

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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Volume 90

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Number 2

Money and Happiness

We all need money, though the very young need their parents to buy everything for them – including their food and clothes. Yet there is a danger that people will become too fond of money, that they will make an idol of it and, as it were, begin to worship it. They may treat money as if it was the most important thing in the world and want more and more of it.

Of course, money in itself is of no real value; what makes it valuable is what it can buy. Remember what Paul once said – perhaps he said it often – “Be content with such things as ye have” (Hebrews 13:5). We must not overvalue the worth of anything except spiritual blessings; we must not overvalue what money can do for us.

Recently I looked inside an old book I had bought not too long ago. Inside the front cover, I found these words written: “Money is a universal provider for everything but happiness, and a passport everywhere but to heaven”. I have no idea who wrote these words, but it seems that he or she had a good understanding of the worth of money.

You can buy anything in this world – if you can afford it. But there is one thing you cannot buy, no matter how rich you might be, and that is happiness. You might buy lots of things, and all of them might seem very likely to make you happy. Yet you may be very disappointed; they might seem very likely to make you happy, and perhaps they do so for a time, but it is not likely that they will *keep* you happy. Nothing in this world can keep you happy. Just one thing can, and it is not what money can buy. It is God's grace; it is God's work in your soul. Even then, you will not always be happy while you are still in this world. But when you reach heaven – which you most certainly will if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ – you will always be completely happy; you will never again be sad.

There have been many stories about people, a husband and wife perhaps, who won large sums of money on a lottery. It seemed as if they would always be happy, because they could now buy whatever they wanted. But their winnings could not bring them happiness. Perhaps they could not readily agree with each other any more; the happiness they used to have in each

other's company disappeared. They now had plenty of money, but they lost their happiness. They still had plenty money but they no longer enjoyed the things they had bought. Somehow life had become stale.

When a marriage breaks down, no amount of money can bring back the happiness the husband and wife used to have in each other. And there are very few people today who, in these circumstances, will seek for a better marriage, one that can never be broken. That is the marriage between a sinner and Christ, which takes place when the sinner looks by faith to Christ and turns from sin. But that is what Christ, in His great kindness, calls sinners to – faith and repentance – whatever their circumstances.

The Saviour has never turned a sinner away, and He never will. When He takes a sinner into a marriage union with Himself, it is a marriage that will never break down; it will bring great happiness, and at last it will bring perfect, unending happiness – on the other side of death.

Money can never bring salvation or the happiness that flows from it. Salvation is a free gift from God; it comes “without money and without price” (Isaiah 55:1). It is freely given; no one can earn it. If we try to earn our own salvation, we cannot succeed with pounds or dollars or euros; no more can we succeed with our imaginary good works. But we have no good works – works that will be acceptable to God – unless we are born again, unless we always want to do, by His grace, what is right before God.

Now let us look at the second statement: “And money is a passport everywhere, but to heaven”. We need a passport if we are to be allowed into another country. People are normally welcomed into a country if they have lots of money. But money will not make us any more welcome into heaven. Just as money will not earn us a place in heaven, neither will our good works bring us there.

It is for Christ's sake that sinners like us can enter heaven – if we believe on Him as the One who worked out salvation for the ungodly, the One who suffered and died in their place, the One who also kept the law of God perfectly as the Substitute for sinners. What sinners cannot do, God has done. Salvation is all of grace. We cannot deserve it. Yet God gives it freely.

Think about what Mary said after she was told that she was to be the mother of Jesus: God “hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away” (Luke 1:53). Mary did not have much money; more importantly, she did not feel she had much in the way of spiritual riches. She did not believe what Roman Catholics now think about her, as one who can influence Jesus on behalf of those who pray to her. She knew she was just a needy sinner. Yet looking by faith to *the Saviour*, who was soon to be born, she expected God to fill her soul with good things.

Yet others – who were sure that the source of their good things was in themselves and did not look to Christ for salvation – would be sent away, even from the door of heaven. They thought they were spiritually rich, but their own “good things” were full of sin; they could not please God.

Let us plead with God that He would take away from us every idea that there is something good in ourselves that will make us fit for heaven. Let us ask Him to make us realise that spiritually we are altogether poor, that we have nothing that can please God and that we need Christ as the Saviour from sin. Let us also plead with God that He would bless us with all spiritual blessings for the sake of Jesus Christ – especially forgiving all our sins, giving us a new heart and working in us by the Holy Spirit so that we would be holy for the rest of our lives here and perfectly holy in heaven above.

Let us be thankful for the good things that God gives us in this life and the money – more or less – that He gives us to buy them. But let us remember Jesus’ words: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all [other] things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

Acting or Happiness

Joseph Munden was a famous actor. In 1818 he was at the height of his popularity. One of his school friends was called Samuel Lowell and was now a minister in Bristol. One day Lowell was visiting Brighton to see a friend, J N Goulty. They were out for a walk among the crowds of people who were on holiday in Brighton.

They heard someone near them speak of Munden as a well-known comedian. Munden was making use of a nearby seat and obviously enjoying watching what was going on around him. Lowell recognised Munden as his special friend at school and spoke to him. The friendship of 40 years before was renewed.

Munden asked Lowell “about his line of life”. Lowell told his friend that he was a minister.

“A minister, are you, Sam? And how do you like your work, Sam?”

“Well, I think I like it better and better every year I live.”

“Ah, you’re a happy fellow. You always were such a happy fellow. Sam, I can’t say as you do. To make oneself a fool to please a parcel of fools is the foolishlest thing a man can do. O Sam, I am sick at heart. I have no satisfaction in it; it affords no satisfaction, Sam. But then you know one must take care of the main chance.” He meant that his acting was an opportunity to make money even if it left him thoroughly bored. Munden then spoke about taking

part in a play at a London theatre the next week and went on: "I am as sick as a dog. So I have come down here to get a little fresh air."

Some years later, Goulty met Munden again. He told Goulty that their friend's remark about his happiness as a minister had a great effect on him and he started to read the Bible. He gave up the theatre and he went to live with his son-in-law, and presumably his daughter, so that he could listen to the preaching of his son-in-law, who was a Bible-believing minister.

Munden at least had learned that the opportunity of earning money, by pretending to be someone else, did not produce happiness. One hopes that he also learned that any right way of earning money must not involve breaking the Ninth Commandment, as acting does. Nor should one watch those who break the Ninth Commandment, and that includes watching films on TV and the internet and in cinemas. And one hopes that Munden came to believe the main message of the Bible: our need of deliverance from sin through faith in Jesus Christ, who died for sinners and rose again.

Would Charles Obey?

Charles always wanted to play when he was not in school. He was never pleased if he was playing and there was some interruption. One day at teatime, his mother asked him to take a basket of food and some firewood to a poor woman who stayed in a distant part of the city where Charles and his parents lived. His mother insisted that he must go at once, because the woman was sick and had nothing to eat. Besides, it was winter and she had nothing to make a fire with to keep her warm.

There was snow on the ground, and Charles was tying the basket and the wood to his sledge when a group of his school friends came along. They called on Charles to come with them to go sledging on a nearby slope.

"I can't go now," Charles said, explaining that he had to take these things down to the old lady.

One of the boys told him: "You've plenty of time to slide, and do that too".

Charles did not need much encouragement. He took the load off his sledge and joined the other boys in zooming down the slope. Evening came on and they carried on sledging in the bright moonlight.

At last Charles' conscience told him he was wrong to be selfishly enjoying himself sledging when his mother had told him earnestly about the woman's need. He felt guilty thinking that the woman might be suffering while he was enjoying himself with dozens of others. Perhaps he also felt guilty because he was disobeying his mother; certainly he was. But he soon

forgot these things, telling himself that a few more minutes would make no difference. It seemed just like a moment had passed when he heard a clock nearby strike 10, but then it was clearly too late to deliver the food and wood to the old lady.

He hurried away home and crept quietly to bed; he did not want to meet his parents. At breakfast next morning, his mother asked Charles how he had found the old lady.

Charles blushed, but he said nothing. Perhaps it was years later that he said, "When the truth was known, I shall never forget the look of pain with which it was received. She exclaimed, 'What may not that poor woman have suffered from your neglect? Gladly would I have gone myself rather than have exposed her to it.'"

The kind woman added some more food to the basket and hurried Charles away to deliver it to the poor sick woman. Charles went away, but he was not happy and felt that this morning was colder than any other.

At last he reached the woman's house. It was old; it was in poor repair; and some of the windows were broken. A man came to the outside door and Charles asked him where the woman lived. The man pointed him to the second storey, the first door on the right at the top of the stairs. The stairs too were in bad repair, and very dirty.

Charles went to her door and knocked. In a very weak voice, the woman called him in. She was all alone, lying under just a thin cover. She had no food and no fire – she had nothing to light it with. She must have been very hungry and very cold.

"Here are some things my mother sent you", Charles told her as he lifted the cover of his basket.

She thanked God for sending what she needed. She then said, "How good He is to raise me up such a friend, and how good your mother is to send these things! And I need them so much *just now*." She spoke of her heavenly Father as One who knew her need and the best time to supply it.

"Now," she went on, "last night I lay here so cold and faint, with nothing for nourishment and no one to call to for help. It seemed as if I was starving. But I called on my Saviour and, late in the night, the man who lives below – a poor, swearing, drinking man – came in with some wood and made me a fire and got me a good bowl of porridge. He couldn't do much for me; he is so poor himself, but it was so strange that he should do it. O, it was the Lord's doing, and I praise Him for it."

"I have brought some wood for you too", Charles told her. "It is at the door; let me get it and make you a fire."

"Thank you, thank you."

Charles had now come face to face with this godly, but poor, woman and it made a big difference to his thinking. He now felt guilty for being so hardhearted the evening before, and he hurried away to get the wood. He felt glad too that he had the opportunity to help a woman who was so obviously good and so very needy. The woman called Charles over to her bedside and told him, as the tears fell from her eyes: "I cannot reward you, but God can". Then she prayed very earnestly that Charles might "grow up to be a good man and a servant of Jesus Christ".

The woman's prayer, in such desperate circumstances, had a great effect on Charles, who later said that it "moved the soul of the wayward boy as no other could". And in later life, he could not listen to somebody telling about the needs of a good person without wanting to do something to help. He spoke of the woman as "rich in faith" and one who soon entered into "a house not made with hands" in heaven. He often looked back to that lonely room and the heavenly-minded woman who lived there, and he felt thankful that his mother had taught him when he was young to help such people.

May God teach children and young people today to obey their parents. The duty of honouring them by obedience is what God directs them to in the Fifth Commandment. What a blessing Charles obtained through obeying his mother, even although he was late in his obedience. Perhaps in some way, he would have received an even greater blessing if he had obeyed at once and had resisted the temptations the other boys put in his way.

How could Charles have resisted these temptations? He should have asked God to help him to do what was right and to turn away from doing what was wrong. Charles should also have prayed when the other boys tempted him. Better still, he should have prayed to God before he left home, asking Him to take him safely to the woman's house and back again, and that the food and the wood would be useful to her. May we feel dependent on God always, whatever we have to do and wherever we have to go!

For Junior Readers

How Good to Have Family Worship!

Phoebe and Sarah lived with their widowed father in America, a long time ago. Their home was in a small village in the country; so their father decided to send them away to stay in a big town to continue their education.

While they were there, the Holy Spirit began to bless the preaching of God's Word in that town. It was a time of spiritual revival and blessing, and souls were being saved. When their father heard of this, instead of being

pleased, he was anxious. He had no interest in religion and did not want his daughters to be affected by it. In fact he was actually afraid that they might be converted!

He then made a plan. He would bring them home at once, before it was too late. If he delayed, he was afraid their happiness would be at risk. But, when the messenger arrived to collect them, it was already “too late”, in their father’s opinion. They had been seeking the Lord earnestly and He had answered their prayers.

Their souls had been saved and they had both decided that, whatever others might do, they would serve the Lord. Like Moses of old, they “chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season”. They had weighed up the world and its pleasures against Christ and eternal life, and they decided, with God’s help, to live for eternity. They saw that their chief happiness must be in loving and serving God, a happiness which the world could neither give them nor take away from them.

When they arrived back at their father’s house they were not gloomy and sad, as he thought they would be. Instead they were happy and full of thankfulness to God. They told their father what the Lord had done for their souls and that they were now “strangers and pilgrims on the earth” seeking that city “whose builder and maker is God”.

They both felt burdened about the duty of having family worship in their home. As their father was not religious, he had never prayed with them or held worship with his family. Yet they asked him respectfully: would he please begin to have family worship with them.

Sadly he totally refused, saying that he had lived for over 50 years without prayer and he was not going to begin now. But the girls did not give up. They asked his permission to pray with the family themselves. As he thought that they would not be brave enough to do so, he agreed.

So that very evening, the sisters got out their Bibles. One of them read a chapter aloud and the other prayed. Their father stood up; he had no intention of kneeling. But, when he heard the humble prayer of his daughter, he was so moved that he also kneeled beside them.

As her prayer went up to heaven, he began to weep tears of repentance. God heard her prayer and made him able to look to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Was that not wonderful? And we can be sure that he then took on the duty of holding worship in his family morning and evening.

Have you ever thought of what a privilege and blessing it is to have family worship in your home and to have parents that pray with you and for you? Do you sing and listen properly to the Bible reading and the prayers? And

as you get older and may be away from home, may you never forget or give up this duty.

J van Kralingen

“Return unto Me” (1)

Robert Murray M'Cheyne

This is the first part of a sermon from a book of M'Cheyne's preaching, with the title, *Additional Remains*. This sermon comes from his own notes and has been edited. It was preached in 1838 in Dundee.

Isaiah 44:21,22. *Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art My servant: I have formed thee; thou art My servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of Me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee.*

In these words God contrasts the blessed condition of His chosen people with that of the poor, blind idolaters whom He had been describing in the verses before. Ah my friends, to the eye of man there may be little difference between the children of the wicked one and the children of God; but to the eye of God they are as different as the chaff is from the wheat – as the lily from the thorn. God says of you that are Christless: “He feedeth on ashes” (verse 20); but to you who are His children, He says, “Remember these, O Jacob?” May God open our eyes to see wonders out of His Scriptures!

1. All who have come to Christ are forgiven: “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins” (verse 22).

(1.) ***The completeness of their forgiveness:*** “I have blotted out as a thick cloud”. This complete forgiveness is shown forth in many ways in the Bible. It is compared to:

[1.] *The change produced on clothes by washing or dyeing them:* “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18); and again: “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”

[2.] *Something covered over:* “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered”. And Jesus says: “Buy of Me . . . white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.”

[3.] *Something lost.* Hezekiah says, “Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back”. Micah says, “Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea”. But they may still be near at hand? No: “As far as the east is distant from the west” (Psalm 103:12). But if God were to seek for them? “In those days, and in that time . . . the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be

none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found:” (Jeremiah 50:20).

[4.] *Something forgotten.* “Thy sins and thine iniquities will I remember no more.” “All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him.”

[5.] *Something blotted out.* Although they are washed, covered, lost, forgotten, yet they will still remain in God’s record? Yes, they will; but how? Blotted out.

Any of you that believe in Jesus, do you take the Son of God as your *Surety*? Take this word to yourself. See what the page will be like on which your sins are written. It will be one great blot – one thick cloud. When you look on the clouds, can you read anything written there? No more can God read any of your sins, O believer in Jesus.

(2.) ***It is present forgiveness.*** It is not, I will blot out; but, “I have blotted out”. Some say, I hope God will forgive me. My friends, you very much get the Bible wrong; a *present* forgiveness is offered to you. The moment a soul closes with Christ, this statement is true of him from that moment: “I have blotted out”. “There is . . . now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.”

Question. Has God blotted out your sins?

[1.] Most say, I don’t know; I never inquired. O sinner, if you never inquired, I will answer for you: Not one of your sins is blotted out. Every evil thought and word and deed you have done is written against you. You will meet them all another day. A deceived heart has turned you aside, and you do not know that there is a lie in your right hand.

[2.] Some say, It is impossible to tell. I never saw the book of life; how can I tell? True, you never saw the book of life; and yet there is another book, the Bible, and if you would search it much and believe what is said about Jesus and trust in Him, you may come to know that you are forgiven. Yes, it is quite possible. David tasted it, and thousands since David have blessed God for forgiving all their iniquities. The woman that touched the hem of Christ’s garment felt in herself that she was made well. She was no doctor, and yet she knew that she was well. When a man has a burden on his back, if you lift it off, he knows it at once; so does the heavy-laden soul that comes to Jesus. He finds rest.

(3.) ***The One who blots out sins:*** “I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions” (Isaiah 43:25).

[1.] Some try to blot out their own sins: I will be grieved and sorry for my sins, says one. I will blot them out with tears; I will pray to God and cover my past sins with my earnest prayers, says another. I will mend my life and cover my naked soul with good deeds, says another. But no; this is all vain;

God alone can blot out sins. Either *He* will do it, or it will not be done: “I, even I, am He”.

[2.] Some hope that Christ will blot out their sin, unknown to the Father. They think that Christ is very willing to be a Saviour, but not the Father. But no; Christ and the Father are one. If you come to Christ, God Himself will do it, and will tell you: “I have done it”.

I will speak to unforgiven souls. You have many pleasures, and many friends; but one thing you lack: the forgiveness of sins. Do you not think that you would be happier, lighter in heart, if you were forgiven? How miserable are all your daily work and pleasures, when you know that hell is opening its mouth for you. God has never blotted out your sins, yet you may be forgiven. Christ says, “Unto you, O men, I call; and My voice is to the sons of man”. Come to Christ, and God will abundantly pardon.

John Welsh: a Man of Prayer

4. In Prison for Christ's Sake

This is a further section of a longer version of a paper which was read at last year's Youth Conference. The last part dealt with Welsh's much-blessed ministry in Ayr, which was brought to a sudden end when he was summoned to Edinburgh to meet the Privy Council, a government body. This was because he had gone to Aberdeen for a meeting of the General Assembly of the Church which the King wished not to take place.

Welsh arrived in Edinburgh on 25 July 1605. A number of other ministers were already there for the same reason as himself. John Forbes of Alford, in Aberdeenshire, was the first to be called to the Privy Council. He was asked if he still maintained that the meeting of ministers in Aberdeen was a lawful General Assembly. He referred himself and all the proceedings of the meeting to the judgement of the next General Assembly.

He and those who followed him were refusing the authority of a civil court over a church court. Forbes was, without any further questioning, imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle, until he could be taken to Blackness Castle, which was built on a rock on the south bank of the Firth of Forth near Linlithgow. “A foul hole”, it has been described, even in comparison with the other prisons of the time.

Welsh was to fare no better than his brother minister. That evening, as he and some other ministers were on their way to visit Forbes, Welsh was summoned to appear before the Privy Council at 7 o'clock the following morning – a time early enough, it was hoped, to avoid the presence of some

of the lords who at a previous meeting “reasoned honestly for the brethren of the Assembly of Aberdeen”.

Welsh refused to answer any questions when he appeared before the Council, taking advantage of the legal provision that he should have received a copy of the questions before being asked to answer on oath. His objection was at once overruled, and he was hurried away to the Tolbooth, the common jail. Before the morning was over, he and Forbes were on their way under guard to Blackness Castle, where they were locked up in separate dungeons.

Welsh later decided that it was wiser to offer a response. Accordingly he was brought again before the Privy Council on August 2, but no account of what happened has come down to us, except that he was soon back in his cell. That same day four other ministers were questioned about the Aberdeen Assembly, and found themselves in Blackness Castle within 24 hours. But their God did not forsake them; one of them has recorded the comfort which they enjoyed from God through their fellowship in suffering for Christ’s sake.

The Privy Council then decided to send Welsh, Forbes and one of the others to Dumbarton Castle, but for some reason this decision was never carried out. The Council also issued a proclamation forbidding all church courts from “approving or justifying [what they called] the unlawful Assembly at Aberdeen”, nor were the ministers to do anything of that nature in preaching or in prayer or any other way. This oppressive regulation was disobeyed by, among others, David Blyth, minister of the Canongate, who found himself spending ten weeks in Blackness as a result.

Towards the end of August the prisoners in Blackness received a list of 18 questions drawn up by the King, with orders to appear in Perth before a meeting of the Privy Council. But they would not need to appear before the Council if suitable replies were given to the King’s questions. Welsh and his brethren declared that they kept the Assembly because of their regard to the Word of God, which authorised such meetings. Their answers, as might be expected, were not considered satisfactory by the authorities. So to Perth they were brought the next day, and from Perth back to Blackness. In an attempt to influence public opinion, the King appointed a meeting of the General Assembly on the last Tuesday of July, but it was suspected that, as no year was mentioned, the meeting would be indefinitely postponed.

The governor of the Castle was instructed to separate the prisoners two to a cell, and to prevent those in different cells meeting at any time. The ministers had to pay huge amounts for their keep in Blackness. At the beginning of October another attempt was made to bring the ministers, Welsh especially, to the King’s way of thinking.

Welsh’s reply may be summed up by some extracts from a letter: “What

is required of us is such a thing as, in the sight of our Lord, we may not do without the hazard of our consciences and liberty of Christ's kingdom, which should be dearer to us than anything else. . . . And we are fully resolved that what we did was acceptable service to our God, who hath put it up as a service done to Him, and hath allowed it and sealed it to us by many tokens. . . . We, Sir, if the Lord will, are yet ready to do more in our callings and to suffer more in the same if so be it will please our God to call us to it and to strengthen us in it, for in ourselves we can promise nothing, but in our God all things."

After four months of imprisonment in Blackness Castle, Welsh and his five fellow prisoners were released, to be brought for trial before the Privy Council in Edinburgh; so were some others who had been imprisoned elsewhere for the same reasons. They were denied the services of a lawyer, but Forbes read a plea, on behalf of them all, that "their case be sent to the General Assembly, where all spiritual matters should be tried".

Shortly afterwards Robert Youngson, another Aberdeenshire minister, appeared before the Privy Council. At an earlier meeting of the Council, he had given way sufficiently to secure his release, but now he declared that he had been summoned by the great God and his own conscience to withdraw his concessions. Only by doing so, he now realised, could he find rest for his troubled soul.

The Council declared that the meeting of the Assembly in Aberdeen was unlawful and sent the ministers to their various prisons until the King would make his mind known. Some attempts were made in private over the next two days to persuade the ministers to make concessions. These attempts were unsuccessful, but the fact that they were made at all reflected the force of public opinion against the authorities. Some of the leading men in Scotland – including the Earl of Morton, the Earl of Argyle and Sir William Livingstone – actually made public their opposition to Government policy.

The King's mind was made known in due course: the six prisoners in Blackness must be put on trial charged with high treason – which carried the death penalty – as they had refused to acknowledge the authority of the Privy Council in church matters. In the two-month interval before the trial, Welsh's health broke down and he was never afterwards completely well. His fellow prisoners too suffered in their health. They were forced to petition the Council to transfer them to another prison, or at least to arrange to have their food provided by someone who would charge less than the Castle governor. Yet common criminals, it seems, were generally fed at public expense.

But the Town Council of Ayr held a public meeting to ask Welsh's parishioners to make voluntary contributions for his support, just as they had

done while he was still assistant to John Porterfield. Welsh recorded years later, "The love of our flocks and private saints and particular friends had been so exceeding towards us that, had it not been for their abundant love, it had not been possible for us to have endured the charges of the one half of the time of our imprisonment".

For Younger Readers

God's Perfect Timing

A very dear friend was helping us with some repairs to the brickwork. He had some calls to make before he arrived. It was a lovely summer morning, so I felt I could finish the first coat of paint on some woodwork before he arrived.

I felt it would be wonderful if he arrived just as I finished. Sometimes God orders things just like that – not always, of course, for there are times when we have to trust Him, however things turn out. But as I dipped the brush in the paint for the very last time, I heard a car stop at the front gate.

My friend came round the corner and said sorry for being late. But I said, "No, it was all perfect timing. I'm just this moment free to help you". We quoted the last verse of Psalm 107 together, which is: "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord" (you ought to learn it by heart). Then he told me his story.

He had a lot of work to do at some village. Every day he travelled there on a bus. It dropped him on the main road about two miles from the village, and he walked the rest of the way. On this morning, it was pouring rain as the bus went along. He kept on praying, because if he had to walk these two miles without anything to keep off the rain, he would have arrived soaked to the skin. The Lord heard those earnest prayers on the bus that day.

As he got off the bus at his stop, the rain was still pouring down. But a car was waiting there. The driver asked him if he wanted a lift. The driver had not been waiting for anyone in particular; he was just passing the time sitting there. My friend thanked the driver for the lift, and he thanked God for providing it. The driver was going to the house next door to my house; that was where he lived. Never before and never afterwards was there a car waiting at that stop. It was God who provided it when my friend needed it.

Adapted from *Cheering Words* for 1985

Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2024-25

Exercise 2

All answers from *overseas* should be sent to *Miss Naomi Clemence*, 60 Dougalston Gardens South, Milngavie, Glasgow, G62 6HT; naomi.clemence@gmail.com. The correctors should have your answers before the end of March. This set of exercises is based on 2 Kings 7 to 2 Chronicles 18, and James 1 to Revelation 22, Matthew 1-11.

Senior Section (15 years old and over)

UK answers to *Mrs J Hicklin*, 22 Lasswade Road, Eskbank, EH22 3EF; jmhicklin86@gmail.com.

Old Testament

1. Read 1 Chronicles chapter 13.
 - (a) What did David decide to do at the beginning of this chapter? (3)
 - (b) Where was the ark and how had it got there? (See 1 Samuel 4-6) (4)
 - (c) Describe how they began to bring it back. (1 Chronicles 13:5-8) (4)
 - (d) What happened at the threshing floor of Chidon? (3)
 - (e) Why was God angry with Uzza? (4)
 - (f) How did David feel, and how did he proceed after this happened? (2)
 - (g) What happened to Obededom's house when the ark was there? (1)
2. (a) In chapter 15 David tried again to move the ark to Jerusalem. What did he do differently this time? (vv 1-2) (2)
- (b) What did he tell the priests to do in verse 12? (2)
- (c) What reason does he give for God "making a breach" on them the first time? (2)
- (d) How was the ark carried this time? (2)
- (e) How did they thank God for helping the Levites that bore the ark? (v 26) (2)

New Testament

Read Matthew 10.

1. (a) What did Christ send His disciples out to do? (4)
- (b) Why do you think it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the judgement than for those who would not receive the apostles? (2)
- (c) What warnings does Christ give them in verses 16-18 and verses 21-22? (5)
- (d) What reason does Christ give in verses 24-25 to explain why they would be treated like this? (2)
- (e) In verse 26 Christ tells them not to fear. What reasons does He give them to encourage confidence? (see verses 19-20, 28-32) (5)
- (f) Read verse 34. Can you explain how this fits with Christ's title as Prince of Peace? (1)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 38 in the Shorter Catechism: What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection? (3)

Intermediate Section (13 and 14 years old)

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

Old Testament

Read 2 Kings chapter 7.

1. What did Elisha prophesy about the ending of the famine? (3)
2. What was the response from the King's officer? (2)
3. How was the prophecy about the officer fulfilled? (2)
4. In your own words explain the part played by the lepers, in answer to these four questions:
 - (a) What happened before they went to the camp of the Syrians? (3)
 - (b) What did they find there? (2)

- (c) What did they do first? (1)
- (d) They had "second thoughts". What did they then do? (2)
- 5. What caused the flight of the Syrians? (2)
- 6. What did the King suspect when he heard the lepers' news? (2)
- 7. (a) What did the King's servants advise? (2)
- (b) What did the servants find? (2)
- (c) What did the people do? (1)

New Testament

Read Matthew 1:18-25.

- 1. Describe what Joseph was told in his dream and the action he took. (4)
- 2. Find and write out the verse from Isaiah 7 (read verses 10-16) which corresponds to the prophecy in verse 23. (2)
- 3. Why was the child called *Jesus*? (1)
- 4. What is the meaning of the name *Emmanuel*? (1)

Read Matthew chapter 2.

- 5. What was the purpose of the visit of the wise men? (2)
- 6. Why was Herod troubled? (2)
- 7. Find and write out from Micah 5 (verses 1-3) the verse which corresponds to verse 6. (2)
- 8. The wise men did not return to inform Herod that they had found Jesus. Why not? (2)
- 9. Explain Joseph's dream and the action he took as a result. (4)
- 10. What action did Herod take when he realised he had been deceived by the wise men? (2)
- 11. Where did Joseph, Mary and Jesus settle when they returned to Israel? (1)

Memory Exercise

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

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

Junior Section (11 and 12 years old)

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

Old Testament

- 1. Read 2 Kings chapter 22.
 - (a) Josiah sent Shaphan with a message for Hilkiah the high priest. What was the message? (2)
(See verses 3-6.) (2)
 - (b) What did they find in the temple? (1)
 - (c) When Shaphan took what they found to the King, what did he then do with it? (1)
 - (d) What effect did this have on Josiah and why did he do this? (See verses 11 and 13) (2)
 - (e) List four reasons why Josiah was promised he would not see all the evil that God was going to bring. (See verse 19) (4)
- 2. Read 1 Chronicles chapter 28.

Give the number of one verse that tells us that:

 - (a) David was not allowed to build the temple because he had been a man of war: verse ____ (1)
 - (b) God chose Solomon to be king after David: verse ____ (1)
 - (c) David gave Solomon the pattern for the temple: verse ____ (1)
 - (d) David encouraged Solomon to be strong in the Lord when building the temple: verse ____ (1)
- 3. Read 2 Chronicles chapter 14.
 - (a) Who came to fight against Asa? (1)
 - (b) How many soldiers did Asa have in his army? (1)
 - (c) How many were in the enemy's army? (1)
 - (d) Asa's prayer is recorded in verse 11. Write out the part of the prayer that tells us that his trust was in God rather than in the number of his soldiers. (1)
 - (e) What was the outcome of the battle? (1)

New Testament

- 1. Read James chapter 1, verses 22-24.

- In your own words, how is someone described who is only a hearer of the Word? (2)
2. James chapter 3 speaks about the use of our tongues. The tongue is described as being "a little member, and boasteth great things".
- (a) What does he say ought *not* to come out of the same mouth? (2)
- (b) Look up the Third Commandment and the Ninth Commandment. What two things should we not use our tongues for? (2)
3. Read Revelation chapter 21, verses 10-27, where heaven is described as a beautiful city.
- (a) How is the street of the city described? (1)
- (b) Why was there no temple in the city? (1)
- (c) Write down the words which tell us why the city had no need of the sun nor the moon. (1)
- (d) Who will enter this city? (1)
4. Read Matthew, chapter 2.
- (a) What led the wise men to the place where Jesus was born? (1)
- (b) How did the wise men know not to return to Herod after finding Jesus? (1)
- (c) Some verses in this chapter refer to Old Testament prophecies. Look up these Old Testament verses and match them to a verse in Matthew chapter 2.
- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Jeremiah 31 v 15 | Matthew 2 v ____ |
| Hosea 11 v 1 | Matthew 2 v ____ |
| Micah 5 v 2 | Matthew 2 v ____ |
- (3)

Memory Exercise

- Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 55 in the Shorter Catechism: What is forbidden in the third 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 the verses in the table below. Fill in the name of the King, whether he ruled over Israel or Judah, how long he ruled and whether he was a good or bad ruler.

Chapter and verses	Name of king	Judah or Israel	Length of rule	Good or bad
2 Kings 12:1-3,19				
2 Kings 14:23,24				
2 Kings 15:1-6				
2 Kings 17:1,2				

(8)

2. Read 2 Kings 18:9-12.
- Why were the people of Israel taken away to the country of Assyria? (2)
3. Read 2 Kings 17:19 and 2 Kings 24:15-16.
- (a) Which country were the people of Judah taken to? (1)
- (b) Why did this happen to them? (1)

New Testament

1. Read Matthew 1:16-23.
- (a) Give the 3 names of the Son of Mary:
 J _____, C _____, E _____.
- (3)

- (b) What would He save His people from? (1)
 (c) Which of the three names also tells us that He was not only human but “God”? (1)
 2. Read Matthew 2:1-11.
 (a) Where was the child born? (1)
 (b) What name did the wise men call Him? (1)
 (c) In verse 6 we read of what a prophet had told would happen many years before. Write out the prophecy from Micah 5:2. (1)
 (d) What did the wise men do when they saw the child? (2)
 (e) Did you read in these verses the date of Christ’s birth? (Yes or no.) (1)
 3. Read Matthew 3:13-17
 (a) Who baptized Jesus? (1)
 (b) What do we read of the “Spirit of God”? (1)
 (c) Was God “well pleased” with His beloved Son? (1)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and copy out the answer to Question 22 in the Shorter Catechism:
 How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man? (3)

Lower Primary Section (8 years old and under)

UK answers to *Mrs A MacLean, 67 Gogarloch Syke, Edinburgh, EH12 9JD*
mrs.a.macleam@proton.me.

Old Testament

1. In 2 Kings chapters 22 and 23 we read about a boy who became King of Judah. Write each missing word (choose from the list):

repair Josiah right tender Lord see Passover

1. _____ became king when he was eight years old. 2 Kings 22:1
2. He did what was _____ in God’s sight, and did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 2 Kings 22:2
3. He asked for carpenters, builders and masons to _____ the house of the Lord. 2 Kings 22:6
4. God was angry with the people for forsaking Him. When Josiah heard this his heart was _____. He humbled himself before the Lord and wept before Him. 2 Kings 22:19
5. The Lord heard Josiah. Josiah’s eyes would not ___ all the evil God would bring on the place. 2 Kings 22:20
6. Josiah and all the people made a covenant before the Lord, promising to walk after the _____ and keep His commandments with all their heart and soul. 2 Kings 23:3
7. Josiah commanded all the people to keep the _____. He put away all the wizards, images, idols and abominations in the land. 2 Kings 23:21,24

New Testament

Read about Jesus healing two blind men in Matthew chapter 9, verses 27-31. Then write in each missing word:

1. Two blind men followed Jesus, crying and saying, “Thou Son of David, have m_____ on us”. Matthew 9:27
2. Jesus said, “B_____ ye that I am able to do this?” Matthew 9:28

3. They said to him, “Yea, Lord”. Jesus touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith be it unto you”.
Matthew 9:29
4. Their eyes were opened.
Matthew 9:30

Overseas Names for Exercise 1

Senior Section: *Auckland:* Peter Campbell. *Calgary:* Khloe Chang. *Gisborne:* Shona Hembd. *Münster:* Clara Rösner.

Intermediate Section: *Auckland:* Joseph Campbell. *Calgary:* Karsten Chang. *Chesley:* Angela Tuinier. *Gisborne:* Brooklyn Hembd. *Sydney:* Ethan Macdonald.

Junior Section: *Auckland:* Keith Smith. *Edmonton:* John Mun. *Gisborne:* Preston Hembd. *Sydney:* Abigail Macdonald.

Upper Primary Section: *Auckland:* Marion Campbell. *Chesley:* Meleah Tuinier. *Edmonton:* Anna Mun. *Fountain Inn:* Katherine Kerr. *Gisborne:* Ashley Hembd. *Münster:* Conrad Rösner. *Santa Fe:* Scout Smith. *Sydney:* Lachlan Macdonald. *Tarragona:* Valentina Nayach van Essen. *Woodstock:* Jo-Anne Heikoop.

Lower Primary Section: *Auckland:* David and Janet Campbell, Daniel Smith. *Chesley:* James and Nathan Kuiper. *Edmonton:* Hephzi-bah and Isaiah Mun. *Fountain Inn:* Jehosheba Kerr. *Gisborne:* Andrew and Ian Hembd. *Grafton:* Samuel Yong. *Melbourne:* Yuri Bratanov. *Santa Fe:* Winslow Smith. *Sydney:* Jackson Campbell, Hugh and James Macdonald. *Woodstock:* Emma Heikoop.

UK Youth Conference 2025

The Conference will be held, God willing, at Strathallan School, Forgandenny, Perth, PH2 9EG, from Wednesday, April 9, to Friday, April 11. (Please note that the days of the week for the Conference are different for this year.) 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 and the speakers are listed below:

1. Life of Joseph Mr R W van Kralingen
2. James Renwick Mr F R Daubney
3. Guided Tour to Blackness Castle and Linlithgow Palace
..... conducted by Rev D Campbell
4. Defending the Faith Rev R Macleod
5. What Is so Special About the Authorised Version? . . . Mr D P Rowland
6. Can the Christian Church Continue? Rev K D Macleod

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