

# 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*



***October 2023***

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**Cover Picture:** Helmsdale harbour. See page 188.

## The Young People's Magazine

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# The Young People's Magazine

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## You Only Live Once

Only today did I first come across the abbreviation YOLO. Apparently it has been in common use on social media since 2012, but then your editor does not use social media, and he does not feel in any way deprived because of that. There is no doubt that these media have their uses, but they also have their dangers. For one thing, they are great wasters of time, and time is a precious resource. In using them, many foolish things are said, quickly and thoughtlessly, that would be much better left unsaid.

YOLO, as most young readers, if not all, will know, stands for “you only live once”. An internet source states that it means, “You should do things that are enjoyable or exciting, even if they are silly or slightly dangerous”; and it gives as an example of its use: “Finished the whole carton of ice cream. YOLO.” To finish the whole carton of ice cream, one assumes, was to consume too much. So it was rather gluttonous, and gluttony is a sin.

Perhaps that example is at the mild end of its usage. But alarm bells should ring in our minds when an expression like “you only live once” is used to excuse sin, and no doubt it is often used to excuse much more serious sins than eating too much ice cream.

Alarm bells should also ring in our minds, when “you only live once” is used to excuse what is dangerous. Obviously there is an element of danger in almost everything we do – for example, crossing a road can be dangerous. So we should ask God, again and again, to take care of us, whatever we intend to do. But we should not attempt things that involve unreasonable risk. If the risk is unreasonable, we should not attempt it, and it is wrong to ask God for His care in doing what is dangerous but unnecessary.

Especially we should ask God to protect us from spiritual dangers. Again we should not take unnecessary risks with our souls. How can we pray, “Lead us not into temptation”, if we willfully enter into temptation with our eyes open? If people attend some event that they know to be sinful, they cannot be sincere in praying that God would protect them.

Yet it *can* be good to remind ourselves that we only live once. The point is that our only opportunities to find salvation, to be delivered from sin and

made ready to enter eternity, are in this one life that we live in this world.

We ought to make the best possible use of this one life that God has given us. Jesus warned Nicodemus: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). In the same way, unless we are born again, we cannot enter heaven; unless we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, our sin cannot be forgiven; unless we are made holy, we must go down to a lost eternity, for "the wicked shall be turned into hell" (Psalm 9:17).

John Owen was one of the best preachers who ever entered a pulpit in England. He believed that it is the great duty of all believers to be really diligent in the ways Christ has spoken about, to avoid falling into temptation. Indeed *everyone* should feel it their duty to do all that they can to avoid being tempted to sin.

First, we should earnestly seek the salvation of our soul, by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and turning away from sin in repentance. Then we should seek to be sure that we have truly believed on Christ and repented. For instance, we should ask ourselves, Do I really want to turn away from sin of every kind? If we can truly answer, Yes, to that question, we will not say in a flippant way, in a way that ignores God and His commands, You only live once.

Second, we should pray to God to keep us from being tempted, and to protect us from sinning if we are tempted. And we should ask God to give us grace to pray sincerely. Whatever it is we pray for, we should ask it for Christ's sake, remembering that it is because of what Christ did as Saviour that we can look for any blessing when we pray.

Third, we should read the Bible. In it God instructs us about how we should live and how we should not live. He directs us not to sin.

Fourth, we should attend public worship – assuming that, reasonably near us, we can find services where the Word of God is faithfully preached. An important part of proper preaching is making clear what the Bible teaches about sin.

Yes, in this world we just live once. So we should make the best use of this life that we possibly can. Is this to enjoy ourselves in any way we please? No, enjoyment is not what we should seek first. What did Jesus say? He told people to seek "first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). We need a place in God's kingdom and we need the righteousness that only God can give, for Jesus' sake. But if God, in His mercy, will draw us into His kingdom, we will lead a much more satisfying life, even in this world. And we will begin to live to the glory of God.

Yet it is true that even God's people cannot avoid trouble and difficulty and temptation in this sinful world. But they have the great blessing of being

able to go in prayer to God to ask Him for His help, however difficult their situation. And what a wonderful difference that makes! And when death approaches, how comforting if we have good reason to believe that we have been saved by grace and are on our way to a blessed eternity!

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## Katherine von Bora

### 3. Married Life with Martin Luther

*F R Daubney*

Last month's article told about Luther's efforts to find a husband for Katherine, after he had helped to arrange for her to be rescued from a convent. In the end, he decided that he must marry her himself. He went to the house where she lived and proposed to her. She indicated that she was willing.

Luther then said, "Then you will be mine until death?" "Yes" was the reply. They were engaged on 13 June 1525 and, following his advice to his friend Spalatin that it was not good to delay, the wedding was arranged for two weeks later. Katherine was 26 at this time, and Luther 42. Their home was to be the Augustinian monastery which, with its associated land, the Elector had given to the Reformer.

The wedding day was one of great rejoicing in Wittenberg. The town gave the couple 20 gold florins, a barrel of beer, a year's supply of table wine and a set of fine linen. The University gave them a huge silver tankard, lined with gold and inscribed on the outside. Many of Luther's friends and of the townspeople were present, but what pleased Luther most of all was the presence of his parents. Luther's father had been very unhappy when his son became a monk and their relationship had been strained since that day. There is no record of any of Katherine's family being present.

Martin Luther said he married for several reasons: to make his father happy, to annoy the Pope, to make the angels laugh and the devil weep, and to seal his testimony. He made no mention of romantic love; in fact, one of Luther's biographers suggested he could just as well have married a plank. But Katherine von Bora was anything but a plank. Luther had no idea what he was getting himself into. He said, "All my best friends exclaimed, 'Not this one'".

Luther and Katherine were very happy, but there were many enemies who wrote to them both, reviling them. Luther cheerfully accepted this. The more he was reviled, the more he prized his new situation; all the wicked assaults only helped him to see more clearly the excellence of marriage.

Five months after Luther and Katie's wedding, Luther's friend Spalatin

was to be married. Luther was invited and accepted the invitation. But Katherine had a strong foreboding about her husband's journey to the wedding. She was distressed and begged Luther not to go.

Luther was sorry for Spalatin's sake but decided to write to his friend and tell him not to expect him. He explained that his wife feared that his life would be in danger as they had heard that the recent rescue of the nuns from the cloister in Freiburg had aroused the wrath of some of the nobility of Duke George's territory. He concluded, "Although I know that I am under the care of the Almighty, and not a hair of my head can be touched without His will, yet my heart is filled with pity for dear Katherine. May God's grace and blessing rest on you."

After the wedding Spalatin wrote in reply, "My dear Brother Martin, although at first, I regretted your absence on the festive day, yet I now greatly rejoice since I recognise that God's hand was in the matter and that He has preserved you from great danger. It has been discovered that four young noblemen were lying in wait for you with the intention to do away with you because you rescued their sisters from the cloister, and the brothers in consequence, have suffered in their temporal possessions. Therefore, friend, clasp your Katherine's hand and thank her, for, under God's guidance, she has been your faithful Eckhart. [Eckhart is an old German expression when someone is warned of the approach of danger and so is preserved.] It is recorded that, on receiving the letter, Luther went to find his wife, put his arms round her, kissed her and said, "My faithful Eckhart".

Life with Luther could not have been altogether easy for Katherine. He appears to have been a very temperamental character; deeply spiritual but experiencing times of self-doubt and depression, sometimes making angry outbursts against opponents, and at other times full of jollity and hilarity. His friend Phillip Melanchthon hoped that marriage might "sober him down, so that he will discard the low buffoonery that we have often censured".

Katie certainly set about bringing order to Martin's chaotic personal affairs. He had been a bachelor for many years and said, "Before I was married, the bed was not made for a whole year and became foul with sweat". He was often so tired that he simply fell into bed without giving it a thought. He suffered at times from various ailments: gout, sleeplessness, catarrh, haemorrhoids, constipation, kidney stones, gallstones, dizziness and ringing in the ears. So Katherine treated him with herbal medicines, poultices and massages. She brewed her own beer and used it as a medicine for his sleeplessness and kidney stones.

Money was a perpetual worry, in part because Martin was incurably generous and was always giving away what little money and belongings they

had. Katherine, who Luther humourously called, “my Lord Kate”, often had to take matters into her own hands. Once she hid a vase which he planned to give to a friend as a wedding present. On another occasion, a friend, Pastor Agricola of Eisleben, admired a costly glass flagon which had been a gift to Luther and Katherine from the Elector. Luther told Agricola he would give it to him as a birthday present but, when the time came, he could not find it because Katherine had hidden that away also. His view was that the Lord freely gives and therefore so should His people.

Martin often jokingly referred to his wife as “my rib” but he called her just as often “my lord”. Sometimes he even changed the name Katie into the German Kette meaning *chain*, or *ball and chain*! It was in the wise providence of God that he had Katherine for a wife, because by her housewifely virtues, her thrift, her hard work, foresight and experience, she was able to sustain their household on very little money.

When they married, neither Luther nor Katherine had any money; he just had his books and clothes, and she had nothing, and her father did nothing to help her. The year after they married, Luther installed a lathe and learned woodworking so that he might be able to support his family if they ever fell on hard times. It is doubtful if he ever used it. He gave himself exclusively to the service of the Word and trusted that God would provide.

Keeping house for such an improvident husband was no light matter for Katherine. “I do not worry about debts”, Luther said, “because when Katie pays one, another comes.” At one point he took care of the garden, which produced all manner of vegetables, but in the main it was Katherine who provided for them. She looked after the orchard, which supplied them with apples and grapes and pears and nuts and peaches. She had fishponds and looked after the barnyard, with its hens, ducks, pigs and cows, doing the slaughtering herself. Her husband called her, “The morning star of Wittenberg”, because she was always up early getting on with her chores.

Luther said in a letter of 1535: “My Lord Katie greets you. She plants our fields, pastures, and sells cows and so on. In between, she has started to read the Bible. I have promised her 50 gulden if she finishes by” a particular time. He went on: “She is hard at it and is at the end of the fifth book of Moses.” Where he expected to get 50 gulden is anybody’s guess!

After a few years they acquired a farm at Zulsdorf, which Katherine managed, spending some weeks there each year. Luther wrote to her on one of these occasions: “To the rich lady of Zulsdorf, Mrs Dr Katherine Luther, who lives in the flesh at Wittenberg but in the spirit at Zulsdorf”; and at another time, “To my beloved wife, Katherine, Mrs Dr Luther, mistress of the pig market, lady of Zulsdorf, and whatsoever other titles may befit thy Grace.”

## A Wonderful Answer to Prayer

John Macdonald was a godly minister in Helmsdale, Sutherland, in the north of Scotland, from 1843 to his death in 1854. He faithfully preached the gospel and fearlessly rebuked sin. His rebukes of sin earned him the hatred and mockery of wicked men.

One of these men had an important position in Sutherland. Some Helmsdale men ask him to arrange, as his duty was, for the removal of a troublesome sandbank which tides had built up at the mouth of the River Helmsdale.

He haughtily replied, "Go to your minister, and ask him to pray for a spate to take it away". Not long after that, there was a heavy and long down-pour of rain, and the river came down towards the sea in full flood – there was a spate – and it removed the sandbank.

Had Mr Macdonald prayed for its removal? Someone asked him directly but he, of course, refused to acknowledge any merit in its removal. He remarked, "When the Syrians said, 'The Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys' (1 Kings 20:28), the Lord made it known that He is God". The people assumed, from his striking response, that he had indeed prayed about the problem.

Here is confirmation that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). And it is an encouragement to all of us to act upon the promise: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matthew 7:7,8).

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## Finding the Messiah

A Jewish man who lived in France spoke of the blessing that he and his wife received through reading the Bible. He said, "In a copy of John's Gospel I read the words, 'We have found the Messiah'. These were the words of Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, to whom he joyfully brought the wonderful news. With no less joy we also desire to tell you that we have at last found the Messiah. We were both deeply religious and practising Jews, and we despised the Lord Jesus Christ."

The man and his wife had been taught from infancy to regard Jesus as someone who just pretended to be the Messiah – which is just another word for *Christ*. Both words mean "the Anointed One", the One whom God promised in the Old Testament, the One whom we know in the Gospels as



Jesus. The man went on to confess that they were enemies of Jesus, and they realised that the words of Isaiah 31:6 applied to them: “Turn ye unto Him *from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted*”. But he added, “But in His love He sought us, and the time was approaching for His gracious revelation to our distressed and troubled spirits”.

The man attended a Protestant service at a time in his life when he was very troubled. He was surprised to hear the preacher say that Jesus was truly the Messiah who was promised by the prophets. Someone gave the man a New Testament. He went on to describe how he used it: “I gave myself to the study of the New Testament with great interest. After a time, everything was changed. It was as if I had become a different person, and I acknowledge that the reading of the New Testament was the means of this great blessing. The Lord Jesus became as One who was well known to me, although at this time I was not fully persuaded that He was God.” The man’s Jewish background still had some influence over him.

But, he said, “my prejudice was being overcome and I was able to give thanks to Him for all the blessings received from His hand. There was still the great question continually haunting my mind: ‘Who was Jesus?’ At the same time, my wife was convinced of His grace and power to save, and was baptized, making a public profession of her faith in Christ. This caused me to search more earnestly for the truth.

“Soon afterwards I obtained a copy of the Old Testament in French. One day, determined to discover the truth about the Lord Jesus, I shut myself in my room and prayed to God to show me whether Jesus was the Messiah or not. While I prayed I felt ready and willing to follow the path which He would show me, believing that it was better ‘to obey God rather than men’ (Acts 5:29). Then I opened His Word and searched in nearly every book contained in it.

It was wonderful how I was led to the verses which spoke of the promised Messiah, and no less wonderful was the great light that then lit up my mind. I saw with amazement how all the prophecies applied to Jesus and could apply to no one other than Himself.” He stated that in the notes in a Jewish copy of the Old Testament many of these verses were said to be “obscure”, but he added, “They all became wonderfully clear to my eyes”.

From then on, he was convinced that Jesus was, without a doubt, the Messiah, and he understood why He died such a shameful death on the cross: “It was to ransom me by His precious blood. He was the Lamb of God taking away sin. It was all made clear in Isaiah 53. I was able to make a public profession of my new-found faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. Many consequences followed. We broke completely from the bondage of the law

and tradition. We were made free with 'the glorious liberty of the children of God' (Romans 8:21). We lost most of our Jewish friends, and our own family turned against us. But how wonderfully we were compensated for this by being brought into Christian fellowship with many of the Lord's people! He filled our hearts with joy and great peace, making us able to rest secure in the faith of Christ.

"Now how many of the writings of the Apostle Paul seem appropriate to my own experience, particularly 1 Timothy 1:12-15: 'And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.'"

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## Lessons from the Life of Aaron

### 2. Aaron and Moses

*Rev John Campbell*

Last month's part of this Youth Conference paper was an introduction to what the Bible tells us about Aaron.

Aaron first appears in the Scripture account in Exodus 4:14: "The anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, and He said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart."

The time came in God's purpose to enter the field of conflict and deliver Israel from the cruel yoke of Pharaoh and Egypt. Moses did not then appear sufficient for the great task ahead; he complained that he was "slow of speech and of a slow tongue". God instructed Aaron to go out to meet Moses in the wilderness. He obeyed God and did so.

It says much for Aaron's cheerful readiness of spirit, and for his strength, that at the age of 83 he was ready to be identified with his brother in what must have appeared very dangerous work. Where true faith in God is active, no obstacle before us in life will be too great. May you and I earnestly seek such a true and living faith in our perilous day.

Paul asks in connection with his labours, "Who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Corinthians 2:16). Then he states that the effective power behind any of his gifts and graces came from God only: "Not that we are sufficient

of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God” (2 Corinthians 3:5).

In the work of deliverance itself and in his role (as Moses’ spokesman to the people and to Pharaoh) Aaron was very much a secondary figure to his brother Moses (who was God’s spokesman to him, and to the people). Yet it was a position of great privilege, trust and influence (Exodus 4:14-16; 7:1,2). Although our work in the service of the Lord may be very much secondary to others, yet the greatest honour one can be called to is to serve the Lord in any capacity, especially in a dark day. Let us then do so humbly and willingly, knowing that God gives the necessary grace for everything in His service.

God confirmed that His presence was with Aaron, by working miracles through his rod, in Egypt before the Exodus. Although we are not to expect outwardly visible signs to accompany any service of God, yet we know that God’s work of giving grace and maintaining it in people’s souls is above every power of nature. So we are called to the same faith in the same almighty power of God. For each of His people, He is able to do “exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Ephesians 3:20). “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).

We may learn from what God did through Aaron’s rod (and also Moses’ rod), that God may take what someone has (Exodus 7:9,12) and make use of it for His own glory. So it is really God’s rod, working through the human instrument. God can use any gift or possession of man in any way He pleases; this is a proof of God’s reality and His power. By God’s help, the capacity of our nature and the opportunities we have in our work have almost unlimited potential, if they are laid at His feet. Each one of God’s people then have, with grace and blessing, all that is necessary for them to glorify Him before the proud world surrounding us today

May each one of us, however young or old we are, use our gifts and our possessions, however small, in the service of God in our day! May He use us mightily as He is able to do!

One prominent incident where Aaron supported Moses in the wilderness, was when he and Hur bore up Moses’ arms during Israel’s battle with Amalek (Exodus 17). Moses’ rod was pointed towards heaven, showing his reliance on the help of God. Aaron and Hur acknowledged Moses as God’s special messenger, and they realised their subordinate but brotherly relation to him. This incident shows what a powerful influence the prayer of the Lord’s people had on the outcome of this battle. It also shows what a powerful weapon prayer is when used by any of God’s people. God will hear those

who look to God in heaven for help, in the great and small affairs of life, and He will help them.

These three men of God – Moses, Aaron and Hur – were the most significant figures in the day's battle. In the same way a praying child of God is more significant in the affairs of any nation than an earthly ruler, as the child of God has power to prevail with God in the constant battle between good and evil in this world. They (humanly speaking) contribute, by grace, to the final victory over the kingdom of darkness in this world.

As Moses held up his arm, it grew weary; this teaches us various lessons:

First, we are always to look heavenward, rather than to consider earthly circumstances if we wish something here, small or great, to turn out in a particular way. We must cease from man.

Second, the habit of prayer may not be easy, and it is often accompanied with weariness and infirmities. But the Lord's Spirit in every age upholds and helps people in their weakness. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26).

Third, it shows our constant need of watchfulness against all our spiritual enemies. We are, with the disciples of Christ, commanded, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Matthew 26:41).

Fourth, Aaron and Hur holding up Moses' hand as he prayed shows why it is so necessary and so helpful for the Lord's people to be united in prayer. We can render no greater service to someone else than by bearing them up at a throne of grace.

Aaron and Hur had a noble and honourable role on this day, not only by praying themselves, but also by bearing up Moses in prayer. So, as we see our own day getting darker, may each one of us see that prayer to God, for ourselves and for each other, is not only our duty but an honour and privilege. Indeed it is a blessed opportunity.

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## God's Word Is True

**T**he preacher took for his text 1 Peter 1:24,25: "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

After the service, the friend I had been sitting with told me about an experience, through those verses, he would never forget. He was in hospital

in his early teens for an operation. Others were in the same ward for the same operation. Usually none of them was in any danger.

On the Sabbath morning, a day or so after the operation, the chaplain came to take a service on the ward. He spoke from these verses, emphasising the uncertainty of human life and the need to consider where we would be when our life here had ended – so quickly, like the flower of grass.

After the chaplain had gone, the man in the next bed laughed at what he had said and made fun of God’s truth. My friend was very sad and upset at what the man said. Bedtime came, and my friend fell asleep. In the morning, the next bed was empty. He asked the nurse where the man was.

“Didn’t you hear us in the night?” she asked. “The man died in the night.” My friend has never forgotten it: to die when mocking God’s Word!

*Adapted from Cheering Words*

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*For Younger Readers*

## The Boys and the Pear Tree

One day, some boys stopped another boy that they knew in school. They told him to climb a tree and pick the pears that were growing on it.

But the pears did not belong to them. They belonged to Mrs Benson. So the boy refused to pick the pears. At once, one of the other boys hit him hard on his head. But the boy still said, No.

Other boys hit him too. But they could not force the boy to do what he knew was wrong. He told them, “Do what you like to me, but you will never make me steal”.

Do not try to force anyone to do what is wrong. Ask God to make you want to do what is right, like the boy who refused to rob the pear tree. Ask God to give you a new heart so that you will want to do what is right.

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*For Junior Readers*

## Providence

I hope you have learned the answer to Question 11 in *The Shorter Catechism*, “What are God’s works of providence?” The answer is, “God’s works of providence are, His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing

all His creatures, and all their actions". God preserves us, He takes care of us; "in Him we live, and move, and have our being". How good to know that our times are in His hands and that He watches over us every moment!

James Gilmour was very conscious of that. In far-off Mongolia, working on his own with no mission colleagues to support him, he felt very strongly that God was close to him and influenced all the passing events of his daily life. On his missionary travels he had to stay in inns, often in remote places.

One day, he really hoped to leave early on his onward journey, but some things happened that he had not foreseen. They delayed him and he felt a bit annoyed. But at last he set off and eventually caught up with other travellers who had spent the night in the same inn, but had left earlier. They had stopped on the path and had been attacked by a band of robbers. Although he felt very sorry for the other men, he saw clearly that the delay at the inn was God's way of protecting him from being robbed. It showed God's care of him in providence.

God's providence extends to animals as well. He created them also; so they too are His creatures. A long time ago, in the early 1500s, when there was much poverty (and no social welfare) a very poor lady in England had a baby boy that she felt she could not feed or provide for in other ways. She was so desperate that she abandoned the little baby in a field. I am sure she hoped that some kind, wealthy person might find the child and look after him.

Close by there were some grasshoppers which, in God's providence, were making very loud chirping noises – so loud that a young boy who was out on a walk made a detour to see what was making the noise. As he did so, he spotted the baby in the grass and was able to get the help of some adults. They found some kindly person to adopt the baby. Was that not wonderful? The Lord used the chirping of the grasshoppers to save the life of the child.

The child grew up to be a successful and wealthy merchant in London. It was due to him that the Royal Exchange was first built and became a centre of trade for the city of London. In acknowledgment of his amazing rescue, he chose a grasshopper for his family crest and it was placed on the walls of the new building. Also he had a weather vane made in the figure of a grasshopper and placed it on the top of the building!

Should you not then be very thankful to God for His merciful providence? Thomas Watson comments on this: "We are kept alive by a wonderful-working providence. Providence makes our clothes to warm us, and our food to nourish us. That we have health is not [because of] our diligence, but God's providence. We may see cause for thankfulness that we have been born and bred in a gospel land, and that we live in such a place where the Sun of righteousness shines, which is a special providence." *J van Kralingen*

# Looking Around Us

## The Flood

Many people do not believe that the Flood in Noah's time really happened. Some of them argue, It is impossible that enough water could come to cover the highest mountains.

We read in the Bible that when the Flood began, "all the fountains of the great deep" were broken up (Gen 7:11), that is – the water came from deep under the surface of the earth. Then, when God stopped the Flood, "*The fountains also of the deep* and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained" (Gen 8:2).

A newspaper article in 2014 said that a vast reservoir of water, at least three times the volume of all the oceans, was discovered deep beneath the earth's surface. The article was reporting on a study by a geophysicist and a seismologist which presented "evidence for potentially oceans' worth of water" about 400 miles underground. The water is trapped inside rock called ringwoodite, we are told, which acts like a sponge due to its crystal structure that makes it attract hydrogen and trap water. "If [the stored water] wasn't there," said the geophysicist, "it would be on the surface of the earth, and mountaintops would be the only land poking out." Their findings are perhaps a possible explanation of "the fountains of the great deep", but there is no hint that these scientists were thinking along these lines.

While these findings are interesting, let us always remember that the Bible's account of the Flood is absolutely true and that we are not to depend on science for proof that the Bible is true. We may be troubled by perplexing questions; yet the Psalmist also had perplexities. But he said to God, "Yet I Thy word believe" (Metrical Psalm 119:81). Let us follow his example and believe all that the Bible says, not only about the Flood, but especially about sin, salvation and the Saviour.

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## Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2023-24

### General Information

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

Please read the following rules very carefully before you begin:

1. Your section *for the whole year* is decided by your age on *1 October 2023*. Stay in that section for the three sets of exercises. You may miss a prize or award by changing sections.

2. Exercises are to be sent to correctors, by post or by e-mail, before November 30, March 31 and June 30. So you have about two months in which to do each exercise. Please send it in time in case you lose marks for being late.
3. Each entry is to be the work of the person whose name is on it, except for beginners in the Lower Primary Section, who are allowed a little help, as is anyone in any section who has special needs.
4. Prizes will be given in all sections except Lower Primary, and awards of books will be given to everyone in each section who does the three exercises.
5. Teachers and others working with young people can arrange for groups to do the exercises, and correctors will be glad to hear from them.
6. The exercises are based on the Bible Reading Cards which will be distributed through the ministers of the congregations (or they may be obtained from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE). It is very important for you to read God's Word every day. The exercises this year are based on the Bible readings from cards A and B: *Exercise 1*: Exodus 35 to Numbers 21, and Luke 1 to John 6. *Exercise 2*: Numbers 22 to Joshua 13, and John 7 to Acts 19. *Exercise 3*: Joshua 14 to 1 Samuel 25, and Acts 20 to 2 Corinthians 4.
7. The exercises are also to be found as pdf files, at <http://www.fpchurch.org.uk/spiritual-help/scripture-and-catechism-exercises/>. When they are printed out, space is available for the answers.
8. The names of those who complete the first two exercises and of the award and prize winners will be published in *The Young People's Magazine*. Because of data protection laws, those who are doing the exercises for the first time should indicate on their answer paper if they wish their name to be published.

### Exercise 1

All answers from *overseas* should be sent to Miss Naomi Clemence, 60 Dougalston Gardens South, Milngavie, Glasgow, G62 6HT; [naomi.clemence@gmail.com](mailto:naomi.clemence@gmail.com). The correctors should have your answers before the end of November.

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

UK answers to Mrs J Hicklin, 22 Lasswade Road, Eskbank, EH22 3EF; [jmhicklin86@gmail.com](mailto:jmhicklin86@gmail.com).

### Old Testament

1. Read Numbers 22.
  - (a) Why was Balak afraid of the Israelites? (2)
  - (b) What did he ask Balaam to do and why? (2)
  - (c) What did the elders bring with them when they came to Balaam? (1)
  - (d) Why would Balaam not go with them? (2)
  - (e) How did Balak try to encourage him to come? (3)
  - (f) Why do you think Balaam asked God again if he could go? Read Jude 11, and 2 Peter 2:15-16. What can we learn about Balaam's character and motivations from these verses? (4)
  - (g) Describe how God warned Balaam not to disobey Him in verses 22-33 (8)
2. God only permitted Balaam to *bless* Israel. What did Balaam predict about them in chapter 23
  - (1) in verses 9-10 (2) in verse 21? (4)
3. Sadly Balaam did succeed in bringing trouble to Israel through tempting them to sin. Read Numbers 31:8. What happened to him in the end? (1)
4. In the passage we see that Balaam believed in God, spoke with Him and feared to offend Him. Why was this not enough? (1)



**New Testament**

Read John 4.

1. What evidence do we see in verses 6-8 that Jesus was a real man? (3)
2. Why was the woman surprised that Jesus spoke to her? (1)
3. Jesus offered her living water. What did she think He meant? What did He really mean? (4)
4. Why did Jesus tell her to call her husband? (1)
5. What do you think Jesus meant by saying that true worshippers worship in spirit and in truth? (2)
6. Find and write out a verse where Jesus makes clear that the Jewish way of worship was superior to the Samaritan way? (2)
7. What did the woman do after she had finished talking with Jesus? (2)
8. Why do you think she left her water pot behind? (1)
9. How did the Samaritans respond to the woman's message? (See verses 39-42) (3)

**Memory Exercise**

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 80 in the Shorter Catechism:

What is required in the tenth commandment? (3)

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

UK answers to *Mrs M Munro, 3 Borve, Isle of Harris, HS3 3HT; morag.rothach@hotmail.co.uk.*

**Old Testament**

1. Read Numbers 13.

- (a) From whom did the original order to search out the land come? (1)
- (b) How many men were to be sent and who did they represent? (2)
- (c) What were the specific issues that Moses asked them to find out about? (verses 18-20) (6)
- (d) Ten spies brought a negative report. How did they describe:
  - (1) the land (2) the people? (1,3)
- (e) Which spy disagreed? (1)
- (f) What did he advise? (2)
- (g) Which report did the people believe? (chapter 14:1-5) (1)
- (h) Who was the second spy who reasoned with the people? (chapter 14:6) (1)
- (i) What was the response of the people to the advice of Caleb and Joshua? (1)
- (j) The Lord was angry with his people and threatened to cast them off, but Moses prayed for them. Describe in your own words the arguments which Moses used in his prayer. (3)
- (k) What was the final result? (chapter 14:29-34) (3)

**New Testament**

1. Read Luke 12:13-32.

- (a) In your own words give an account of the parable of the rich farmer. (4)
- (b) What was the essential thing that he left out of his plans? (1)
- (c) State two lessons which these verses teach. (4)
- (d) Find and write out the verse which summarises what we are advised to do to be safe for time and eternity. (2)
- (e) Give two examples which Christ gave to show the completeness of God's provision for our practical needs. (4)

2. Read Luke 18:10-14.

- (a) Jesus often rebuked hypocrisy. Find and write out the verse in 1 Samuel 16 which says that God is more concerned about our heart sincerity than about our outward behaviour. (2)
- (b) State (1) what was right about the publican's prayer and (2) what was wrong with the Pharisee's prayer. (2,2)
- (c) What was the outcome of their prayers? (2)

**Memory Exercise**

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 79 in the Shorter Catechism:

Which is the Tenth Commandment? (3)

### Junior Section (11 and 12 years old)

UK answers to *Mrs M Logan, 21 Leys Drive, Inverness, IV2 3JB; moira.logan@btinternet.com.*

#### Old Testament

1. Read Numbers 11. God provided manna from heaven for the children of Israel in the wilderness.
  - (a) What did the manna look like? (1)
  - (b) What did it taste of? (See also Exodus 16:31) (2)
  - (c) How was it prepared for eating? (3)
  - (d) Verse 10 says that "the anger of the Lord was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased". Why was this? (1)
  - (e) Describe how Moses felt at this time. How did the Lord help him? (2)
  - (f) God provided meat for the people. What was it? (1)
  - (g) What happened to them as they were eating it? (1)
  - (h) Give one lesson we should learn from this. (2)
2. Read Numbers 13:17-25.
  - (a) Moses sent men to spy out the land of Canaan. Write down three things they were to find out about. (3)
  - (b) What fruit did they bring back with them? (3)
  - (c) Most of the spies brought back an evil report about the land but two did not. Who were they? (Numbers 14:6-8 will help.) (1)
  - (d) How did they describe the land? (2)
  - (e) What happened to the spies that brought back an evil report? (Numbers 14:22 & 23 will help.) (1)

#### New Testament

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

<i>Type of ground</i>	<i>What happened to the seed?</i>	<i>What does the parable mean?</i>
Thorny ground	It was choked	They are taken up with the cares, riches and pleasures of this life, and the Word has no effect.

(9)

2. Read Luke 24:13-53.
  - (a) The two on the road to Emmaus were discussing two main events that had taken place in Jerusalem. What were they? (2)
  - (b) How did Jesus answer them? (2)
  - (c) What did they ask Jesus to do when they reached the village? (1)
  - (d) When did they recognise it was Jesus that was speaking to them? (1)
  - (e) Write the verse that tells us the effect this meeting had on them both. (1)
  - (f) What did they do immediately after Jesus left them? (1)

#### Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 51 in the Shorter Catechism: What is forbidden in the second commandment? (3)

**Upper Primary Section** (9 and 10 years old)

UK answers to *Mrs M Schouten, 58 Fairfield Road, Inverness, IV3 5QW.*  
*mary.schouten59@gmail.com.*

**Old Testament**

1. Read Exodus 35:30-35. How many men were given wisdom by God to do special work for the tabernacle? (1)
2. Read Exodus 39:10-14. How many precious stones were in the breastplate? (1)
3. Read Leviticus 19:23-25. How many years did the Israelites have to wait before eating fruit from the trees they had planted? (1)
4. Read Leviticus 25:8-11. Which year was the jubilee year (a holy year) for the Israelites? (1)
5. Read Numbers 7: 15-17. How many animals did each prince offer to the Lord? (1)
6. Read the following verses and fill in the table. Write in who asked this question and to whom it was said.

<i>The question</i>	<i>Who asked this question?</i>	<i>To whom it was said?</i>
Numbers 11:4-6 and 18 “Who shall give us flesh to eat?”		
Numbers 11:10-13 “Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people?”		
Numbers 11:21-23 “Is the Lord’s hand waxed short?”		

(6)

**New Testament**

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

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

(12)

**Memory Exercise**

Learn by heart and write down the answer to Question 42 in the Shorter Catechism:  
 What is the sum of the Ten Commandments?

(3)

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

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

### Old Testament

When the Children of Israel came near the land of Canaan, Moses sent 12 men to spy out the land.

1. They brought back pomegranates and figs, and two men were needed to carry between them a branch with one cluster of g \_\_\_\_\_. Numbers 13:23
2. What did ten of the spies say about the people of the land? "They are s \_\_\_\_\_ than we." Numbers 13:31
3. This made the people cry and wish they had died in Egypt or in the wilderness. They feared that their children would be a prey (captured). What did Joshua and Caleb say? "If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this l \_\_\_, and give it us; a land which floweth with m \_\_\_ and h \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord is with u \_\_\_, fear them not." Numbers 14:8,9
4. The Children of Israel did not want to listen and God was angry with them because of their unbelief. What did Moses ask God to do? P \_\_\_\_\_, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of thy m \_\_\_\_\_. Numbers 14:19
5. Did God pardon them? Numbers 14:20
6. What did God say about the men who did not trust God even after seeing all the miracles? "Surely they shall not s \_\_\_ the land." Numbers 14:23
7. What did God promise about their children? "Your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring i \_\_\_, and they shall know the l \_\_\_\_\_. Numbers 14:31

### New Testament

Jesus told this parable (a story with a spiritual meaning) about a man and his sons. It is found in Luke 15:11-32.

1. How many sons did the man have? Luke 15:11
2. The younger son asked his father for his share of the goods. Then he went to a f \_\_\_ c \_\_\_\_\_. Luke 15:13
3. Did he use his share of the goods wisely? Luke 15:13
4. When he had nothing left, he thought of his father's servants. Even they had plenty food. He said, I will a \_\_\_\_\_ and go to my father, and will say unto him, F \_\_\_\_\_, I have s \_\_\_\_\_ against heaven and before t \_\_\_\_\_. Luke 15:18
5. When his father met him, was he angry with him? Luke 15:20
6. There was great gladness for him but was the elder brother glad too? Luke 15:28
7. The father said, "We should make m \_\_\_\_\_, and be g \_\_\_\_\_: for this thy brother was d \_\_\_\_\_ and is a \_\_\_\_\_ again; and was l \_\_\_\_\_, and is f \_\_\_\_\_." Luke 15:32

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