

The Young People's Magazine

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

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” Ecclesiastes 12:1



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Cover Picture: *A beach near Northton, Isle of Harris. See page 25.*

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Volume 88

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Number 2

God Has Spoken

I think it was an American politician who reacted to the result of an election by saying, “The four most important words in a democracy are, ‘The people have spoken’”. In a democracy, the people speak by casting their votes at an election. And, surely, their votes are very important; when the people speak in this way, they will normally be choosing a government. The people are expressing a preference for one set of politicians as against another, to rule over them and make decisions instead of them, for perhaps the next four or five years.

But in a democracy or under any form of government – even when a dictator is ruling over a nation, without ever giving the people the chance to vote – there are four words which are far more important than those that the American politician drew attention to. These four words are, The Lord has spoken.

How has God spoken? Long ago, He spoke through prophets, whom He sent out to speak for Him, and through apostles, whom the Lord Jesus sent out to speak for Him. But God the Father sent Jesus, His only begotten Son, to speak to sinners, and in the Gospels we find a lot of what He said.

But how does God speak to us today? He speaks to us through the Bible, which is why we call it the Word of God. The Bible is infallible, which means that it is without any error; it is perfectly reliable in everything it says – not just some parts of it, but all of it, from beginning to end. So a Psalmist says to God: “Thy word is true from the beginning” (Psalm 119:160); the Bible has always been true ever since God gave the first part of it to mankind, and it always will be true. It is true now.

God created all things. He made us; so we are under His authority. And we should feel the authority of the Bible, because in it God is speaking to us. We have a duty to obey what God says to us in His Word. So we need to know what He is saying; we should be asking, What is He saying to *me*? Remember that the most important words for you, wherever you may be in this world, are the words that God speaks, what He says to you in the Bible.

But do we listen to God? Do we listen to what He tells us in the Bible? Do

we make any effort to find out what He is saying? Do we read the Bible for ourselves to find out? Indeed Jesus said, “*Search* the Scriptures” (John 5:39). To *search* means that we ought to make some effort to find out what is in the Bible. What is more, God speaks to us through preaching, because preachers are to explain the truths of the Bible and to apply them to the needs of those who hear what the preacher is saying. But do you listen to what he says? If the preacher keeps to the truths of the Bible, what the preacher says is what God says. Then *God* is speaking to you, and again you must remember that what God says is far more important than anything that anyone else says. Whenever you listen to a sermon, God is speaking to *you*. It is your duty to listen and to obey.

He speaks to you about sin, for the Bible emphasises that “all have sinned”. In particular, *you* have sinned. And the Bible emphasises too – Jesus especially spoke about it – that sin has consequences, endless consequences of punishment in hell. You are to listen to these things; you are to pay real attention to them, because they are true, and they are altogether relevant to you and to everyone else, not only in this world but also in the eternity that lies beyond this life.

But the Bible has even more to say about deliverance from sin and its consequences. It speaks about Jesus, the Son of God, coming into the world to save sinners. He suffered and died in the place of sinners; He took their punishment instead of them. And “whosoever believeth in” Christ shall “not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Those who trust in Him will all escape eternal punishment; they will enjoy instead the perfect blessedness of heaven in the presence of Christ for ever.

God is speaking to us through such statements; they are tremendously important for our life in this world, and even more so for eternity. Let us then pay careful attention when God calls to each of us: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).

Cornelius Cayley was a preacher in London. One day he was at St George's Hospital, which was then in the centre of the city, near Hyde Park Corner. Somebody asked him to go to speak to a soldier in the hospital, who had lost a leg through gangrene. He had suffered some injury, and some of the flesh of his leg was no longer alive. The gangrene was continuing to spread, and the poor man was dying. Cayley went to see him and found that he knew little about religion. He had no thought about eternity, although he was now so close to it. He confessed that he had lived a wicked life.

Cayley tried to teach the soldier about his lost condition as a sinner and the dangerous position he was in. But Cayley did not stop there; he went on to speak about the great “riches of the grace and mercy of God to sinners”,

through the sacrifice of Christ. He assured the soldier that Christ will “in no wise cast out those who come to Him”. The soldier did not seem to be much influenced by what Cayley said, but the next morning he sent a message, asking him to come back as soon as he could.

Cayley was glad to find that the Lord had been working in the soldier’s heart and that he now had a proper sense of his sin and misery. He also had some hope of pardon through Jesus Christ. He was now very anxious to be taught more about these things.

The Holy Spirit had blessed what Cayley said to him, and the soldier was able to praise God that he had been brought into the hospital; it was where he heard about his need and the provision for him in his need. He suffered greatly as a result of severe pain (no painkillers then) but he was very happy because God had mercy on “such a wicked creature” – which was what he called himself. He knew that he deserved to go to hell, but he felt assured that he would enjoy eternal life in heaven because Jesus had died for him.

On the other side of that hospital ward, another man was dying, but he would not listen to the gospel message. He had not been a bad man, he claimed; he was a sober and honest man. He assumed that all would be well with him – although he was dying without Christ, without faith in the One who came into the world to save sinners. He did not realise that “without faith it is impossible to please” God (Hebrews 11:6).

What a contrast! One man was ready to listen to what the Lord had spoken about sin and salvation. The other man did not recognise the importance of the words that the Lord has spoken. What about you?

Someone Did This

Rev K M Watkins

The piece of timber must have been floating in the sea for some time before being washed up on the shore. Heavy, and about ten feet long, we had seen it lying on the beach for several months. Then one day we found it standing straight up out of the sand. You can see it in the photograph on the cover. Especially in the winter, few people come to this beach. But as soon as we saw the timber standing up like that, we knew that someone had been there and done this. It could not be explained any other way. Everyone would think the same. Someone must have dug the hole, put the timber in the hole and packed sand around it, to hold it in place. *Someone did this.*

If only people would think like that regarding the creation of the universe! When they look above and see the sky and clouds, the sun and moon and

stars, they should say, Someone did this. When they look around and see the sea and dry land, the mountains and hills, the lakes and rivers, they should say, Someone did this. When they see trees and plants and flowers, they should say, Someone did this. When they see the animals and insects, and birds and fish, they should say, Someone did this. When they see human beings, with never-dying souls as well as mortal bodies, all of them “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14), they should say, Someone did this.

But many people refuse to say that. They do not want to face the truth that God made all things. People reject God as the Creator of all. Instead, so they say, it was through the “big bang” and evolution that everything came to be as it is. If we think about the piece of timber, we will see how foolish that is.

1. *The timber did not stand itself up.* Absolutely no one would have thought that. It is the same with creation. The sun and moon and stars all in their set places above us – they did not put themselves there. The dry land standing out of the sea – it did not do that itself. The hills and mountains rising up above the plains – they did not do that themselves. The living trees standing up straight as they do – they did not make themselves do that. Someone did all of this. Only Someone with infinite wisdom and power could make all creation to be as it is. That is God, the Creator of all.

The creation did not create itself. But that is what those who believe in the “big bang” are saying. They think that everything in existence was produced by a huge explosion billions of years ago, which set in motion a chain of events that produced the whole universe and everything in it. But what exactly was it that exploded? Where did it come from? Whatever it was that exploded could not have created itself.

But that is not what happened. Only the eternal God, much greater than all the things produced, could have made the entire universe, and He made it out of nothing, in a period of just six days. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

2. *Natural forces did not set the timber upright.* Many people today seem to think that “nature” has a mind and purpose of its own. In its worst form, we hear about “Mother Nature”, as if the forces of nature were personal. Of course there are natural forces at work in the world. Sometimes we would see evidence of that with this piece of timber. During a stormy night, the wind and tide could roll it a few feet up or down the beach. And it was on the waves of the sea that it arrived on the beach in the first place. But no natural forces could take the timber and stand it upright in the sand. No one could think that. Clearly, someone did this.

Creation is full of marvels and wonders, far greater than anything man can

make. Yet many people think that nature does it all of itself. But it is not a mere force that controls everything. It is not something, but Someone, who produces the marvels we see every day: the sunrise and sunset bringing light and darkness, the changes in weather bringing cold and warmth, the changes in seasons bringing summer and winter, and seedtime and harvest. None of these things has a power in itself to do this. No, Someone is directing and controlling them all.

And that Someone is God, who is “upholding all things by the word of His power” (Hebrews 1:3). As for “the earth and all the inhabitants thereof”, God insists, “I bear up the pillars of it” (Psalm 75:3). Just as the great pillars held up the temple in Jerusalem, to support the building, so God upholds and supports the whole of creation by His power, wisdom and goodness. “The pillars of the earth are the Lord’s, and He hath set the world upon them” (1 Samuel 2:8).

Does the sun shine? Does the rain fall? Weather systems do not achieve these things of themselves, but God, who uses and directs them. “He maketh His sun to rise . . . and sendeth rain” (Matthew 5:45). Does it rain in one place and not another? It is not nature that makes the difference, but God, who says, “I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered” (Amos 4:7). With everything that happens in nature, we must say, Someone did this.

3. *Chance did not make the timber stand up straight.* No one would say that it was mere “chance” or so-called “luck” that did it. No one would say that the timber stood up in the sand by mere chance. Rather, everyone would say, Someone did this.

Why then, with that which is so much greater, the wonderful universe and all the things in it, do so many people say that it exists as it does just by chance? We are told that animals and birds and fish and men all developed by chance, as evolution did its “work” over billions of years. The universe could have been very different, they think, and insist that it is only by chance that it is like it is. Human beings could just as easily – indeed, much more easily – not have existed at all. According to these people, it is all by chance that the earth is so suitable for life, set at exactly the right distance from the sun, with water and minerals and everything else necessary for such complex life to exist.

This is to deny God, the Creator. It is to deny that Someone did this. No one would be foolish enough to say that the large piece of timber stood upright by chance. But nowadays almost everyone says this about all the mighty wonders of creation. How foolish! “Professing themselves to be wise, they

became fools" (Romans 1:22). They "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator" (verse 25). God, not chance, made everything. God left nothing to chance. "He commanded, and they were created" (Psalm 148:5). "By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible . . . all things were created by Him, and for Him" (Colossians 1:16).

The next time it is a clear night, go out and look at the stars above you. Remember that we see only a tiny, tiny number of all the stars that are there. Each of these stars is like our sun. How did they get there? Did they put themselves where they are? Of course not. Did the forces of nature produce them? That is impossible. Are they there just by chance? That can never be. Someone did this! God did it. "Seek Him that maketh the seven stars . . . The Lord is His name" (Amos 5:8).

John Rock

1. A Complete Change

John Rock was born in County Kildare, in Ireland. His father worked a small farm, and John was one of a large family. As he grew up, he behaved badly. His parents were very upset about him.

John left home and went to work in Glasgow. He got a job as a stonemason's labourer and was helping to build a tall chimney. A few days after he began, he fell from the scaffolding and was nearly killed. He spent a long time in hospital and somehow he became conscious of his sins and trembled at the thought of meeting the holy God, against whom he had sinned.

Eventually John got better and forgot about his sins. Then he married a Scottish girl and they moved to Edinburgh, where they lived in the Grassmarket. Everyone who knew John knew him as someone who would strongly defend his Roman Catholic beliefs, often violently. So visitors might hesitate to climb the stairs leading up to his home. One day he met two women who were distributing religious tracts. He took away their tracts and set them on fire. Then he poured a pail of water over them as they went downstairs and told them to go to purgatory and dry themselves there (purgatory is the false Roman Catholic idea of a place where people suffer fiery punishment for their sins before they go to heaven).

In December 1846 John was unwell. He now worked as a miner, digging out tunnels through which railway trains would run. A man called Hay, who worked as a missionary in the district, called to see John one dark day. Yet the visit was important; that day, there was the beginning of God's work

through which John was turned “from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God” (Acts 26:18). Hay did not know what kind of man John was, so he just spoke to the invalid as he might to anyone else, knowing that he was a sinner.

“Do you ever think of death?” Hay asked him.

“Yes,” John answered, “but that’s a dark thing to me. O to escape from what is beyond it!”

“Did you never hear of Jesus Christ, through whose death a sinner may die in peace and safety?”

“Well, I’ll just tell you the truth. I know little about Christ, for I was born and brought up a Roman Catholic; but I left that Church about two years ago, and I don’t belong to any Church now.”

“Why did you leave the Roman Catholics?”

John explained that he had gone to attend a Christmas service, and admission to the service cost sixpence, which was worth a lot then. He was turned away from the door because he did not have the money; he could get no work at the time. So he sold a piece of clothing for sixpence, went back to the chapel and was admitted. He later spoke to the priest and complained about how he had been treated. He asked why poor people were not allowed into the chapel, pointing out that salvation is “without money and without price”, referring to Isaiah 55:1. The priest’s answer did not satisfy John, and he never went back.

Hay then tried to explain to the ill man, as simply as he could, the way of salvation through God’s free grace. John was very much moved by what he heard and he asked Hay to pay him another visit.

Hay returned a few days later and John told him, that during Hay’s first visit, he was afraid to say too much in case the missionary would think he was a hypocrite looking for money. John went on: “But it’s not what I want. My soul is lost, and how am I to be saved? If you only knew my fears and inward anguish, you would pity me. I have cried to the Lord to have mercy on me, for I have led a fearful life. I have prayed and He would send someone to teach me the truth; so my cry has been answered. It’s God that sent you, and God alone.”

Hay said to John what he thought would be helpful to him. When he found out that John could read well, Hay gave him a Bible and told him to read Acts 16. It was while reading in that chapter, about the conversion of the Philippian jailer, that light from heaven penetrated into John’s dark soul. Hay believed there was good reason to say that John had been born again.

Early the next morning, John sent for Hay. He came to see John, bringing with him two women who used to visit homes in the district. When they

went in, they found John reading his Bible out loud. On one side sat John's wife, Nancy, holding a baby in her arms; on the other side was a daughter eagerly listening to what her father was reading.

Hay asked John why he had sent for him. John told him: "I have found the Saviour. All's well now."

The missionary wanted to know how John had been changed. He explained, "In reading that glorious chapter, I thought, Well, here's Paul, an apostle inspired by God, and here's a sinner [the jailer] anxious about his soul. The sinner puts the question, 'What must I do to be saved?' The Apostle answers, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved'. Well, I thought again, An apostle is greater than either priest or pope, and his answer must be true. Light came into my heart; I believed, and now I can rejoice in the Lord Jesus."

What a blessing John received! God gave him light in his soul on the way of salvation; the Holy Spirit made him a new creature; he now had the beginnings of true holiness; he was on the way to heaven.

While John was ill, he spent a lot of time with his Bible. Sometimes he spent the whole night reading it; perhaps he was not able to sleep. So when Hay came to visit him, John had lots of questions about the meaning of various verses. One day when John was out, his wife told the missionary how his behaviour had changed. In the past, he would often lose his temper and hit her; now she called her home a little heaven because he reacted in such a different way. What a change the Holy Spirit brings about in the soul of a sinner and in their outward life!

Lessons from the Life of Jacob

3. After Leaving Laban

Rev J B Jardine

Last month's section of this Youth Conference paper told about Jacob's time at home with his parents; then having to flee after he deceived his father into giving a blessing to him, rather than to his brother Esau; and finally his time with Laban, his uncle in Haran.

After Jacob left Laban, a company of angels met him at a place he called Mahanaim. Jacob's prayer here is one of the earliest recorded in the Bible (Genesis 32:7,9-12). He pleaded God's character as One who keeps His covenants with His people. Jacob addressed Him: "O God of my father Abraham and Isaac". Then Jacob pled the word and promises of God, who had said to him: "Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal

well with thee". This was followed by the plea, "Deliver me . . . from . . . Esau". He appealed to God's known pity for the helpless: "I fear him lest he . . . smite . . . the mother with the children,". And he again fell back on God's promise, "Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea".

Jacob approached God as a God in covenant. By believing prayer, he laid hold of God's faithfulness. He appealed to God on the ground of a sure and established relationship, as the God of his father Abraham and his grandfather Isaac. Jacob cast himself on the sure word of Jehovah, pleading before God that He had promised to be with him and bring him back safely. He humbly reminded the Lord how He had said, "Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee".

A man "wrestled with him until the breaking of day" (Genesis 32:24). That man was Jesus Christ appearing in human nature, even before He was born in Bethlehem. He could have easily overcome Jacob. But the point of the wrestling was not about who would win, but to test the faith of Jacob. At this point in time, Jacob recognised that he could not continue to rely on his own ability to acquire blessings. He realised that only God was able to give him genuine blessings.

The Lord tested Jacob to see how much he wanted the blessing and how far Jacob would persevere. The prize in the Christian race is found at the end, not the beginning. It was just before dawn that the Lord asked Jacob to let Him go. Jacob answered, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me". This is when Jacob finally obtained God's blessing. So he was told: "Thy name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel".

God was teaching Jacob how weak man is in himself; he must cling to the Lord (Genesis 32:22-32). It was to God alone that Jacob could go for safety, and as soon as he was reconciled with Esau, Jacob saw the need to distance himself from him. The brothers did not meet again until they buried their father in Hebron.

Having left Canaan in guilt, Jacob returned to it with deep searching of heart. We now see in him the growth of that faith which lays hold of the covenant. Jacob learned that he had more to fear from God's displeasure than from Esau's hatred. Jacob now erected an altar to God, which he called, "El Elohe Israel" (Hebrew for *God, the God of Israel*). In this way he was claiming that God was his own, the "God of Israel". So Jacob called his household to put away their strange gods and to be clean. They put away their idols and their earrings, and Jacob fulfilled his promise to make the stone pillar God's house.

Remember that Isaac was "old and his eyes were so dim that he could not

see" (Genesis 27:1). For this reason, Rebekah and Jacob were able to deceive him about the blessing. We can see later that Jacob was also "blinded" by the darkness of his wedding night. Instead of Rachel, whom he loved, Laban gave Jacob his oldest daughter, Leah. Jacob was also deceived by his own children when they faked the death of their brother Joseph.

Lesson Two. *We need God to make us like Jacob and take God's word as true and perform our vows to Him. It is much better not to make a vow than to promise and not to fulfil it. "Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay" (Ecclesiastes 5:5).*

Lesson Three. *In Haran the supplanter was supplanted, and the deceiver was deceived. One thing is certain: unless the Lord had prospered Jacob's plan, it would have failed. Later, in Shechem, Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, committed a horrible crime: they killed all the males in that city. Then Jacob feared that the people would avenge themselves and slay him (Genesis 34:30). The main reason for Jacob's fear was that he did not fully believe God's promises. If Jacob had trusted God's promise more, he would not have feared being destroyed.*

Lesson Four. *Jacob laid his trouble before the Lord in prayer. This teaches us that times of fear should be times of prayer; whatever frightens us should drive us to our knees, to pray to God. "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him, even into His ears" (Psalm 18:6). He tells us: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me" (Psalm 50:15). We must not be as the nine lepers who did not return to Christ to give thanks.*

Today God's people come before Him, not so much as the God of their forefathers, but as the God and Father of their Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore their "God and Father". Christ wants His people to address God as their Father, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven" (Matthew 6:9). It shows the relationship His people have with their God. How good it is to be able to address God as "our Father", to be in a covenant relationship with Him.

God has promised His people that He will never leave them, nor forsake them (Hebrews 13:5). It is not because our prayers are long that we get an answer. God hears the prayer of faith and humility: "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. . . . The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:15-16).

Times of fear, trouble and affliction should be times of prayer. Let us pray before we start our day and when we end it. "Evening, and morning, and at

noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and He shall hear my voice” (Psalm 55:17).

Lesson Five. *Following God and keeping His commandments is never easy. “We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). However, this must not discourage us, but rather encourage us. God is no man’s debtor and there is an eternal reward and crown of glory awaiting all those who persevere to the end.*

The road to eternal life is not an easy path. There are many challenges and obstacles. But “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9); “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:10).

Lesson Six. *Jacob’s story reminds us that God can use the struggles of His people for His own purposes and for their good. Just like Jacob, they have lives full of regret, shame and failure. But they cannot go back and change their lives. They must go forward in the hope that the Lord will bring good out of their failures and shortcomings. Paul wrote, “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13-14). The sins of believers are completely forgiven, even though they may have to deal with the consequences.*

For Junior Readers

“Begin the Day with God . . . ”

Have you ever noticed David’s resolution in Psalm 5? Look up verse 3: “My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up”. Is that not a good way to start the day? Is it not the way you should start every day? There are so many things to take up your attention all day, but God should be first, before everything else that might distract you!

“Begin the day with God,
Kneel down to Him in prayer;
Lift up thy heart to His abode,
And seek His love to share.”

Then your Bible reading: you should seek to know what God would have you learn from His Word. “Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law”; this was the Psalmist’s desire as he read God’s Word. *The Shorter Catechism* tells us: “That the Word may

become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation and prayer; receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practice it in our lives”.

“Open the Book of God,
And read a portion there;
That it may hallow all thy thoughts,
And sweeten all thy care.”

Remember that God sees you wherever you are and whatever you are doing. Whatever responsibilities you have, or studies or worries, “commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him”. There is nothing too small to pray about or to seek God’s help with. God has also said, “Them that honour Me I will honour”. So never be afraid that you will be the loser by doing what is right – by obeying God’s commands and putting Him first!

“Go through the day with God,
Whate’er thy work may be;
Where’er thou art – at home, abroad,
He still is near to thee.”

Finish the day as you started it – with your Bible and prayer. These duties should become habits for the rest of your lives. Remember always to put God first, and never let other demands or relationships take the place of seeking God!

“Conclude the day with God;
Thy sins to Him confess;
Trust in the Lord’s atoning blood,
And plead His righteousness.”

For those of you who are a bit older there is a very helpful small paperback by Matthew Henry called *The Secret of Communion with God*. It has three sections: How to begin the day, spend the day and end the day with God. It is a very worthwhile read!

J van Kralingen

For Younger Readers

The Honest Prisoner

Have you ever heard about John Bunyan? He was a godly man and a well-known minister.

Yet he spent 10 years in prison. Why? Surely a godly man like Bunyan would never be sent to prison! It was because God had sent him to preach and there were bad men who did not want him to preach. Bunyan kept on preaching, and he was sent to prison.

The jailor, in charge of the prison, was good to Bunyan. He even let this prisoner go out sometimes to visit his family. The jailer knew that honest Bunyan would come back at the time agreed.

One night, Bunyan was at home with his family. But he was so restless in bed that he could not sleep. So he told his wife that he felt he should go back to prison at once. He must have believed that it was God who was making him feel uneasy.

The jailor was not pleased when Bunyan came to the prison in the middle of the night, probably getting him out of bed. He had told Bunyan that he could stay at home till the morning.

But before long a messenger came to the prison. People away in London had heard that Bunyan was being allowed out of jail. They were not pleased. So they sent the messenger to find out.

He asked the jailor, "Are all the prisoners safe?". "Yes", the jailor told him.

"Is John Bunyan safe?" "Yes", said the jailor.

"Let me see him", the messenger asked. So Bunyan was brought.

The messenger was satisfied and went away. So the jailer went on letting Bunyan go out of prison when he thought it was right to go. God was taking care of him.

Looking Around Us

What Did it All Achieve?

At the end of last year, *The Herald* newspaper ran a two-page spread to remember "actors, musicians and politicians" whom "we lost" in the course of 2022. Some of the politicians became leading members of governments in countries around the world; among them, no doubt, were some who did good while they were in power.

But can we say that actors, for instance, are doing good? They are trying to entertain audiences in theatres, cinemas, or in people's homes through television or the internet. They are taking on the personalities of other people, most often of imaginary people, and speaking these other people's words and expressing their emotions. This is false; it is not according to the Ninth Commandment, which calls on everyone to promote truth in every situation they find themselves in.

The entertainers described in the article have died; they have passed into eternity. As we look back on their lives, we may ask, What did it all achieve, now that their life's work is all over? They too can ask themselves, in eternity: What did it all achieve? We may go further and ask ourselves, whatever work we do, or hope to do: What will it achieve? I hope that each young reader will undertake work that will be useful to others, as well as earning a wage for themselves. Yet "what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). What is life worth if we do not find Christ before we die, and salvation through Him?

Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2022-23

Exercise 2

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 March. These exercises are based on Daniel 5 to Malachi 4, Genesis 1-23, James 1 to Revelation 22 and Matthew 1-11.

Senior Section (15 years old and over)

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

Old Testament

1. (a) Find a verse in 2 Kings 14 where Jonah is referred to. What extra information do we read about him there? (3)
Now read Jonah 1.
- (b) What did God ask Jonah to do? (1)
- (c) How did Jonah respond at first? (2)
- (d) Why do you think he did not want to obey God? (Jonah 4:2 might help you) (2)
- (e) Describe in your own words how God stopped Jonah from running away. (4)
- (f) What effect did the calming of the storm have on the heathen sailors? (2)
- (g) How was Jonah saved from drowning? (1)
- (h) In Jonah 2 we have Jonah's prayer of distress. What gives him hope in his awful predicament? (1)
2. (a) Look at Jonah 3. How did the Ninevites show their repentance? (4)
- (b) Look at verse 9. Why did they do this? (2)
- (c) Was their hope rewarded? (1)
- (d) Find and write out a verse from Matthew 12 where Jesus describes Jonah as a picture of Himself. (2)
- (e) How would the people of Nineveh be able to condemn the people who heard Christ preach and rejected His message? (2)
- (f) What can we learn about God from reading the book of Jonah? (2)

New Testament

Read 2 Peter 1.

1. What blessings does Peter remind his readers that they have from God? (see verses 3-4) (3)
2. What graces does he urge them to cultivate in verses 5-7? (3)
3. What positive effects will diligence in religion bring to us in this life and at death (see verses 10-11)? (3)
4. What proof does Peter give from his own experience that confirms that the gospel is not a "cunningly devised fable"? (2)

5. What greater proof does he point his readers to that we all have? (1)
6. How can we be sure that the Bible is completely accurate? (1)
7. What is Peter warning the Christians of in this letter? (see 2 Peter 2:1 and 3:3) (2)
8. What does Peter point them to as a protection from this danger? (1 Peter 1:19 and 3:2) (1)
9. What is his final exhortation to us, at the end of the letter? (2)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 90 in the Shorter Catechism:
How is the word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation? (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 Hosea 11:1.
 - (a) Who is the Son referred to in this prophecy? (Matthew 2:13-15 will help you.) (1)
 - (b) Explain how this prophecy was fulfilled. (Matthew 2:19-23 will help you.) (3)
2. Read Malachi 3:1-6 and Malachi 4:5.
 - (a) Who is the messenger and prophet (the same person) mentioned in these verses? (1)
 - (b) Explain how this prophecy was fulfilled. (Read also Luke 1:5-19 and Matthew 3:1-6.) (4)
3. Read Genesis 3.
 - (a) Who did Adam blame when God spoke to him after he ate the forbidden fruit? (verse 12) (2)
 - (b) Who did Eve blame? (verse 13) (1)
 - (c) What plan did Satan (in the form of the serpent) use to deceive Eve? (verses 1-5) (3)
 - (d) What was Adam's punishment? (verses 17-19) (3)
 - (e) What was Eve's punishment? (verse 15) (2)
 - (f) We read in this chapter about the "seed of the woman" (verse 15) who, it was promised, would bruise the head of the serpent. Who was he? (1)
 - (g) How was this bruising done? (See, for instance 1 Timothy 1:15) (2)
 - (h) Why was this promise important to Adam and his descendants? (2)

New Testament

1. Read James 3.
 - (a) Describe two examples, from this chapter, which illustrate the great evils that a small member of the body, like the tongue, can cause? (4)
 - (b) Name the two opposing actions that the tongue is capable of (verses 4-6). (2)
2. Read Revelation chapters 2 and 3.
 - (a) Name the two churches which are commended, but not rebuked. (2)
 - (b) Name the church which was rebuked, but not commended. (1)
 - (c) Read the passage dealing with the Church of Ephesus (chapter 2:1-6).
 - (1) For what was the Church of Ephesus commended? (4)
 - (2) For what was the Church of Ephesus rebuked? (1)
 - (3) What was the Church of Ephesus urged to do? (2)
 - (4) What were the consequences of not heeding the warning? (2)
3. Write out the gospel invitation given near the end of chapter 3. (2)
4. Write out the verse that is repeated at the end of each of the messages to the seven Churches. It emphasises to us the urgent need to listen to God's Word. (2)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 19 in the Shorter Catechism:
What is the misery of that estate whereunto man fell? (3)

Junior Section (11 and 12 years old)

UK answers to *Mrs M Logan, 21 Leys Drive, Inverness IV2 3JB.*

Old Testament

1. Read Hosea chapter 14.

- (a) What words in verse 2 should we take to the Lord in prayer? (1)
 (b) From verses 4 and 5, write out the three things that the Lord would do to Israel if they returned to Him. (3)
2. From your reading of the Book of Jonah, say,
 (1) Who spoke the following words? (2) To whom were they spoken?
 (a) "Take me up and cast me forth unto the sea" (chapter 1).
 (b) "Lay not upon us innocent blood" (chapter 1).
 (c) "I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple" (chapter 2).
 (d) "Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything" (chapter 3).
 (e) "Doest thou well to be angry?" (chapter 4). (5)
3. Read Genesis chapter 1 which tells us about the creation of the world and then complete the table.

Day	What was created
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

(6)

New Testament

1. Read James 3:5-8. Write down any *three* things we are told about the tongue. (3)
 2. Read James chapter 4.
 (a) What is promised to those who:
 (1) resist the devil, (2) draw nigh to God, (3) humble themselves in the sight of God? (3)
 (b) What special instruction does verse 15 give us about our daily lives? (1)
3. Read the message to the Laodicean church in Revelation 3:14 - 22.
 (a) This Church thought it was rich and increased with goods. What was its true condition? (5)
 (b) What were they told to do in order to become truly rich? (1)
 (c) What were they told to buy to become clothed? (1)
 (d) What were they told to do to be able to see? (1)
4. Read Matthew 8:5-13 about the centurion coming to Jesus. In what way did he show "so great faith"? (1)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 49 in the Shorter Catechism:
 Which is the second commandment? (3)

Upper Primary Section (9 and 10 years old)

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

Old Testament

Questions 1-8 are from Genesis chapter 1.

1. Read verse 1. In the beginning, who created the heaven and the earth? (1)
 2. Read verses 2-5. What did God create on the first day? (1)
 3. Read verses 6-8. On the second day God created the sky (the firmament), which divided the waters above it from the waters beneath it.) What did He call the firmament? (1)
 4. Read verses 9-13.
 (a) What did God gather into one place?
 (b) On which day were the grass and trees made? (3)
 5. Read verses 14-19.

- (a) God made two great lights to rule the day and night. Is this true or false?
 (b) Where were they “to give light”?
 (c) On which day were the stars made? (2)
6. Read verses 20-23. Fill in the missing words:
 God blessed His creation on the _____ day saying, “Be fruitful and _____”. (1)
7. Read verses 24, 25. Fill in the missing word:
 God saw that what He had created on the sixth day was _____. (1)
8. Read verses 26-28.
 (a) In whose image did God create man? (1)
 (b) Complete verse 27: “m_____ and f_____ created He them”. (2)
9. Read Genesis chapter 2:1-3. Which day did God especially bless, after He had finished all His work? (1)

New Testament

1. Read Revelation 20:11-15.
 (a) Write down two things that John saw (verses 11-12). (2)
 (b) Where will we all stand on the day the books are opened? (1)
 (c) Which book do we read about in verse 12? (1)
 (d) What will happen to those people whose names are not written in that book? (1)
2. Read Revelation 21:1-4.
 (a) What two things did John see (verses 1-2)? (2)
 (b) Write down the four things which “shall be no more”. (2)
3. Read Revelation 22:1-7.
 (a) What did John see in verse 1? (1)
 (b) What shall those who serve God and the Lamb see? (1)
 (c) Why is there no need of sunlight or a candle in heaven? (1)
 (d) Who are blessed? (1)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write down the answer to Question 10 in the Shorter Catechism:
 How did God create man? (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

1. What did God create in the beginning? Genesis 1:1
 2. What happened when God said, “Let there be light”? Genesis 1:3
 3. On which day did God make the grass and plants and trees?
 Genesis 1:12,13
 4. On which day did God make the fish and other sea creatures, and the birds and other flying creatures? Genesis 1:20,21,23
 5. On the sixth day God created the animals. He also made man on the sixth day, but man was different from the animals – he was made in the image of God. Fill in the words: In the i_____ of God created he h____: m_____ and f_____ created he them. Genesis 1:27
 6. What did God see when He had finished making everything? Fill in the

- words: And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was v____
g____. Genesis 1:31
7. On which day did God rest from all his work? Genesis 2:2
8. What were the names of the first man and woman? Genesis 3:20

New Testament

In Matthew 5 and 6, Jesus tells us of important things we have to do in our lives. We need special help from God for this. Fill in the missing words:

1. Let your l____ so s____ before men. Matthew 5:16
2. Love your e____. Matthew 5:44
3. Be ye therefore p____, even as your F____ which is in heaven is perfect. Matthew 5:48
4. Lay not up for yourselves t____ upon e____. Matthew 6:19
5. Lay up for yourselves treasures in h____. Matthew 6:20
6. Ye cannot serve G__ and m____ (the world). Matthew 6:24
7. Take no thought for your l____, what ye shall e____, or what ye shall d____; nor yet for your b____, what ye shall put on. Matthew 6:25
8. But s____ ye f____ the kingdom of G__, and his righteousness; and a____ these t____ shall be added unto you. Matthew 6:33

UK Youth Conference 2023

The Conference will be held, God willing, at Strathallan School, Forgandenny, Perth, PH2 9EG, from Tuesday, April 11, to Thursday, April 13. The lower age limit is 16. The cost is the same as before: £50 for those in full-time employment and £25 for others. Payment may be made by cheque to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland; to pay by bank transfer contact: nm.fpchurch@btconnect.com. Please apply early – if possible, by the middle of March (to Free Presbyterian Church, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE, or use the e-mail address shown above). If necessary, you can contact Rev J B Jardine by phoning 01859 502253. Further details about the Conference will be sent to applicants later. The titles of the papers are listed below.

1. **Aaron** *Rev J Campbell*
2. **The Seventh Commandment** *Dr R J Dickie*
3. **Historical Tour to Perth** conducted by *Rev J B Jardine*
4. **Katherine Luther** *Mr F R Daubney*
5. **Christian Character** *Rev W A Weale*
6. **The Sabbath** *Rev D A Ross*

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