

# The Young People's Magazine

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

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*“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*



***May 2022***

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**Cover Picture:** The Alps in south-east France, not far from where Felix Neff ministered. See page 85.

## The Young People's Magazine

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# The Young People's Magazine

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## The Need for Prayer

When John Newton arrived one Sabbath evening at his church in central London, he found a notice on the church. It said something like this: “A young man, having come into the possession of a very considerable fortune, desires the prayers of the congregation, that he may be preserved from the snares to which it exposes him”.

Newton noted what the young man had written and commented on it in his sermon. Perhaps that was when he said, “Now if the man had lost a fortune, the world would not have wondered to have seen him put up” such a notice.

It would not have been surprising for someone who had lost a lot of money to ask for help. Everyone could understand that. But when someone gained a large sum of money – probably because some well-off relative had died – most people would have assumed that he needed no one’s help. But as Newton said, “This man has been better taught”. God had taught him to realise that there were snares he might fall into when he became rich.

What snares was he in danger of falling into? Before he was rich, the young man possibly felt his need to depend on God to earn enough money to pay his way through life. Perhaps he prayed every day: “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11). Now he was in danger of *not* feeling his need; he might just assume that at every meal he would have plenty to eat; he might become altogether self-sufficient. He might trust in himself and forget that it is God who gives every good gift – including our food, but also everything else we need for our bodies and for our souls.

Are we too not in danger of being self-sufficient in many things? Many people today do not need to ask themselves where their next meal is going to come from. They do not ask God to provide their food. Of course, many people who *are* short of money do not pray that God would give them food. They are trying to do without God and, as a result, they are struggling with the difficulties of life.

Think of the rich farmer Jesus spoke about, who had a huge harvest and assumed that he had “much goods laid up for many years”; so he could take

his “ease, eat, drink, and be merry” (Luke 12:19). He did not feel his need of God; he did not ask for God’s blessing to follow that wonderful harvest. But that night he died and, because he was “not rich toward God”, he could not have a blessed eternity, although he seemed to have all that he would need for many years to come, if he lived on in this world.

This man was rich, but he was a fool. That was what God called him. Here was a man who should have prayed for God’s blessing on his soul, so that he would seek the Lord and His salvation. Then he would be ready to go to heaven whenever God would call him away from this world. But the farmer did not pray for these things. And he would have done well to ask others around him – godly people who prayed – to go before God, on his behalf, to ask for spiritual blessings.

Here is another of the snares that the young man needed to be kept from. He was in danger of forgetting his soul and focusing on the things of this world – especially now that he had the money to buy lots of things. The rich fool is an example of someone who fell into that snare. He forgot his soul and focused on the things of this world.

It may have been about the same time in Newton’s life that, on a Wednesday, a woman spoke to him on the steps of the church. She told him that she had won a quarter share of a prize in a lottery. The prize was £10 000, and her quarter share would now be worth about £190 000. She expected that Newton would congratulate her, but he just told her that he would try to pray for her.

Gambling is wrong, whether it takes the form, for example, of a lottery or a raffle, or betting on horses or football. It is making a bad use of God’s providence, and He is in control of everything. And gambling takes money out of the pockets of many people who cannot afford to part with it; it gives a lot of money to a few people, encouraging others to covet a big prize and buy the next lot of tickets. So Newton would not encourage the woman in her sin by congratulating her, and he knew the snares that such a large sum of money could bring her into. She needed people to pray for her, as did the young man. But the young man knew his need of prayer; he knew something about his danger. The woman, it seems, did not.

How much we need to pray for ourselves, even if we do not have much money! We will meet many temptations and many other dangers as we pass through this world. How much we need to be protected from these snares! David knew that “the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them” (Psalm 34:7). We can think of Christ as the Angel of the Lord, and no doubt David prayed for the Angel to watch over him and deliver him from every temptation and every other danger he might



meet. So should we. We should pray for His care if we are experiencing difficult circumstances in our lives, but also if we are experiencing good things. We should pray to God whatever our circumstances.

Remember always that our greatest needs are our spiritual needs—to have God’s Word applied to our souls by the Holy Spirit, to trust in Christ, to have our sins forgiven and to be kept from evil. God tells us: “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:6,7).

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## Felix Neff: Pastor of the High Alps

### 6. Spiritual Progress

In 1823 Neff became pastor of a large mountainous area in the High Alps district of France. He began his work energetically, seeking the good of souls. He had to walk long distances to visit his people and preach to them, climbing steep slopes to get from one valley to the next.

**I**n April 1824 Neff visited the village of Violin, where the local people were working on a new church building. They needed Neff to tell them where to place the pulpit and the seats; it may have been the first church that was ever built in the village. During the few evenings Neff was able to spend in Violin at that time, he met with the young people and found they had made a big effort to learn the Scripture passages he had pointed out to them.

At that time of year, the young men were working in slate quarries and the young women were looking after the animals as they grazed on the sides of the mountains where the snow had melted. This meant that it was later in the evening when the young people met with Neff, and it could be 11 o’clock before they left for home; so those who had the greatest distance to walk needed to light torches to show them the way.

For the opening service at the new church, crowds of people came from all over the Valley of Freissinière. And Antoine Blanc, a 73-year-old pastor, walked for two days through the Alps to get to Violin for the service. The church was packed, and those who could not get inside stood to listen under the trees in front of the building, the trees shading them from the hot sun.

There were some villages that Neff could not reach during winter because they were cut off by the heavy falls of snow. He asked himself what he could do to help them spiritually when he could not reach them. So he gathered some of the people in his parish and suggested that some religious books

should be bought and passed around them. Then someone would be able to read one of the books aloud when they gathered on a Sabbath or on any other day of the week. They decided to order seven sets of sermons by a French preacher, each set being made up of four volumes.

But the people were too poor to gather enough money to buy them. So, although Neff only had only a small income himself, he lent the people the money to buy the books until they could afford to pay him back. Yet when the books arrived, the people had no enthusiasm for listening to someone reading them; they would have much preferred to listen to Neff preaching. But when Neff had read some of the sermons to them, every family wanted their own copy. He suggested that four families should club together to pay for a set that they could share between them. Neff had to order a second parcel of the books, and then a third; so many people now wanted them.

In the village of La Combe, the people bought two copies of the sermons between them. Then one family, who had some more money than the others in the village, wanted two books for themselves. But they did not have enough money. One day the father of the family was speaking about how sorry he was that he could not afford them, when one of his sons said, "But you have some money laid aside to buy a pig. Now suppose we were to do without the pig, these books would be more useful to us."

Then a girl spoke; she said, "Yes, do, and we will fatten a goat. That will do just as well. Get the sermons, Dad."

They all agreed they should get the sermons, saying, "We will consent to live on soup if we may have them". And the father agreed too.

A great improvement had taken place in the behaviour of the people in Neff's congregation. But he was not satisfied; he could see no real signs of spiritual life – which was what he was so anxiously looking for. Yet, the next year, signs of the work of the Holy Spirit began to appear in several places.

Neff was upset that there were no such signs in Dormilleuse, the village where he had first preached in the district. After a Bible class, he spoke strongly to the young people about the hardness of their hearts and how careless they were. He told them how sad he was that the only effect of his work among them was likely to be their greater condemnation at last. He was conscious of the greatness of their sin in rejecting the gospel. Neff prayed and then sat down beside the fire. He could say no more. And no one else said anything. After a quarter of an hour, most of the young people left, without saying a word. Yet some of them followed Neff into the kitchen and he could see that they were impressed by what he had said.

Wherever Neff went, he received an especially warm welcome; it was as if they had not met for a very long time. But they had seen him within the

past three weeks; they were now placing a much greater value on what he would say. As soon as people heard that he had arrived in a village, they surrounded him wanting to speak about religion. Though they were very glad to see him, they were soon overcome with sadness because of their sins; the Holy Spirit was convincing them that they were sinners and that it was indeed a serious matter to sin against God. Neff was making his way towards Dormilleuse, but he was making very slow progress because so many people wanted to speak to him about their souls.

Having reached Dormilleuse, Neff spent the evening with his Bible class, although he did give some time to meeting older people. It was already midnight when they heard a noise from one of the nearby cottages. Neff went inside and found a group of young women praying; their particular concern was that they had been careless about the gospel for so long.

The next day, a Friday, Neff went on to Violin. The people were expecting him and, when he went to the new church at 10 am, he found the building already full. He preached to them from the words, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2). Neff believed that the Lord very much helped him, although he was not able to prepare his sermon. This was because he had to spend so much time speaking to those who were concerned for their souls.

There were further services on each of the next three days and many people gathered to them. And when there was no service, people spent time praying and examining themselves about the condition of their souls. Young people especially spent time in these activities. Before and after these services, Neff could see small groups walking around talking earnestly among themselves, probably reminding each other about what they had heard.

Not far away, he noticed a friend of his speaking to a group of young women about the love of Christ. Another friend was talking to a group of older people about the corrupt state of the human heart, the evil of sin and the need for repentance. Wherever he looked, Neff could see serious expressions on many faces as they listened to what was being said to them.

To Neff, what was happening was far beyond what he had hoped for; he felt it was as if he was dreaming. No doubt he loved the district from the time he came there, but now this region that was once so desolate spiritually became, he said, "agreeable and dear to me, since I now felt assured that it was the dwelling place of Christian brethren".

But he went on: "I must also bear in mind that the blossoms which shoot forth so luxuriantly in spring do not all ripen and become fruit in autumn". He knew that many people, who would not truly believe in Christ, may appear to be just as concerned for their souls as those in whom the Holy

Spirit is indeed carrying out a saving work, making them new creatures in Christ Jesus. Neff noted also that all the honour and glory of a saving work was to be given to God alone.

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## How Christ Forgives

William D Killen was a Presbyterian minister in the north of Ireland. In 1829 he became a minister in Raphoe, in Donegal, which is now part of the Republic of Ireland. A few years afterwards, cholera began to spread through the wider district. It is a very serious disease; when people catch it, they may die the same day, even if they have been perfectly healthy up till then.

There was no known remedy for it; so people became very alarmed. When it began to spread towards Raphoe, though it had not yet reached the town, a lot of people were very frightened. Among them was a woman who was known to be very immoral. She stayed in bed, and Killen was asked to visit her as she was connected with the Presbyterian church in the district. As he approached her house, Killen could hear her despairing shouts. She was crying out that she was the greatest sinner in the place and that, if cholera came there, she was sure to perish.

Killen went inside and found that her landlord, a Roman Catholic, was already visiting her. He had come to see if anything could be done to help her. Killen believed that the landlord was going to leave when he came in, but the minister encouraged him to stay, wanting him to hear what he had to say to the woman. As Killen stood beside her bed, she kept shouting, "O my black heart! O my black heart!"

Some time passed before Killen could get her to listen to him, but at last she stopped shouting for a moment. Killen told her: "I know you are a great sinner – a very great sinner. But I am come to tell you about a great Saviour." As he went on speaking, the woman calmed down and stopped shouting.

Killen went on to say, "Were you 10 times greater a sinner than you are – and I know that you have sinned grievously – there is a mighty Saviour who is ready to save the very chief of sinners. His blood cleanseth from all sin. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him. It is written: 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved'."

The minister could see that she was listening intently to what he was saying. He exhorted her to turn to God, to give up her sins and to cast all her care on "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world". He then committed her to God in prayer.

As Killen came away from the house, the landlord walked with him and they talked together about what they had just seen inside. The landlord told him: "I think that you teach rather a roundabout way of comforting penitents" – those who are repenting. He went on: "You called that woman to look away from her sins and look to Christ, to leave her sins behind her and to continue in them no more, and to behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. You exhorted her to believe His word, to accept His invitation, and that all would be well with her.

"Now our priest has surely a simpler way of working. When she confessed her sins, he would have said to her, 'I absolve you'. Then everything is settled. And would that not be more comforting to the woman than all this talk about coming to Christ and trusting in Him?"

Killen thought differently. He knew which was the way that God revealed in Scripture, the *true* way. He pointed out: "The absolution of the priest is, after all, only the word of a man, and of an erring man; the absolution which I proclaim depends on the word of Christ, whose promise cannot fail. And I thought that the forgiveness of which I spoke was in every way preferable to that which the priest announced. You know the life of this woman. . . . Suppose that the priest absolved her, would she not have been required to pass through purgatory? Would she not have been obliged to remain for an indefinite time – it may be for years – in that woeful place?

"The forgiveness which I proclaim is of a totally different character. If the Saviour now receives this woman, bad as she is, her sins will be completely and for ever forgiven. She will escape the pain of purgatory and be at peace with God."

At least the landlord heard what the Bible teaches about forgiveness. It was rather different from what he expected to hear. But we are not told if it did him any good.

What about the woman? Killen states that, from that time, her behaviour changed. She began to attend public worship, something she had not done for a long time. He believed that the way she listened in church pointed to the deep interest she took in what was said. She lived for several years afterwards. Killen had moved away from Raphoe before she died, but he commented, "So far as I could learn, she walked before God in newness of life".

We should take encouragement from the fact that nothing is too hard for the Lord; it is never too hard for Him to convert any particular sinner, no matter how wicked. But we should not imagine that we may go on careless about our souls and neglecting public worship, while thinking all will be well at last. God may abandon us to our carelessness. What He tells us is to seek Him *now*; it may very suddenly become too late to seek for salvation.

*For Junior Readers*

## “Open Mine Eyes”

**D**o you know where Romania is? Perhaps you have noticed it on maps recently as it shares a border with Ukraine to the north and also near the Black Sea in the east. It used to be a Communist country and persecution of Christians was very common.

Since the fall of Communism, new churches have been planted and there are more congregations that believe the Bible. Sadly many people still cannot get a faithful translation of the Bible, like we have in Britain, for instance. But the Trinitarian Bible Society sends out Bibles, New Testaments and articles in Romanian. These are gratefully received by Christians and by others seeking to learn more about God and the gospel in that country.

One Christian worker was very happy to hear that a parcel of 30 TBS Romanian Bibles had arrived in the country for him. He had to go to a customs office to collect them. The customs official asked what was inside the parcel and then asked him to open it. He told her it was a box of Bibles and showed her what was inside.

Then the lady asked if she could have one of the Bibles as she did not have one at home. He happily gave her a Bible. He then asked the other three officials if they would like one too. They all accepted one for themselves and another one to pass onto relatives. He was then able to speak briefly to them about the importance of the Bible.

When he got home he told his wife all about what had happened in the customs office. She was so happy and said that God had answered her prayers! That morning, after reading her Bible, she had prayed that the Lord would show His mercy to someone who was searching for Him and had nobody to help them. They both saw the Lord's hand in directing her husband to that particular office that morning and to meet these members of staff. Truly God, by His providence, orders all the details of our lives and “is worthy to be praised” (Ps 18:3).

The letter the man wrote to thank the TBS for the parcel ended by asking them to pray for these people who had received the Bibles. He wanted them to pray that the Holy Spirit would touch their hearts, minds and souls in such a way that their hearts would be renewed and that they would be saved for eternity.

Does that not make you think about your Bible? Do you value it like these people did? Do you ask for a blessing when you read your Bible and pray that the Holy Spirit would apply the Word of God to your soul?

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One of God's servants wrote: "In order to keep God's Word, must we not pray to understand it? What then is the prayer? Not, 'Give me a plainer Bible', but, 'Open mine eyes to know my Bible'. Not, 'Show me some new revelations besides the law', but, 'Make me behold the wonders of Thy law'. Open mine eyes." I hope you will use this prayer too! *J van Kralingen*

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## Scriptural Teaching on the Family (5)

*Matthew Vogan*

This Youth Conference paper has been answering the question, Does the family have a future? This article says something more about family worship, continuing from last month's piece.

Family worship is meant to be an oasis of spiritual help and strengthening, where the family come together around the most important things. Families today are under intense pressure. Often they are struggling to keep up with the relentless pace. Activities, expectations and ever-changing peer pressures all make their demands. It can seem like parenting takes place within a whirlpool of economic, social and media pressures. They take their toll on those who strive towards faithful parenting.

Against this, it might seem that daily family worship is just one more pressure. But actually, it is a relief from other pressures and an opportunity to get family life in its true perspective. It is a means of grace especially designed to strengthen family life in the midst of intense pressure.

The Fourth Commandment (Exodus 20:8-11) requires family worship, distinct from public worship and individual, secret worship. It requires the worship of God amongst those that are related to each other, which is not required of others in the same way. It includes all relationships within the home. Parents, children, sons and daughters are mentioned. Even guests are included. This commandment requires worship on the Lord's Day from family members in their family. Thus it requires distinct family worship, since they must keep the day holy together. It means closer communion among the members of a family than with individuals and families to whom they are not related in the same way.

It is vital that the head of the household makes sure that the Lord's Day is kept holy, as the commandment requires. It reminds the family that they live unto the Lord and not themselves. It points them to eternal realities. They also attend public worship and seek to benefit from it as much as possible. Indeed family worship trains and prepares the whole family to benefit from the preaching of the Word and the rest of public worship.

Secularism seeks to push God and religion to the side as a marginal interest rather than being what influences and governs everything. We must constantly guard against that. It is interesting how *The Westminster Directory for Public Worship* makes God central to the duties of marriage. Married people must:

- study the holy Word of God,
- learn to live by faith,
- be content in the midst of all the cares and troubles of marriage,
- sanctify God's name, in a thankful, sober and holy use of all the comforts of marriage,
- pray much with and for one another,
- watch over each other and provoke each other to love and good works,
- live together as the heirs of the grace of life.

Isaac Ambrose, another Puritan, says that part of the way in which a wife is a helpmeet to her husband is to help him in “erecting and establishing Christ's glorious kingdom in their house, and especially in their own hearts. This is that one necessary thing, without which their family is but Satan's seminary [or school], and a nursery for hell.”

*Loving others as ourselves.* When we emphasise love it could easily be understood wrongly. Marriage is widely seen as solely an emotional, romantic bond between two adults. Our culture's notion of romantic love is a feeling and a physical attraction that gives us an emotional high. When it wanes, people move on. This is why living together in defiance of God's ordinance of marriage is so popular. It is also why no-fault divorce is so attractive. An exclusively romantic definition of marriage changes the whole purpose of marriage. It becomes largely self-absorbed. The worldly tendency is to idolise one's husband or wife as the one who guarantees fulfilment for us.

If this is the only basis for marriage it results in an unbalanced view. It leads to the worldly view that marriage is worthless when romance becomes more challenging or even less intense. Marriage is a covenant relationship. It involves a solemn vow before God. It reflects Christ's covenant with His people. It is formed and sustained by love, but that love is practical, not selfish – it is self-sacrificing and endures many trials.

Where there is self-love and self-interest – trying to control and manipulate others to serve our own will – there will be conflict, which will undermine the love that should prevail. Mark Regenerus in his book about the future of marriage writes, “As a researcher, studying the demise of marriage has been like watching an invasive fungus slowly destroy a stately old oak tree”.

What disease is attacking marriage? The same pervasive disease that is attacking the Church and society. It is the prevailing principle (indeed idolatry) in our culture: expressive individualism (the idea that we find our basic



meaning only when we express our own feelings and desires). It proclaims that the highest good is individual freedom and self-expression. So its chief purpose is to glorify and enjoy ourselves as we choose, resisting anything that would constrain us. Marriage is either delayed or abused by pursuing individualist goals.

The family is the house God built, but it is built on the foundation of love, with the materials and cement of love. We are to see the commandments as a law of love for family life. As *The Larger Catechism* shows, the honour that is required in the Fifth Commandment points to the duties of all members of the family, whether they are under authority or in authority.

William Gouge (1575-1653) takes his foundation principles from Ephesians 5:21: “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God”. This means having the same affection towards one another, “serving one another in love, according to the Apostle’s rule. Let this duty of submission be first well learned, and then all other duties will be better performed.” The key principle is self-denial in the fear of God, because we have already given ourselves first to the Lord. This leads to mutual submission.

This is to be expressed in their love (Titus 2:4; Colossians 3:19), sharing in what they have and living together (1 Peter 3:7), mutually bearing one another’s burdens and weaknesses (Galatians 6:2). In other words, they are to live out Christian character and grace in the context of marriage. The husband must not seek his own preferences and love himself more than his wife; he must love her as himself (Ephesians 5:28-29). The wife must equally deny herself in respect and submission to her spouse (v22). The husband has a particular headship and authority that she must submit to, which is not in any way undermined, but rather helped, by mutual submission in love. There is to be obedience, but it is lovingly rendered in response to loving headship – it is not a military authority, where everyone else serves the whims and self-importance of the head of the family.

Ephesians 5:21 is a general exhortation that applies to all members of families. This service of love is what everyone owes to each other for their mutual good in their various roles and relationships (Galatians 5:13). It requires a submission to others that arises from a principle of love to them, and actually intends their good. It must be done with a humble spirit, not proudly thinking that our duty to others is beneath us. It is to be done in the fear of God because humbling ourselves in this way is an evidence of fearing God, and fearing God is the reason why we do it (Colossians 3:22-23). The fear of God defines the extent of our submission to others, since we are not to submit to them more than God, or in a way that conflicts with what we owe to Him. This shows how the foundation of love to God first is essential.

*For Younger Readers*

## A Better Wife and Mother

A woman in India was listening to someone reading from the Bible. She was converted.

Her husband was not pleased. He treated her badly. A Christian preacher asked her what she did when her husband was bad to her.

She said, "Well, I cook his food better. When he complains, I sweep the floor cleaner. And when he speaks unkindly, I answer him mildly. I try to show him that, when I became a Christian, I became a better wife and a better mother."

The man could see the change in his wife's life. It made him willing to listen to the teachings of the Bible. God blessed these truths to him and he became a Christian too, believing on Jesus Christ.

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## Is *The Shorter Catechism* Worthwhile?

*Benjamin B Warfield*

This is the Introduction to a book, *The Chief End of Man*, by John Hall, which was written to explain the first answer of *The Shorter Catechism*; this introduction has been edited. Both Hall and Warfield were ministers in America.

*The Shorter Catechism* is perhaps not very easy to learn. And very certainly it will not teach itself. The men who put it together were less careful to make it easy than to make it good. As one of them, Lazarus Seaman, explained, they sought to set down in it, not the knowledge the child has, but the knowledge the child ought to have. And they did not dream that anyone could expect it to teach children by itself. They committed it rather to faithful men who were zealous teachers of the truth, "to be", as the Scottish General Assembly puts it in the Act approving it, "a directory for catechising such as are of a weaker capacity". They sent out *The Larger Catechism* "for catechising such as have made some [progress] in the knowledge of . . . religion".

No doubt it needs some effort whether to teach or to learn *The Shorter Catechism*. It requires some effort whether to teach or to learn the basics of any part of knowledge. Our children – some of them at least – groan over even primary arithmetic. Even to learn to read has proved such a task that "reading without tears" is thought to be an achievement. But we think that to learn arithmetic and reading is worth the pains it costs the teacher to teach them, and the pain it costs the learner to learn them. Do we not think

that to learn the basics of religion is worth some effort and even, if need be, some tears?

For the basics of religion must be taught and learned as truly as the basics of anything else. Let us make no mistake here. Religion does not come by itself; it is always a matter of being taught. The feelings of the heart, which many people seem to think is the whole of religion, always follow the movements of thought. Being earnest to serve God cannot take the place of being earnest about truth. It cannot safely outrun the learning of truth, for it is dreadfully possible to compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, to find we have made him only a child of hell.

This is why God establishes and extends his Church by preaching; it is why we have Sabbath schools and Bible classes. This is why God has grounded His Church in the revelation of Scripture. He does not content Himself with sending His Spirit into the world to turn men to Him. He sends His Word also into the world. This is because it is from knowing the truth, and only from knowing the truth, that true religion can arise in the soul, as the Spirit makes the soul alive.

Is it not worth the pains of the teacher to convey the truth, and the pains of the student to learn this knowledge? How wrong it is to keep back the truth, so that we may save ourselves and our pupils these pains! But it is through the truth that the religious nature must work if it is to work properly.

A story has been told that will illustrate the value to religious life of having been taught these forms of truth. A man was staying with a Scottish friend in London when a younger man came to speak to him about religious things. He was in difficulty about a number of points; among them was prayer. "What is prayer?" he said, "I can't tell what you mean by it!"

They were in the hall of a large London house. Before the man could answer, they heard a child's voice singing on the stairs. It was that of a girl of nine or ten, the daughter of their host. She came running down the stairs and paused as she saw strangers sitting in the hall.

"Come here, Jenny," her father said, "and tell this gentleman 'what is prayer'." Jenny did not know what had been going on, but she quite understood that she was now called upon to say her catechism. So she drew herself up, and folded her hands in front of her, like a good little girl who was going to "say her questions", and she said in her clear childish voice: "Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgement of His mercies".

"Ah, that's the *Catechism*!" the man said; "thank God for that *Catechism*." How many have had reason to "thank God for that *Catechism*". Did any-

one ever know a really godly man who regretted having been taught *The Shorter Catechism* – even with tears – in his youth? How its forms of sound words come echoing back into the memory, in moments of trial and suffering, of doubt and temptation, giving direction to religious hopes, firmness to hesitating thought, guidance to stumbling feet: and adding to our religious meditations an ever-increasing richness and depth.

We have the following bit of personal experience from an officer of the United States army. He was in a large city in the west of the country at a time of intense excitement and violent rioting. The streets were overrun daily by a dangerous crowd. One day he noticed a man coming towards him who unusually combined calmness and a firm bearing; his very appearance inspired confidence. So impressed was he with his bearing amid the surrounding uproar that, when he had passed, he turned to look back at him, only to find that the stranger had done the same.

When he noticed him turning, the stranger at once came back to him and, touching his chest with his forefinger, he demanded, without saying anything else: “What is the chief end of man?”

When he received the expected answer, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever”, the stranger said, “Ah, I knew you were a Shorter Catechism boy by your looks!”

“Why, that was just what I was thinking of you,” the officer replied.

It is worthwhile to be a Shorter Catechism boy. They grow to be men. And better than that, they are exceedingly apt to grow to be men of God. So apt, that we cannot afford to have them miss the chance of it. “Train up a child in the way he should go, and [even] when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

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## Looking Around Us

### “I Can Do Anything”

“My college experience has given me the belief that I can do anything that I put my mind to.” So said a student studying in Inverness; she was quoted in a leaflet promoting courses in the College.

The claim is surely an exaggeration, but no doubt her college course could have given her increased confidence, for instance. But there are many things beyond the capacity of every individual. We should realise that we need to commit ourselves to the Lord, whatever we try to do. We should ask Him to help us in all our responsibilities and to bring us to recognise when we should give up attempting what is too difficult for us.

# Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2021-22

## Exercise 3

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 June. These exercises are based on Isaiah 41 to Jeremiah 46, and Acts 20 to 2 Corinthians 4.

### Senior Section (15 years old and over)

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

#### Old Testament

1. Read Isaiah 54.

- (a) Why are the barren women told to sing? (2)
- (b) What preparations are they told to make in preparation for this coming blessing? (2)
- (c) What condition was Israel in at this time? How do you think they were feeling? (See verses 1,4 and 6) (4)
- (d) To whom were they to look for the provision promised here? What four titles does He give Himself in verse 5? (5)
- (e) Why is God promising them all these blessings? (See verses 8 and 9) (2)
- (f) Find and write out a verse where God promises:
  - (1) That His kindness will endure longer than the hills,
  - (2) That their children will have peace,
  - (3) That any attack on them will fail. (9)

2. Look back at chapter 53. Who is the subject of this prophecy? What is the connection between chapter 53 and the blessings promised in chapter 54? (2)

#### New Testament

Read Romans 12.

1. What does Paul tell the Roman Christians to do in verse 1, as their reasonable service to God? (2)
2. What sin is Paul cautioning them about in verse 3? (1)
3. Summarise in your own words what Paul is saying in verses 4-8. (3)
4. Write down 10 Christian duties that Paul exhorts them to in verses 9-18. (10)
5. Why are we not to seek revenge on people who hurt us? (1)
6. How are we to respond to our enemies? What will be the result of this? (2)

#### Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 2 in the Shorter Catechism: What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him? (3)

### Intermediate Section (13 and 14 years old)

UK answers to *Mrs M Munro, 3 Borve, Isle of Harris, HS3 3HT.*

#### Old Testament

Read Isaiah 36.

1. (a) What question did Rabshakeh, on behalf of the King of Assyria, ask Eliakim, Shebna and Joah to bring to King Hezekiah? (1)
- (b) In whom did he say they should not put their trust and why? (verses 4-9). (2)
2. (a) Why did Hezekiah's servants ask Rabshakeh to speak to them in the Syrian language? (2)
- (b) What was Rabshakeh's response? (Is 36:11-13). (2)
- (c) What message did Rabshakeh give to the people? (Is 36:14 -20). (3)
3. Read Isaiah 37.
  - (a) When he heard the words of Rabshakeh, what did Hezekiah ask Isaiah to do, and what hope did he express in his request? (Is 37:1-4) (3)
  - (b) What was Isaiah's reply? (3)

- (c) The King of Assyria sent a further message to Hezekiah. What did Hezekiah do when he received the letter? (Is 37:14-20). (3)
- (d) What did Isaiah prophesy against the King of Assyria? (Is 37:33-35). (3)
- (e) What happened to the King of Assyria eventually? (1)
- (f) What does Hezekiah's reaction to his troubles teach us? (2)
4. Read Isaiah 38:1-6. Describe the incident where Hezekiah was ill, the action he took and what happened in the end. (4)

### New Testament

1. Read Acts 22:1-23.
- (a) When Paul was defending himself in Jerusalem, he spoke to them in the Hebrew language. What effect did it have on his listeners? (2)
- (b) Describe Paul's background, his birth, and his education. (3)
- (c) What happened on the way to Damascus which changed Paul's life and future work? (2)
- (d) What did Paul say during his speech that angered the Jews so much that they threatened to kill him? (2)
2. Read Romans 5.
- (a) How can we have peace with God? (2)
- (b) How does God commend his love to sinners? (See verses 6-10) (2)
- (b) Explain what is meant in verse 19: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous"? (2)
- (c) What benefits do believers derive from suffering tribulations? (verses 3-4) (3)

### Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 98 in the Shorter Catechism: What is prayer? (3)

## Junior Section (11 and 12 years old)

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

### Old Testament

1. Read Isaiah 53.
- (a) Who is referred to as "a man of sorrows"? (1)
- (b) Why was this "man of sorrows" wounded and bruised? (1)
- (c) Give the number of the verse that tells us that this "man of sorrows" suffered meekly. (1)
- Read Isaiah 54:1-6, 15-17.
- (d) Give two different names given to the Lord in this chapter. (1)
- (e) Write out the promise given to the servants of the Lord. (1)
- Read Isaiah 55.
- (f) Read verses 10-11 and, in your own words, explain the comparison given between snow and rain and God's word. (2)
2. Read Jeremiah chapter 36. God told Jeremiah to write in a book all the prophecies He gave him.
- (a) Who wrote these words for Jeremiah and then read them to the people? (1)
- (b) Why could Jeremiah not go to the Lord's house and read them himself? (1)
- (c) Who read the book to King Jehoiakim and what did the king then do with this book? (2)
- (d) What punishment came upon the king for this wicked deed? (3)

### New Testament

1. Read Acts 20:17-38, where Paul addresses the elders of Ephesus.
- (a) Although Paul knew that "bonds and afflictions" awaited him in every city, how did he feel about this? (1)
- (b) What claim did he make about his preaching among them? (1)
- (c) He warned them that after his departure "grievous wolves" would enter in among them (v29). Say in your own words, what you think this meant? (2)
- (d) Write out a similar verse to be found in Matthew 7:13-20. (1)
- (e) How did the elders feel as they parted with Paul? (1)

2. In Romans 10:13-15, there is a chain of truths linked to each other. Read these verses carefully and then write down the words missing from the following passage. (there are six different words to be filled in, with some words used more than once.)

If preachers are not \_\_\_\_\_ by God, they cannot \_\_\_\_\_. If preachers do not \_\_\_\_\_, people will not \_\_\_\_\_. If people do not \_\_\_\_\_, how shall they \_\_\_\_\_? And if they do not \_\_\_\_\_, how shall they \_\_\_\_\_ on the name of the Lord? If they do not \_\_\_\_\_ on the name of the Lord, they will not be \_\_\_\_\_. (6)

3. Read 1 Corinthians 13, where "charity" means love.

(a) Give an example of something that is worthless without charity. (1)

(b) From verses 4-8, give six descriptions of charity, in your own words. (3)

### Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 47 in the Shorter Catechism:

What is forbidden in the first commandment? (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 Isaiah 55:1-8.

(a) How many times do we read the word "come" in these verses? (1)

(b) Who is saying, "Come unto me"? (Read to the end of the section to make sure.) (1)

(c) What are we to "forsake"? (1)

(d) Give four blessings promised to those that obey the command, "Come unto me" (verses 3 and 7). (4)

2. Read Isaiah 52:7.

How does Isaiah describe the gospel message which brings peace and salvation? (1)

3. Read Isaiah 53:1-3. Did all who heard of the Saviour believe on Him? (1)

4. Read Isaiah 65:1-2. How does Isaiah describe the people of Israel? (1)

5. Read Jeremiah 17:9-14.

(a) How does Jeremiah describe our hearts? (2)

(b) Who is searching our hearts? (1)

(c) Write out the short but suitable prayer at the end of these verses. (1)

### New Testament

1. Read Acts 26:12-23. Then read the following sentences and say if they are true or false.

(a) Paul was going back home from Damascus when he saw a vision.

(b) Paul had been persecuting Jesus.

(c) The Lord was calling Paul to work as a minister.

(d) Paul was sent only to the Jewish people with the gospel.

(e) Paul was an obedient servant of the Lord.

(f) Paul was able to go on with his ministry because of the help he received from God. (6)

2. Read Romans 10:13-21. Use these words to fill in the blanks in the following sentences:

*preacher calls faith hearing Word saved.*

All who will be \_\_\_\_\_ must hear the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. \_\_\_\_\_ or believing in Christ comes by \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel. The \_\_\_\_\_ must be sent to bring the glad tidings to others. Whosoever \_\_\_\_\_ on the name of the Lord shall be saved. (6)

### Memory Exercise

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

What is faith in Jesus Christ? (2)

## **Lower Primary Section** (8 years old and under)

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

### **Old Testament**

The wicked princes threw Jeremiah, the good prophet, into a dungeon.

1. Was there water in the dungeon? Jeremiah 38:6
2. What did Jeremiah sink into? Jeremiah 38:6
3. Who spoke to the king about Jeremiah? Jeremiah 38:8,9
4. How many men went with Ebed-melech to rescue Jeremiah? Jeremiah 38:10

Fill in the words to answer the next questions.

5. What did Jeremiah tell the king that God wanted him to do? O \_\_\_, I beseech thee, the v \_\_\_ of the L \_\_\_. Jeremiah 38:20
  6. Jeremiah was not put back into the dungeon. Where did he stay? Jeremiah a \_\_\_ in the c \_\_\_ of the p \_\_\_\_\_. Jeremiah 38:28
- God then told Ebed-melech good things.
7. Was he going to be given to the men he was afraid of? Jeremiah 39:17
  8. Why would he be delivered from them? What did God say? Because thou hast p \_\_\_ thy t \_\_\_ in m \_\_\_, saith the Lord. Jeremiah 39:18

### **New Testament**

1 Corinthians chapter 13 tells us about charity (love). Anything that we do, should be with love to God.

1. Is charity kind? 1 Corinthians 13:4
2. What does charity not rejoice in? 1 Corinthians 13:6
3. What does charity rejoice in? 1 Corinthians 13:6
4. Charity lasts for ever. Fill in the words that tell us that:  
C \_\_\_\_\_ n \_\_\_\_\_ f \_\_\_\_\_. 1 Corinthians 13:8
5. Verse 8 also tells us of three things that will fail or stop. P \_\_\_\_\_, t \_\_\_\_\_, k \_\_\_\_\_. 1 Corinthians 13:8
6. A grown up can understand things better now than when he was a child. When I was a child I spake as a child, I u \_\_\_\_\_ as a child, I t \_\_\_\_\_ as a child: but when I became a m \_\_\_, I put away c \_\_\_\_\_ things. 1 Corinthians 13:11
7. And everything will be clear and wonderful when God's people reach heaven. For now we see through a g \_\_\_\_\_, d \_\_\_\_\_; but then f \_\_\_\_\_ to f \_\_\_\_\_. 1 Corinthians 13:12

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