have hundreds of millions. To be an influencer can pay very well indeed; those who are most successful may receive more than £1 million for a single post on social media.

Clearly it is important not to be carried away with the idea that these influencers are always – or even often – worth listening to. Indeed, many of them may not know more than you do about the product they are being paid to promote. But by listening to an influencer trying to persuade you, and lots of other people, to buy some item that you do not need or that you will not find helpful, you are only likely to lose some money – though if you are short of money, that may be serious enough.

But there are lots of people who may influence you in other ways. Most serious is the influence that various people may have on you in moral or spiritual matters. For instance, you may meet lots of people at school or at university or at work. It is possible that some of them may have a good influence on you, encouraging you to follow true religion and to keep God's commandments.

But sadly it is much more likely that those you meet would encourage you away from true religion and from keeping God's commandments. You may find them helpful in other ways, helping you with your studies or with your work, but you should never make such people your close friends. Remember that God has authority over you, that you are under an obligation to keep all His commands. Remember too that the religion of the Bible – living a godly

life of sincere faith in Jesus Christ – is the only safe way through this world and the only way that leads to heaven.

You should ask yourself what kind of influence your friends have on you. For instance, do they try to draw you into sin, making sin attractive? Are you more likely or less likely to indulge in sin by having these people as your friends? Does their conversation make you less likely to think about God? Do their jokes have the effect of making you think in the same filthy way? Do they use bad language? And you should act in the light of the answer you give to these questions.

Now it may be difficult for some of you to find friends who would show you a good example. But surely it is better to have no friends at all, at least where you live, than to get too close to people who will only do harm to your soul. Remember that you can ask God to give you good friends, who will do you good. Remember too that you must seek blessings from God for your own soul. Then you should have a good influence on other people.

The Bible tells us: “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed” (Proverbs 13:20). So if you have wise friends, who believe in God and look to Him for grace to keep His commandments, they should have a good influence on you.

On the other hand, if your companions are foolish – if they have no thought of seeking the Lord and reject the authority of His law – the danger is that they will influence you to follow them more and more in their ungodly ways. If you follow them, you are in danger of being destroyed by being sent to a lost eternity. How earnest we should be to look at life from the perspective of the Bible and to seek “the Lord while He may be found” (Isaiah 55:6). In other words, we should seek Him *now*.

Not only do social media exert a lot of influence on most people; so also do other media, such as the internet and television. Various individuals are telling listeners and viewers what they should think and, almost certainly, what they think will have no relation to what the Bible says. We need to be very selective in what we accept.

The important question is: What does *God* want us to believe? In other words, What is God saying to us in the Bible? No matter how many people believe a particular idea – for example, that human life came into existence through a long process of evolution – we should not believe it if it is opposed to what the Bible teaches. We can be sure that everything the Bible says is true, that it is totally reliable – no matter how many people disagree.

And no matter how many people with influence disagree with what God, in the Bible, tells us about how we should live, we can be sure that God is right and they are wrong. God told the Israelites: “Thou shalt not follow a

multitude to do evil” (Exodus 23:2); these words apply to us today just as surely as they applied to the Israelites when they were in the wilderness. No matter how much influence anyone has, it is to God we must listen. He is always right; we can always safely listen to Him. Let us seek grace to do so.

The Silent Prayer Meeting

In a small American village, a prayer meeting was held every week in the old school. Very few came regularly, and only two men took part. The church had no minister at this time, and very few converted people lived in the village. Indeed, these two men were almost the only people in the place who lived as true Christians should. Those who were openly ungodly mocked them; yet those who had at least some outward regard for religion respected the way the men kept on following a godly life.

One year there was a severe outbreak of typhus fever in the village. The first man to die of the disease was well known for bad language and hardness of heart. When it became obvious that he was going to die, someone told him so. Probably it was the same person who asked him if he was ready to die. He answered, “I don’t suppose I am fit to die, but I might as well go now as ever, but it is not likely that I should be any better if I should get well”. And no one ever saw any sign of a change in his lack of concern about where he would spend eternity. He seems to have continued completely careless about his soul till he died.

People in the village became more and more worried about their health as other people took ill and died, nine of them in the end. When the evening of the prayer meeting came, the school was crowded. But no one was present to conduct it. One of the men was away from home and the other was unwell. After waiting for half an hour, someone suggested that they send a message to this second man. The messenger was soon back at the school; he explained that the man was ill, but he did not deliver the rest of the message he was given – which was to say that death was going about, “and they must not wait for others to pray for them; they must pray for themselves”.

The people left the building in silence. Some of them were asking themselves the questions: Is there no one in this crowded room who can pray? If we are not prepared to pray, are we prepared to die?

One of the men present told a younger one: “It is rather a sad thing that, among so many, there was no one who could offer a prayer”.

The young man answered, “You seem to be serious”.

“I think it is time we were all serious.”

"I have felt so for some time."

The young man said he would go and see how sick the man was who did not come to the prayer meeting. But his real reason was a hope that the man would speak to him about his soul.

After he arrived at the house, the older man asked him: "Have you been to the prayer meeting?"

"I have."

"Who took the lead of it?"

"No one."

"Were there many present?"

"The schoolhouse was crowded."

"And no one among them could pray?"

"We dispersed when we found you could not come."

"And so you were all speechless before God! Poor souls! I am afraid they will be speechless before Him at another and much greater gathering."

The young man was obviously affected by these words. The older man said nothing more for some time. Perhaps he was considering what he should say and was asking God to direct him to say what would be most suitable. Then, with a kindly look, he said, "Young man, you are not happy".

"Indeed I am not."

"God has made abundant provision for your happiness. Whose fault is it that you are not happy?"

"It is my own."

"Of course it is. . . . All [God's] laws are fitted to make you happy. He lays no heavy burdens on His servants. His yoke is easy, and His burden is light. He requires you to have a new heart; for He knows you can never be happy with that wicked heart. He requires you to leave off sinning, for the fruit of sin is misery. He requires you to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, for [believing] is the only way by which you can be delivered from the burden of guilt."

"How shall I repent and believe in Christ?"

"Do you wish to do it?"

"I do"; the young man replied, and added that he had been in trouble since someone's funeral.

The older man then told him: "I can give you no advice till I know the state of your mind. What is the cause of your trouble?"

"I know that I am not prepared to die."

"The fear of death and of future punishment then is the chief cause of your trouble?"

"It is."

“Do your sins give you any trouble?”

The young man answered that, if he had not sinned, he would not have had any fears about the future.

The older man went on asking questions, until he was satisfied that he understood the state of the other man’s soul. Then he spoke to him about Christ and Him crucified. And the result of the silent prayer meeting was “the hopeful conversion of a soul”.

The outbreak of typhus fever soon came to an end, but sadly no one else seemed to have benefited spiritually. If you are still unconverted, it is dangerous when death or serious illness comes close to you and you do not profit from it spiritually. Afterwards God may, more than ever, leave you to yourself, to go on in unbelief. And that would be unspeakably dangerous.

Best Day Ever!

Rev K M Watkins

A few months ago, the billionaire Jeff Bezos had a brief flight into space. When he returned to earth, he was reported to have said, “Best day ever!” Was he right? Seeing the earth from so high above it was no doubt an extraordinary experience. The rest of us see God’s marvellous creation from earth, and “the heavens declare the glory of God” (Psalm 19:1). When we look up into the sky above us on a starry night, we can feel something of the Psalmist’s admiration when he said:

“When I look up unto the heav’ns, which Thine own fingers fram’d,
Unto the moon, and to the stars, which were by Thee ordain’d”

(Psalm 8:3, metrical version).

To look back down upon the earth from the edge of space, as Mr Bezos did, must have been amazing. Astronauts have said that the experience of seeing it changes them for the rest of their lives. They never forget it. But is it right to describe it as the “best day ever”?

Perhaps it was the best day that Mr Bezos has experienced in his whole life. If so, that rich man is in fact a very poor man! Every real Christian – even the poorest – has had a day very much better than that, a day when he saw much better things than Mr Bezos did. We mean the day when he was converted by the Holy Spirit and first believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. On that day, “the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared” to him (Titus 3:4). On that day, he saw “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6). On that day, the eyes of his understanding were opened. He understood

that Christ, the Son of God, became man, lived the only perfect life ever lived, and suffered the death of the cross, taking upon Himself the punishment of His people's sin. On that day, he met the risen Saviour.

What a day that was! Truly, that was the best day ever! Of that day, the new believer can say: "This is the day God made, in it we'll joy triumphantly" (Psalm 118:24, metrical version). On that day he was lifted so high that he was blessed with "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3). All his sins were forgiven. He was accepted by God. He became God's child. Christ was now his friend, for ever. A new life opened up before him: he would live all the rest of his days for his precious Saviour. These are the true riches. These really are the best things.

The unconverted person has no day to match this. No experience can equal the experience of being saved. No day can compare with the day when a person is reconciled to God and saved from the wrath to come. During their lives, rich people have days when they meet all kinds of important people. But the poor sinner who believes the gospel had a day when he met Christ, the Son of God, who is infinitely higher than the best of the earth, who is "fairer than the children of men" (Psalm 45:2).

Added to this, the true Christian has an even better day to look forward to – the day when he will go to heaven. The Apostle Paul spoke of death like that. It would be "far better" than continuing to live, because it would take him "to be with Christ". That is the "best day ever!" No wonder Paul had "a desire to depart" (Philippians 1:23). At death, believers are set free from all sin and sorrow. Then they see Christ as He is, and are made like Him. Then their souls are "made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory" (*Shorter Catechism*, answer 37). Mr Bezos travelled to the edge of space, but if he dies without repentance and faith in Christ, he will never make it to heaven.

In Luke 16, the Lord Jesus spoke about a certain rich man who would have found it hard to choose his best day ever, for he "fared sumptuously every day" and all his lifetime he enjoyed "good things". But his last day on earth was definitely not his best. Rather, it was his worst, for as soon as he died he found himself in the unending torments of hell. He was not sent to hell because he was rich, but because he did not believe the Bible, did not repent of his sin, and did not believe in Christ for salvation. That is how it will be for all, rich and poor alike, who die without Christ. Some unbelievers have many good days in this life, but the day they die will not be a good one. Many unbelievers have their share of bad days in this life, but the day they die is always the worst day ever. However high they go in their worldly lives, nothing will stop them sinking deep into the bottomless pit when they die.

But Jesus spoke about another man – a very poor man called Lazarus, who was sick and endured many “evil things” in his lifetime. Death for him was the best day ever – not simply because it ended his earthly sufferings, but because it took him straight to heaven, where all his sorrows were left behind, including sin. He went to heaven, not because he was poor, but because he had believed in Christ for salvation. So it will be for all others who do the same, rich or poor. If you trust in Christ, you will one day arrive in heaven and then you will say, “Best day ever!” You will never come back down to earth and you will never fall into hell. You will be with the Lord Jesus for ever.

For Junior Readers

A Day of Prayer

Do you know what the word *armistice* means? An armistice is an agreement between two sides in a war, that they will stop fighting while an attempt is made to arrange a lasting peace. The Armistice which brought the fighting of the First World War to an end took place at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918!

When the war had started in August 1914, nobody realised how long it would last. In fact most people thought it would be over by the end of that year. But it dragged on for over four years, with very many lives lost on both sides.

Although Britain and her allies were preserved from disaster, they were not successful in pushing back the Germans on the Western Front in France. In fact, in March 1918, things were looking very bad, as the Germans succeeded in pushing their line forward a long way. They nearly drove a wedge between the British and the French, who were fighting on the same side. That would have been disastrous.

This situation was of great concern to praying people in Britain. During this time, many individuals and churches and some organisations urged people to seek God in prayer. Yet the Government still made no official move to appoint a national day of prayer. It was not until July 1918 that there was talk of this happening. The Government then chose August 4 as the date for a national day of prayer, exactly four years since the outbreak of the war.

As soon as that decision was taken, there was a remarkable change on the Western Front. On July 18, the French forced the Germans to make a hasty withdrawal on one part of the line. Then on August 8, four days after the Day of Prayer, the Battle of Amiens began and a breakthrough was made.

It was so serious a breakthrough that a German General called it “the black day of the German army”.

This was the first of a series of victories in the British sector which, with God's help, was to bring about the complete downfall of the German army. The Lord's help was seen in more favourable weather conditions, as well as in many other ways. Was that not a wonderful answer to prayer? As the Psalmist said, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord” – and who publicly acknowledges God and seeks His help.

As a result of this, a message to stop all fighting was sent to all units of the British army on the morning of November 11. The armistice had to be signed by the Lieutenant Colonel who was on duty that day, and that soldier was a Christian, Lieutenant Colonel William Dobbie.

He wrote about his experiences of God's help throughout the war and pointed to the example of King Asa (2 Chronicles 14), who was threatened by a great army of Ethiopians. What did he do? “Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, Thou art our God; let not man prevail against Thee.”

And what happened? We are told: “So the Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled”. The Lord answered his prayer too!

J van Kralingen

William Hewitson and Madeira

4. Further Persecution

Last month's section of this Youth Conference paper was headed, “spreading the gospel in difficult circumstances”. Hewitson, in the face of Roman Catholic persecution, went on teaching the converts, often in very small groups. A special emphasis of his work was to prepare men to become elders and deacons.

As Hewitson considered the spiritual situation of his people, he noted his belief that a good work was “still going silently forward”. There were some under conviction of sin, seeking the way of salvation. But Satan had been busy, not only in stirring persecution, but also in tempting some to commit serious sin. At least three gave in to temptation and had to be suspended from the Lord's table.

Before the end of the year 28 people were in prison for such offences as reading the Bible. Six of them had met on a Sabbath evening to read the Bible and pray together. Three others had been set free because they were arrested

illegally; yet they had to meet the cost of being looked after in jail! And a family of three learned that they were to be banished to Africa for seven years and fined heavily because they were no longer going to a priest to confess their sins; so they left the island and went to live in South America.

Not everyone could come to hear Hewitson at any particular time. So some would ask him: “When will we come, for we are very hungry?” – hungry, that is, for the Word of God. And Hewitson quoted the Saviour’s words: “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6). If theirs was a true hunger – and the minister clearly believed it was – then they would be filled with spiritual food and truly blessed in time and in eternity.

In early 1846, there were 105 people on his communion roll, though a few of them had by now left the island. There were now two young men that he hoped might become ministers in Madeira. He continually felt under threat of arrest and was now moving his services from one place to another. Soon afterwards he heard that the governor had directed one of the judges to proceed against him, but the judge refused on the grounds that he had no authority over him.

Hewitson decided that it was wise to leave the island for some months, in the hope of being able to return and continue services there for some time longer. But first he wanted to finish teaching doctrine to the men he hoped would become catechists and to set apart some of them to be elders and deacons. He believed that there were thousands of Madeirans who would have willingly come to listen to the gospel if the authorities would allow them to do so.

A man who wished to become a member of the congregation told the minister that he found the best way of overcoming sinful thoughts was to go at once to pray or to sing praise to God. He also said, “When I awake at night in my bed, I always remember the Lord”. Hewitson was probably very much encouraged by the conversion of a wicked man who, he understood, “had been one of the chief tools of the priesthood in carrying into effect their deeds of violence”. Hewitson was able to continue his classes until April. He then examined the “students” carefully and went on to ordain six men as elders and several others as deacons. They would look after the affairs of the congregation while he was away and conduct the meetings. He left Madeira in early May 1846.

On the morning of August 2, a Sabbath, over 30 converts gathered in an English family’s house to listen to a pastoral letter from Hewitson; there was also prayer and reading of the Bible. As they were about to leave, a mob was gathering at the gate, with a priest at their head. The first to leave was

Arsenio da Silva, the elder who had conducted the worship. As soon as he came outside, the priest pushed an image in his face, telling him to kiss it. But Arsenio managed, with difficulty, to escape, along with three or four others.

Near midnight, the mob were still doing their evil work, many of them drunk. They had been shouting, smashing windows, and hammering on the door with clubs. A Miss Rutherford, who lived in the house, pleaded with them calmly, gently, but firmly, to leave. She pointed out the danger they were in through breaking the law. At once she was told: "There are no laws for Calvinists", the name that was used for the Protestants in Madeira. And the mob again threatened to burn the house down if the door was not opened right away.

Eventually the door was forced open. It was a huge house, with 20 bedrooms, but at last the Protestants were discovered – on their knees praying to God. What better could they do in a time of such danger? But some of the mob grabbed a man and beat him with clubs, ready to drag him outside, intending to murder him. Just then police and soldiers appeared on the scene and, it would appear, brought the whole incident to an end.

Soon afterwards, in the early hours of a morning, Kalley walked to his gate with a friend who had been visiting. He overheard one of the soldiers who were supposed to be guarding his house chatting with some other men, one of whom was sharpening a large knife, preparing to kill Kalley with it the next day. It was obviously not safe for Kalley to remain any longer. He had to flee. He disguised himself as a country peasant and made for a friend's house.

That day services were held in honour of "our lady of the mount", the Virgin Mary, to whom Roman Catholics give a totally-unscriptural place as a mediator. Near noon the services of the day were over and a rocket was fired into the air; it was a signal for an attack on Kalley's home. Both he and his wife had already left, but the mob set his books and papers on fire and went off in search of their target. He was already being carried, hidden in a hammock, to the pier. There he was lowered into a boat, only moments before the mob reached the pier. The boat quickly brought him to a ship at anchor in the Bay. In God's kindness, he was now safe.

But what about the converts? Many of them fled at once to the mountains, where they were hunted down and some of them beaten savagely. Several women were beaten so badly that they were not expected to recover, and a man was actually murdered. There was no way that they could remain safely on the island and by mid-August a ship was taking 200 of them on board before sailing across the Atlantic to another island, Trinidad, in the West Indies. Someone described their attitude: "They never speak against their

persecutors; they only mention them with pity. Sometimes I overhear them in prayer, praying for their enemies and for those who have turned back again to houses of idolatry [presumably Roman Catholic chapels].” In the end, about 800 sailed from Madeira, most of them settling in Trinidad.

The success of Hewitson’s ministry on Madeira was, humanly speaking, the result of the simplicity and fullness with which he preached Christ. And in a pastoral letter which he wrote to the converts just after he left Madeira, he told them: “In Christ, we have forgiveness through His blood – the complete forgiveness of our sins. In Christ, all things are ours. Out of Christ we have nothing. Do you wish for pardon and peace? Go to Christ. In Him you will find all you want. Do you wish for light and wisdom? Do you wish to understand more the meaning of the Word of God? Go to Christ. He will send you the Spirit of light and truth.”

The minister went on: “Anything you need, either for the soul or for the body – for the life which now is or for that which is to come – go to Christ; all things are found in Christ. Christ is ready to give you all things abundantly. To be far from Christ is to be far from light, from life, from mercy and from heaven; to be far from Christ is to be near death, misery, hell; to be without Christ is to be without God, without hope in the world.”

Hewitson did indeed proclaim Christ simply and fully. And his life matched what he said; someone noted that his Christianity was “a living fellowship with a living Lord”.

Looking Around Us

Love and Marriage

A man called John was jailed for two years for burning down his home, to take “revenge” on his ex-wife; so the judge understood the matter. John had admitted arson and being reckless as to whether he was putting someone’s life in danger. Neighbours were shocked to see John sitting in his garden, sipping a glass of whisky, as he watched the flames coming from the back of the house. Someone asked him what he was doing, and he answered “I’m watching it burn”.

John had spent some years repairing the cottage, which was 200 years old. It was to be sold for £550 000 soon after the fire, but the price the new owners paid for it was only £320 000 as a result of the damage caused by the fire. The fire service were able to put out the flames before even worse damage was caused. Presumably if he alone had owned the house, it would have been no crime to have set it on fire apart from the danger of damage to

other people and to their property. But the house was partly owned by his ex-wife, and she lost out badly through John's actions.

The judge also told John: "You would appear to have been entirely consumed by hatred for your wife at that time and this was revenge on your part". This is not how a marriage should end.

Clearly this marriage did end disastrously. Who was to blame for the breakdown? That is not at all clear from the news report. One might be inclined to blame John because of what he admitted to doing afterwards, but that does not mean that he was responsible for breaking up the marriage. There may have been faults on both sides; there often are.

But John and his wife *were* married. So they took vows to each other – in other words, they made promises to each other before God. They promised to love each other, until death would part them.

Marriage is God's gift. He brought Adam and Eve together in marriage. And even after the Fall, now that all human beings are sinners, we still have God's gift of marriage. It must be between one man and one woman, and it will only work where there is sincere love between them. Both the husband and wife must feel their responsibility to continue loving each other, and they must remain faithful to each other.

As sinners, those who marry must realise that they will make mistakes, that their love to each other will be less than perfect. So they should realise they need God's help to continue loving each other, even when they notice imperfections in their partner's actions, words and attitudes. So they should pray for God's blessing on their marriage – on themselves and on their spouse. This is one good reason for having a worship service in connection with the wedding: so that the minister would pray for God's blessing on the couple and their marriage. And all those present should be joining in the petitions offered to God, for His blessing.

But, sadly, a large proportion of marriages today end in divorce. No doubt, if there was prayer when the man and woman became friends and then got married, far fewer marriages would end in divorce. And if the husband and wife would continue to pray for themselves and for each other and have family worship together, very few marriages would fall apart.

Clearly something – we do not know what – went wrong with John's marriage. It ended up with hatred, at least on John's side, according to the judge, and a desire for revenge. But revenge is for God, not for us; He says, "To Me belongeth vengeance" (Deuteronomy 32:35).

We should seek to commit ourselves to God always, that He would care for us, especially our souls, and that He would keep us from evil. Whether married or single, we always need God's blessing.

For Younger Readers

The Poor Man and the Gold Coins

One evening, a good man and his son sat beside the road near the gate of the town. The father had bought a small loaf of bread in the town. He now picked it up and broke it into two parts. He gave one part to his son to eat. They thanked God for His goodness in giving them some food.

As the father broke up the bread further, he felt something hard. They were very surprised when some money fell out. These were big gold coins; so it was a lot of money. How surprised they were! The boy was very glad to see the money, because they were very poor.

But his father told him: "Do not touch the money; it is not ours".

"But whose is it, Father, if it is not ours?" answered the boy. The father did not know whose it was. But he thought that perhaps the baker made some mistake. Yet it was very unlikely indeed that the baker made a mistake of that kind.

The son said, "But, Father, you are very poor. And as you bought the loaf, it is yours. The baker may say it is his, but be telling a lie."

"Now, my son," the father said, "listen to me. I bought the loaf but I did not buy the gold pieces that were in it." If the baker sold it, not knowing that some of them had got into the bread, the father believed it would be dishonest for him to keep it.

He told his son to remember that Jesus Christ has told us to do to others as we would have others do to us. Even if the baker would tell a lie about the gold, that was no reason for the man to keep it.

He said, "I am poor indeed, but that is no sin. We may never be rich, but we may always be honest. Yes, my boy, trust God and walk in his ways. Now, run to the baker and bring him here."

So the boy went into the town to speak to the baker at his shop. The baker came with the boy. He wondered why the boy asked him to come to the roadside to his father.

"Friend," the man said to the baker, "you have made some mistake and almost lost your money." The man showed the baker the gold and explained how he had found it. "Is it yours?" he asked; "If so, take it away."

The baker looked at the pieces of gold on the grass and said, "You are indeed an honest man. My neighbour David spoke the truth when he said you were the most honest man in the town.

"Now I will tell you about the gold. A stranger came to my shop three days ago and gave me that loaf; so I did not bake it. He told me to sell it cheaply, or give it away, to the most honest poor man I knew. I asked David

to send you to me today. And as you would not take the loaf for nothing, I sold it to you for the last penny in your purse, as you know. So the loaf and its treasure is yours, and God grant you a blessing with it!"

Scripture and Catechism Exercises

General Information 2021-22

There will be three exercises, the first in this *Magazine*, the second next February and the third in May. Search the Scriptures, and may the Lord bless His Word to you so that it would be mixed with faith in your hearts.

Please read the following rules carefully before you begin:

1. Your section *for the whole year* is decided by your age on *1 October 2020*. Stay in that section for the three sets of exercises. You may miss a prize or award by changing sections.
2. Exercises are to be in the correctors' hands by 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. You should say on your first answer paper if you wish your name to appear in *The Young People's Magazine* to show that the corrector has received your exercise.
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.
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. The names of the award and prize winners will be published in *The Young People's Magazine*.
5. Teachers and others working with young people can arrange for groups to do the exercises, and correctors will be glad to hear from them.
6. The exercises are based on the Bible Reading Cards which will be distributed through the ministers of the congregations (or they may be obtained from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE). It is very important for you to read God's Word every day. The exercises this year are based on the following Bible readings from cards C and D: *Exercise 1*: Job 27 to Psalm 128, and Luke 1 to John 6. *Exercise 2*: Psalm 129 to Isaiah 40, and John 7 to Acts 19. *Exercise 3*: Isaiah 41 to Jeremiah 46, 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.

Exercise 1 2021-22

All answers from *overseas* should be sent to *Miss Naomi Clemence*, 60 Dougalston Gardens South, Milngavie, Glasgow, G62 6HT. The correctors should have your answers before the end of November.

Senior Section (15 years old and over)UK answers to *Mrs J Hicklin, 22 Lasswade Road, Eskbank, EH22 3EF.***Old Testament**

1. Jesus spoke about what was written in the Psalms concerning Him (Luke 24:44). When you answer the following, give the Scripture references from the book of Psalms (prose version):

- (a) Quote a sentence from each of Psalms 40, 110 and 145, one referring to the Saviour's office as Prophet, another to His office as Priest, and the third to His office as King. (6)
- (b) From Psalm 41, quote a verse about His betrayal. (2)
- (c) From Psalm 118 quote words about His rejection. (2)
- (d) Give the numbers of two Psalms (often sung on communion occasions) in which the Saviour's sufferings are described in the minutest detail. (2)
- (e) Read Psalms 16, 68 and 98. Give the number of:
 - (1) a verse in which we read about Christ's resurrection,
 - (2) a verse in which we read about His ascension,
 - (3) a verse in which we read about His second coming. (6)

New Testament

- 1. Read Luke 15.
 - (a) What do you understand by a parable? (2)
 - (b) What did the Pharisees accuse the Saviour of? (2)
 - (c) Summarise in your own words the first two parables that Jesus told in response. (6)
 - (d) How do these parables justify Jesus' desire to associate with sinful people? (2)
- 2. (a) How did the prodigal son become so poor? (2)
 - (b) What occupation was he obliged to follow? (1)
 - (c) How do we know how hungry he felt? (2)
 - (d) Explain how the thought of home came into his mind. (3)
 - (e) What did he plan to say to his father? (2)
 - (f) Describe his reunion with his father and the reception he received. (4)
 - (g) What was the elder brother's reaction and the father's explanation? (3)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 21 in the Shorter Catechism: Who is the Redeemer of God's elect? (3)

Intermediate Section (13 and 14 years old)UK answers to *Mrs M Munro, 3 Borve, Isle of Harris, HS3 3HT.***Old Testament**

- 1. Read Job 29. Job remembers his former prosperity and honour.
 - (a) Quote two verses where Job describes the times when he enjoyed God's favour. (2)
 - (b) Quote two verses where Job describes how he was respected by people in high places. (2)
 - (c) Quote two verses which describe Job's kindness to those in need. (2)
- 2. Read Job 30:1-10. Job's honour was turned to contempt.
 - (a) Give five ways in which Job was treated with contempt. (5)
 - (b) Who were the people who treated Job with contempt? (2)
- 3. Read Job 40:1-5 and Job 42.
 - (a) What did Job learn about himself after the Lord had spoken? (2)
 - (b) What was his response? (2)
- 4. Read Psalm 1.
 - (a) Name three situations in which the blessed man will *not* be found. (3)
 - (b) Where is the blessed man's delight? (1)
 - (c) Where will the ungodly and sinners not be found? (2)

New Testament

- 1. Read Luke 15.

- (a) The three parables in this chapter teach similar lessons. What are the parables about? (3)
 - (b) Why is there joy in heaven? (1)
 - (c) One parable is about a son who left home. Where did he go and how did he spend his time there? (2)
 - (d) How did he try to survive when the country was hit by famine? (2)
 - (e) When "he came to himself" what did he decide to do? (2)
 - (f) Describe the reception he received from his father and the benefits he received. (5)
2. Read Luke 22:46-62
- (a) What did Jesus advise His disciples to do so that they would be able to resist temptation? (1)
 - (b) Which one of Jesus' disciples betrayed Him? (1)
 - (c) Which one of Jesus' disciples denied Him? (1)
 - (d) Which one of the two sincerely repented of what he did? (1)
 - (e) What lesson did this disciple learn? (2)
3. Read Luke 23:20-38. Find the verses in Psalm 22 which are fulfilled in:
- (a) Luke 23:34 (one verse) (1)
 - (b) Luke 23:35 (two verses) (2)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 87 in the Shorter Catechism: What is repentance unto life? (3)

Junior Section (11 and 12 years old)

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

Old Testament

1. Read Psalm 62.
- (a) David repeats in two verses why he shall not be moved. What are his three reasons? (3)
 - (b) "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." In your own words, explain what this means. (2)
 - (c) Where are true riches to be found? (Matthew 19:21 will help) (1)
2. Psalm 92 is a Psalm for the Sabbath day. Read the Psalm and answer the following questions:
- (a) What is a good thing to do? (2)
 - (b) What should we do in the morning and in the evening? (2)
 - (c) What will happen to the Lord's enemies? (1)
 - (d) Describe two things that will happen to the righteous. (2)
 - (e) What are we told about the righteous in old age? (2)
3. Read Psalm 113 and 1 Samuel 2:1-12.
- Write out the verse from Hannah's prayer which is similar to words found in Psalm 113. (1)

New Testament

1. Read Luke 5:1-11.
- (a) How long had Simon Peter and his friends been fishing without success? (1)
 - (b) What did Jesus tell them to do and what happened when they obeyed? (2)
 - (c) What effect did this have on Simon Peter? (2)
 - (d) What do you think Jesus meant when He said, "From henceforth thou shalt catch men"? (See also Matthew 4:17-20) (2)
2. Read John chapter 1. In this chapter who is referred to as:
- (a) An Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile (end of chapter)
 - (b) The voice of one crying in the wilderness (middle of chapter)
 - (c) Cephas (end of chapter)
 - (d) The King of Israel (end of chapter) (4)
3. Read John chapter 4:1-42 about the woman of Samaria.
- (a) Why was the woman surprised that Jesus asked her for a drink of water? (1)
 - (b) How is the "living water", which Jesus gives, different to the water in the well? (v13,14) (1)
 - (c) Why did the woman leave the well and go into the city of Sychar? (v28,29) (1)

- (d) Give two different reasons why the Samaritans believed on Christ? (v39-42) (2)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 45 in the Shorter Catechism:
Which is the first commandment? (3)

Upper Primary Section (9 and 10 years old)

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

These questions are all about prayer.

Old Testament

- Read Job 42:7-10.
 - Job prayed for his friends. What are their names? (3)
 - What did the Lord give Job after he prayed for his friends? (1)
- Psalm 17 is a prayer of David. Read verses 1-8. Give the number of the verse where:
 - he prays to be kept walking in God's paths without slipping, (1)
 - he prays to be hidden under the shadow of God's wings, (1)
 - he prays because he knows God hears his prayers. (1)
- Read Psalm 51:1-10. Match each *question* with the correct answer.
 - What is the first prayer in the psalm?* "and done this evil in Thy sight".
 - What is the next part of the verse that begins: "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned"?* "Create in me a clean heart, O God."
 - What is the last prayer in this part of the psalm?* A heart washed from its sins.
 - What is whiter than snow?* "Have mercy upon me, O God." (4)
- Read Psalm 66: 18-20. When will God not hear our prayers? (1)

New Testament

- Read Luke 5:12-16.
 - Write out the leper's prayer. (1)
 - Who prayed in the wilderness? (verse 16). (1)
- Read the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15:18-24. It is a picture of a sinner returning to God the Father in heaven. Put the sentences in the right order:
 - The father forgave him and welcomed him home.
 - The son prayed, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight".
 - The father saw him coming and ran to him.
 - The son saw his need and began to go home. (4)
- Read Luke 18:10-14.
 - How many went to pray in the temple? (1)
 - Write out the short prayer of seven words which pleased God. (1)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write down the answer to Question 98 in the Shorter Catechism:
What is prayer? (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

Job went through many terrible trials. Even his three friends said unkind things to him.

- Was God angry with the friends? Job 42:7
- Was God pleased with what Job said? Job 42:7
- What did Job have to do for his friends? (middle of verse 8). Job 42:8

4. Did things go well for Job when he prayed for these unkind friends?
Job 42:10
5. God gave Job even more afterwards than he had before. Fill in the missing words: So the Lord b_____ the latter end of J_____ more than his b_____.
Job 42:12
6. What does verse 17 say about how old Job was when he died? O_____ and f_____ of d_____.
Job 42:17

New Testament

These questions are from Luke chapter 10.

1. The Bible tells us how to love God and how to treat those around us. Fill in the words: Thou shalt l_____ the Lord thy God with all thy h_____, and with all thy soul, and with all thy s_____, and with all thy mind; and thy n_____ as thyself.
Luke 10:27
- Jesus told a parable to explain who is our neighbour. There was a man who fell among thieves and was left badly wounded.
2. Did the priest or Levite help him?
Luke 10:31,32
3. These men did not care. But who came to him and had compassion on him?
Luke 10:33
4. The man who was neighbour to him showed m_____.
Luke 10:36,37
5. Jesus said, G_____, and do thou l_____.
Luke 10:37

Overseas Prizes and Awards 2020-21

Senior Section

Prizes: *Auckland:* Rachel Campbell. *Connecticut:* Nathanael Mack.

Awards: *Auckland:* Nathanael Newton. *Singapore:* Naomi Chai Shi.

Intermediate Section

Prizes: *Auckland:* Amelia Smith. *Carterton:* Aaron Verheij. *Chesley:* Kara Zekveld. *Grafton:* William Marshall.

Awards: *Auckland:* John Campbell. *Calgary:* Kharis Chang. *Fountain Inn:* Ehud Kerr.

Junior Section

Prizes: *Carterton:* Blake Verheij. *Gisborne:* Shona Hembd. *Grafton:* Levi Kidd. *Münster:* Clara Rösner.

Awards: *Auckland:* Peter Campbell, Timothy Newton, Aaron Smith. *Calgary:* Khloe Chang.

Fountain Inn: Othniel Kerr.

Upper Primary Section

Prizes: *Auckland:* Owen Smith. *Fountain Inn:* Isabel Kerr. *Sydney:* Ethan Macdonald.

Awards: *Auckland:* Joseph Campbell. *Calgary:* Karsten Chang. *Carterton:* Chelsea Verheij. *Chesley:* Angela Tuinier. *Gisborne:* Brooklyn Hembd.

Lower Primary Section

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

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