

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 91

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Number 5

Good Men Speaking of the Bible (2)

Last month we considered five comparisons made by some good ministers in New England – states in the north-east of the USA – during the 1600s. Now I want to refer to some more of these.

1. We may begin with a comparison made by Cotton Mather, who was one of the the best known of the New England ministers of his time. His father was Increase Mather, whom we noticed in last month's article. Cotton Mather became his father's assistant in a church in the New England town of Boston. Later he became the minister in that church.

Mather compared the Bible to a *spur*. Someone riding a horse might have a spur on the heel of his boot; a spur has a small spike and is used to urge a horse to go faster. People may know how they should behave, that they should turn from their sins and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. But too often they do not pay much attention to these duties. They need to be spurred on to attend to them.

But how can they be spurred on? They need the words of the Bible to come to them with power, the power of the Holy Spirit. Those people need these words to influence their souls, so that they would feel an urgency about spiritual things. Mather said that the Bible is “the spur which moves young people to seek a cure for the uncleanness [or sinfulness] of their ways”.

What a mercy it is when God makes a sinner feel the force of the words, “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near” (Isaiah 55:6). It is as if the Lord spurs them on to make use of their opportunities to seek the Lord, before these opportunities come to an end – before they are no longer able to read the Bible or go to church and, even more seriously, before they pass away from this world.

It is also as if the Lord spurs them on to call on Him in prayer, now, before He is no longer near them and no longer ready to hear their prayers and to give them grace to turn to Himself. Ask the Lord to make you feel His authority *now* so that you would seek Him seriously and pray earnestly to Him for mercy.

2. Joshua Moody was born in England, but he reached New England

when he was just one year old. He was first a minister at Portsmouth in the state of New Hampshire and later moved to Boston. He described the Bible as the Christian's apothecary shop – in other words, the Christian's pharmacy – where he can find treatment for all his spiritual illnesses.

Moodey said, "If a man needs reproof, correction, doctrine, instruction" and so on, he can find them in the Bible. If someone needs to be put right, if the person is going wrong in the way he lives, God can show him from the Bible where he is going wrong and the Bible can put him right. If he needs to be taught its teachings better, God can show him from the Bible what he needs to know. Let us then see our need of reading the Bible day by day, but let us also ask God to bless to us what we read whenever we open it.

We should pray, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law" (Psalm 119:18). God can show us wonderful things out of every part of the Bible. If we suffer from wrong thinking, we can find teaching in the Bible which can correct our thinking. If we suffer from carelessness, God can bring the warnings in the Bible to bear on our souls so that we become earnest in seeking salvation. If God's children feel weak, He can strengthen them from the Bible; He can say to them, for instance, "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine" (Isaiah 43:1). So they should believe that He will take care of them.

No matter what our spiritual disease is, suitable medicine is to be found in the Bible. And that medicine is guaranteed to be effective when it is applied by the Holy Spirit. So we should always ask that the Holy Spirit would apply what we read from the Bible.

3. Let us return to Cotton Mather to notice how he emphasised the need to read the Bible, and to do so regularly. He told his congregation not to let a day pass in which they did not read some part of the Scriptures (unless that was impossible for them – if, for instance, they were seriously ill). And he advised them, not only to read from the Bible, but also to think over what they have read and pray about it. He encouraged them by saying that, when they were reading the Bible, "God may well meet the deepest longings and greatest needs of [your] soul". God is still able to meet *our* deepest longings and greatest needs.

On the other hand, Mather asked his people why they could not read the Bible if they were able to read a newspaper or a love story. Mather was certainly not encouraging the congregation to read novels; he would consider them a waste of time, and very often they are immoral. He told another congregation: "When you cannot read, be sure you meditate upon some part of God's Word, every day and every night". That is how important he believed it is to keep in contact with God's Word.

Mather also encouraged people to learn the Scriptures by heart. He considered “the best way in the world” to resist temptation is to have parts of the Bible hidden away in our memory. Then we can bring into our mind an appropriate verse, or a part of a verse, which, with God’s blessing, will turn our mind away from giving in to the temptation and so sinning again against God.

4. We will conclude these articles by listening again to Increase Mather. While preaching, he sometimes encouraged his hearers to “dig . . . into the rich mines of Scripture”. It is good to read the Bible, but it is better to study it – to go deeply into it. We are to do as Jesus said, “*Search the Scriptures*”.

Increase Mather also gave other good advice: for instance, we are “to stick close to the guidance of the Scriptures and love them”; and we are to “let the Word of God speak” and to listen seriously to everything He says. What God says in the Bible is for our good; so we should receive it and we should ask God to help us obey whatever He says to us.

The Disruption in the Scottish Church

2. Revival Blessings in Scotland

Rev A W MacColl

Last month’s section of this paper, read at the Youth Conference in 2024, was an introduction to the subject. The “Moderates” were a sizeable group within the Church of Scotland who did not favour the preaching of the gospel and many of them were not godly in their lives.

Revivals. One of the most powerful influences which led to the Disruption was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in great awakenings and revivals throughout Scotland in the early years of the 1800s. The previous century has been called the Dark Age of the Church of Scotland. During that time, when the Moderates were in control, many in the Church had no zeal for the gospel. And many men who were not converted entered the ministry merely as a career. This had a deadening effect on the religious tone of the nation.

Scotland needed a great work of God’s power in order to revive the Church and bring multitudes to a saving knowledge of Christ. And this, in God’s wonderful mercy, is what took place. The Lord raised up a great number of zealous, godly and able ministers in both the north and the south of the country, whose preaching was greatly blessed.

One of these ministers was a man called Thomas Chalmers. He had been a Moderate minister in Fife but, around 1808-9, he was converted to a true faith in Christ. This occurred after a period of illness, when he was brought

to face the solemn realities of eternity and the emptiness of a life without saving faith in Christ.

He wrote to a friend that his illness had “fixed on my heart a very strong impression of the insignificance of time – an impression which I trust will not abandon me though I again reach the heyday of health and vigour. This should be the first step to another impression . . . the magnitude of eternity. Strip human life of its connexion with a higher scene of existence and it is the illusion of an instant, an unmeaning farce, a series of visions and projects and convulsive efforts which terminate in nothing.”

Thomas Chalmers was now a new man in Christ Jesus and the whole of his ministry was revolutionised. He now declared the gospel of the grace of God with earnestness and zeal, and his great talents and energies were thrown into the service of Christ.

Chalmers was called to a charge in Glasgow and there his preaching attracted great attention. He preached a famous sermon, which was entitled the “expulsive power of a new affection”, on 1 John 2:15: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” He meant that only when the love of God comes into the heart is the life of a sinner changed, and the power of the gospel is felt in breaking the power of sin and worldliness. Only God’s grace expels the love of the world.

Chalmers was deeply concerned for the gospel to be preached to everyone in society and that the Established Church would be used to bring that about. He wanted many more churches built and the poor cared for by Christian charity. He once said that, for every one person converted under the gospel, ten are “Christianised” – he meant that the moral influence of the gospel spreads through society like leaven and raises the standards of the lives of the general population.

Other men besides Thomas Chalmers were raised up in the cities of Scotland to preach the gospel with power, men such as Andrew Thomson, Robert Gordon, William Cunningham, R S Candlish. The Church of Scotland also began to send out missionaries to the heathen, Alexander Duff, who went to India, being the first in a long line. In the north, the gospel began to spread out from the eastern Highlands to reach the west coast and the islands with great power in a series of revivals. The names of John Macdonald of Ferintosh – the Apostle of the North – John Kennedy, of Redcastle in the Black Isle, Alexander Stewart of Cromarty, and John Macrae, are some of the more famous of the ministers whom the Lord raised up in the north at this time.

Another whose labours were greatly blessed was Roderick MacLeod, a

minister in the Isle of Skye. He was a Moderate in his early years but was powerfully converted by God's grace. This is what he had to say about himself: "During the first three years of my ministry, I was an entire stranger to the gospel scheme of salvation . . . I have often thought that I scarcely ever heard the gospel till I began to preach it myself." An account of what happened at the Disruption tells us that "it was a sermon by Dr [Thomas] Chalmers which opened his eyes to the gospel."

When the Lord has a great work to do in His Church, He will pour out His Spirit and raise up servants to do His work, and He will also raise up praying people in the pews, especially among the young. He did this before in Scotland at the time of the Reformation in the 1500s, and during the time of the Covenanters in the 1600s. In the 1800s also, He did the same in the period leading up to the Disruption. In the years between 1839 and 1843, a number of revivals occurred in various parts of the land. It was a time when the Lord prepared His Church to stand faithful by pouring out His Spirit in revival.

An Unbeliever's Prayer

A minister in Canada lost his way when he was riding through a wood. It was getting dark, and he was afraid that he might have to spend the night alone there. But as he pressed onwards, he saw a glimmer of light in the distance. He rode on in the direction of the light and reached a log cabin, where he found a warm welcome. He was given a meal and a bed for the night.

His first thought was: "Perhaps here I may both do good and get good". (He was referring to spiritual good.)

During the evening several men came in to sit before a blazing fire and to talk together. Before long a young man began to claim that he did not believe in the existence of God. He even went so far as to challenge God to destroy him then and there, if there is such a Being. (No doubt, in his madness, he was showing off in front of everyone else.) Then the young man sat down while most of those present loudly praised him for how well he had spoken.

When the minister heard these unbelieving words, his heart was filled with sadness and amazement. In his heart, he prayed that God would protect him through the night while he was among such ungodly men. He was also thinking how he should reply to the man's atheism, but his tongue seemed to stick to the roof of his mouth. God must have been holding him back for someone else to speak who was able to give a very suitable answer.

The minister did not wish to be a coward, or to hold back in “the day of battle”; but when he was almost ready to get up and speak, a burly man got up. He had passed middle age, but was still very vigorous, and seemed a strong, muscular clearer of the backwoods.

He said, “I should like to speak if you will give me a hearing. I am not going to say anything about the topic which has been discussed by the orator who has just sat down; I am only going to tell you a fact. Will you hear me?”

“Yes, yes,” they shouted; he was free to speak, so they would hear him, especially as he was not going to argue.

“A week ago,” he began, “I was working up yonder, on the river’s bank, felling trees. You know the rapids down below.”

While at his work, the older man must have heard someone crying for help. He made what he called “some little prayers to God for help. I ran down to the water’s edge, for I guessed what was the matter. There I saw a young man, who could not manage his boat; the current was getting the mastery of him, and he was drifting down the stream and before long, unless someone had [intervened], he would most certainly have been swept over the [water]falls and carried down to a dreadful death.

“I saw that young man kneel down in the boat, and pray to the Most High God, by the love of Christ, and by His precious blood, to save him. He confessed that he had been an infidel [someone who rejects the Bible]; but said that, if he might but be delivered this once, he would declare his belief in God. I at once sprang into the river. My arms are not very weak, I think, though they are not so strong as they used to be. I managed to get into the boat, turned her round, brought her to the shore, and so I saved that young man’s life.”

Then came his powerful, closing words: “And that young man is the one who has just sat down and who has been denying the existence of God and daring the Most High to destroy him!”

We are not told what happened next, but the young man must have wished that he could have been somewhere else and that he had never spoken as he did. Did the young man turn to God and believe the gospel, as he had promised to do when he was almost swept away to his death? Or did he go on in the unbelief he had just expressed so forcefully? We cannot tell. But we should learn to ask God to deliver us from any unbelieving thoughts that may attack us – and to do so whenever we are tempted to speak foolishly.

But we are only safe, especially for eternity, if we trust in Jesus Christ, the Saviour whom God has provided. To reject God is both foolish and dangerous. To reject the Bible, and the salvation revealed in the Bible, is also foolish and dangerous. Christ calls us to seek Him *now*. He says “Seek

ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near” (Isaiah 55:5). How uncertain life is! How urgent our need to be delivered from “the wrath to come” – the punishment we deserve because of our sins!

Lessons from the Life of Joseph

1. Introduction and Life

R W van Kralingen

This is the first section of a paper given at the 2025 Youth Conference.

Introduction. Henry Law, once a minister in Gloucester, had this to say about the story of Joseph: “He has much to learn, who doesn’t delight . . . in Joseph’s story. The variety of incident, the rapidly changing scene, the crowded picture of man in every character and every circumstance, make it a choice pleasure ground for young and old We weep with the weeping father: we grieve in his protracted grief: we revive, when he lives again in his son restored. We tremble with the youth trembling in the pit. We sigh with him sighing in his exile. We take courage with him trampling on his temptation. We are [sad] with him, [when he was sad] in his dungeon. We triumph with him, when he surmounts reproach, and takes his seat as the ruler of a mighty empire.”

Before we learn any lessons from so interesting a character, we may, by way of introduction, ask who Joseph was? When did he live? Where did he live? Who were his family? Where did he go and what did he do? These details are to be found in the Old Testament book of Genesis, chapters 37-50, and Exodus, chapter 1. There are also references to Joseph in Psalm 105 and, last of all, a reference to Joseph in Hebrews 11, in the list of those who lived by faith.

A Summary of Joseph’s life. In 1654 James Ussher of the Church of Ireland wrote a timeline of the history of the world titled, *The Annals of the World*. He used Scripture as well as verified secular events in history, to work out the dates of particular Bible events. We have used this record to identify some dates in the life of Joseph.

We learn that Joseph was born in 1745 BC and died in 1635 BC at the age of 110. Tracing his ancestors back to Adam we find that Joseph was in just the twenty-third generation from Adam.

He was one of a family of 13 (12 brothers and 1 sister) born to Jacob’s four wives – Leah and Rachel (daughters of Jacob’s uncle, Laban) and their maids, Zilpah and Bilhah. Joseph and his brother Benjamin were the last of

the family to be born and were the only two of the family who were born to Rachel, whom his father Jacob loved more than his other wives.

Life for Joseph began in Haran (present-day Harran in Turkey – not far from the Syrian border). This is where Jacob met his wives Leah and Rachel. It was here that Joseph and all of Joseph's siblings, except Benjamin, were born and where Jacob served as under-shepherd to Laban for 20 years.

After being treated deceitfully by Laban, we find that Jacob and his family (Joseph being a mere 6 years of age at this point) secretly left Haran and journeyed to Mount Gilead where Laban caught up with him. After a dispute and then a reconciliation with Laban, we find Jacob and his family journeying to Succoth via Penuel and from there to Shechem. After the slaughter of the Shechemites by Simeon and Levi, Jacob and his family moved to Canaan, where Joseph's brothers worked as shepherds.

Joseph, now 17 years old, was instructed by his father to search for his brothers, who were thought to be shepherding in Shechem. He at last found them in Dothan, some 13 miles to the north of Shechem. The brothers were jealous of their father's affection to Joseph, and annoyed at Joseph's willingness to report their wickedness to their father, and at his high sense of his own destiny. So they harboured a hatred of Joseph and intended to kill him, but in the end they sold him to Ishmaelites, who in turn sold him into slavery in Egypt.

He served faithfully under Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officers, and the Lord blessed both him and Potiphar. Potiphar's wife kept on seeking to commit adultery with Joseph although he offered her no encouragement. She then falsely accused him of trying to force her and provided an article of Joseph's clothing as proof. Joseph was then cast into prison and was left there for a period of 13 years. The Lord blessed Joseph in prison and he was granted a fair degree of freedom by the keeper of the prison.

There Joseph found two of Pharaoh's servants, the chief butler and chief baker, who were imprisoned for alleged misdeeds. They both had a dream which Joseph interpreted for them, predicting the death of the baker and the restoring of the butler to his duties. The butler, despite the good turn Joseph did for him, forgot about him. Joseph was kept in prison till he was 30.

Then Pharaoh had dreams and sought an interpretation of them from those in his inner court. After no one could be found to interpret his dreams, the butler remembered that Joseph had accurately interpreted his dream, and suggested to Pharaoh that Joseph be fetched to interpret Pharaoh's dreams.

Joseph duly declared that these dreams were from God. He explained to Pharaoh that each dream represented a period of 7 years. The first was a period of plenty for Egypt and the surrounding countries, and the second was

a period of famine. Joseph suggested a scheme in which the plenty of the first 7 years should be used to provide for the shortfall in the next 7 years. Pharaoh acknowledged that the Lord was with Joseph, appointed him Governor over all the land of Egypt and instructed him to carry out the scheme he proposed.

Joseph's family in Israel were also affected by the 7 years of famine – resulting in two trips to Egypt, during which they unknowingly met Joseph. Joseph did not reveal himself to them but tested them to see whether they had changed during the 13 years he had been in Egypt. At last, he told them who he was and freely forgave them for their treatment of him. He had his whole family move to Goshen in Egypt to be under his care. Little more is told us of Joseph, other than that he died at the age of 110.

For Junior Readers

Glad to Be Able to Give

Two rich Christians were on a tour around the world. One of them was a lawyer and the other a businessman.

They had reached Korea. One day they were looking at a field beside the road. They saw a boy pulling a rough wooden plough. And an old man held the handles of the plough and guided it through the field, where rice was to be grown.

The lawyer was very surprised; he took a photo of the field and the people in it. He said to the missionary who was guiding the two men around the country: "I suppose they are very poor".

"Yes", the missionary replied quietly. Then he explained: "When the church was built after the war, they were keen to share in building it, but they had no money. They sold their ox and gave the money to the church." In past years they would have used their ox to pull the plough; now they had to pull the plough themselves, to turn the ground so that the rice could grow.

The lawyer and the businessman stood without speaking, for a little while. Then the businessman said, "That must have been a real sacrifice".

The missionary answered, "They did not call it that". No, they were glad they had an ox to sell. But it *must* have been a very big sacrifice. They must have missed the ox terribly.

The two men had very little more to say. But when they got home to their own country, the lawyer went to visit his minister. He took his photo with him and showed it to the minister. The lawyer then told him what they had seen in the rice field.

He said, "I intend to double my giving to the church. I have never given anything to Christ that really cost me anything." He meant that he could very easily afford all that he used to give to the church. He went on to say that he had to go around the world to learn what he should give to the church, for Christ's sake. But it is a pity if the men did not buy another ox for the rice farmers.

But try to remember this story for the time when, God willing, you grow up and start earning money.

Do You Know the Lord?

This article has been taken from Brownlow North's book *Ourselves* and edited.

"I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." Do you know who said that? Was it not Pharaoh, when Moses went in to ask him to let the Israelites go to worship God in the wilderness?

The very fact that Pharaoh would not obey the Lord was a proof that he did not know the Lord. But what an acknowledgement! Do you know what a man confesses when he says that he does not know the Lord? He confesses that he is unsaved: that if he were to die as he is, he would perish for ever!

In 2 Thessalonians 1:7,8 it is written that the Lord shall take "vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ". This Scripture may have escaped your notice. You thought, perhaps, that Jesus Christ would come to take vengeance only on the outwardly immoral, on murderers and adulterers and Sabbath breakers, on swearers, drunkards and such like.

But that is not the teaching of the Word of God. The Bible says that those who know not God, no matter what their moral character may be, shall be punished with everlasting destruction. And the same Word also tells us (in John 17:3) that life eternal is to know God, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.

And what is the advice of this God to sinners who do not know Him? He says, "Acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace" (Job 22:21). All our ignorance, and all our misery arises from not knowing God. Some of you will say, How am I to acquaint myself with God?

I answer you, By studying Him as He has made Himself known to you in His Word; especially as He is revealed to you by Jesus Christ, who is "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person".

But this study, to acquaint yourself with God, can never be successful unless you first seek the teaching of the Holy Spirit, for it is written, "The

things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God". So then you must "ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find;" for Jesus has promised, "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"

The Unwelcome Passenger

This article is taken from *The Young People's Magazine* for May 1975 and has been edited. The writer called himself "Old Humphrey".

Some years ago I was travelling one evening towards London. I happened to be the only passenger inside the mail coach. There are times when we would not willingly travel without company, but being then in a thoughtful mood, I hoped no one would disturb me. For some miles I had my wish, but suddenly the coach stopped near the gate of a farmhouse, and a man of unusual size climbed up the steps into the coach.

From the glance I had of him, in the bright light on that side of the coach, I concluded at once that he was some honest farmer who would talk of nothing the whole way but turnips, clover, seed, barley, pigs, sheep and cattle. All of these things are important and interesting, but I was no farmer and, besides, my head was full of other things.

To defend myself as well as I could from so unwelcome a trespass on my thinking, I leaned my head back into the corner, but my fellow traveller was not to be so easily denied a friendly chat. He began at once, just as I had expected, to speak of the effect of the recent rain on the turnips.

To all he said, I replied yes or no, as the case required, and hoped that he would soon relapse into silence, but in this I was quite mistaken. Yet I found it impossible to evade his conversation; so I tried to endure patiently what I could not avoid. But here it will be well to confess honestly that I thought very little of the farmer and prided myself on my superior knowledge. I felt, in talking to my companion, like a man who confers a favour on someone else. Such is the weakness, the folly and the pride of the human heart!

After speaking of the produce of the ground, of cattle and of the high prices of some things and the low prices of others, my companion ran into other topics and so completely astonished me by the extent of his information that I began to wonder when and how he had managed to pick up so much knowledge.

He spoke of the value of human labour as compared to machinery, of the population and resources of the country, of its mines, of the products it manufactured, and of its business. Indeed he got so far beyond me that I felt

like a schoolboy in the presence of a teacher. Yes, the very man whom I had estimated so low, as to think myself greatly his superior, was as a giant on practical subjects and I was a dwarf.

After asking, I learned he was a man very much involved in mines, that the workmen he employed amounted to several thousand, that government ministers sought to learn from his practical knowledge, and that at the time when he travelled with me, he was on his way to the British Prime Minister with important calculations.

I felt little in my own eyes. It does us good when puffed up with an undue estimate of our own importance, to meet with a reprimand like this. It was a lesson I shall not soon forget, nor do I think that from that time onwards I have ever undervalued a man on account of his appearance.

What my companion thought of me I cannot tell, but I know well what I thought of myself. It was altogether a humbling experience, and it taught me to prize more highly than I did before the command of the Bible, "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits" (Romans 12:16).

For Younger Readers

The Promise that Had to Be Kept

Abraham Lincoln was a very famous man. He was the President of the United States of America, the chief ruler of the country.

One day a man came to see him. He wanted to be a friend of the President's little boy, but the boy did not want to come to him. At last the man persuaded the boy to come.

How did the man persuade the boy to come? The man promised to give him something hanging from his watch.

The visit came to an end. The man was ready to leave. Lincoln asked him, "You are not going to forget your promise, are you?"

The man was surprised. "What promise?" he asked.

Lincoln told the man that he had promised to give his son what was hanging from watch.

The man tried to explain: "I did not mean – I cannot give that to him". It was precious to the man because someone in his family – perhaps his granny or his mother – had given it to him.

"You must give it to him", the President answered (meaning the

boy). Lincoln did not want to have someone in his house who paid no attention to his promises.

You must ask God to help you keep your promises. If you do not want to keep a promise, do not make it. Remember that God sees you always. He knows all the promises you make. Try always to say what is true and never to tell a lie. Yes, always ask God to help you.

Looking Around Us

It Seemed Funny at the Time

Not long ago, the owner of a supermarket in Swansea received an apology and £100 in cash for a theft which took place 15 years ago. The writer, who did not give his name, said he had stolen a sign from the store as a student. He said that he and another student had taken a temporary PVC banner from outside the shop after “a night of drinking”.

The students “thought it would be funny to bring” the sign home with them. The writer of the letter went on: “As an older man, I now see that what seemed funny to us, at the time, likely caused your shop some inconvenience. I would like to offer my apology and hope you will accept this compensation.”

It was good that the former student made an apology and paid some money towards the cost of the sign, though the owner of the shop said that the sign had cost much more than £100. But just because young people think that it would be funny to do something, this does not mean that it is right to do it. God has said, “Thou shalt not steal”. And the victim will probably not think it funny. How good it would be if young people, and those who are older, would consider whether what they think of doing is right or wrong – and that they would consider the matter in the light of the Bible.

Another point is that students had been drinking alcohol. They probably had drunk at least enough to influence the way they thought, making them less in control of what they did, and leaving them more irresponsible in their behaviour. Young people may do what they will regret when they become older and perhaps wiser.

So they should commit themselves to the care of God in prayer every day, asking Him to keep them from doing foolish things, including things that will cause inconvenience to other people, and even actual harm. But it is not enough to live an upright, moral life. We need a new heart; we need to be converted; we need the Holy Spirit to turn us from our own ways to serve the living God; we need to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Only then will it be

well with us when we reach the end of our lives in this world; only then will we be fit to go to heaven and escape the awfulness of the punishment of our sins in hell for ever.

Delivered From a Bomb Explosion

Mohammad Farooq was convicted at Sheffield Crown Court in 2024 of preparing acts of terrorism and was sentenced more recently to a minimum of 37 years in prison. He planned to set off a bomb in the hospital where he worked, St James' Hospital in Leeds, in 2023. The Court heard that Farooq planned to "kill as many nurses as possible" at St James' Hospital.

Nathan Newby was a patient in the hospital at the time and spent two hours persuading Farooq, described as a "lone-wolf terrorist", to give up his attempt. He approached Farooq after spotting him fidgeting and looking anxious. He said that Farooq "was watching a bag all the time which was six feet away." Inside the bag was a pressure-cooker bomb with 10 kg of explosives. It was also said that Farooq was armed with knives, which he intended to use to kill other nurses, and an imitation gun.

Newby eventually managed to call the police and is credited with saving many lives. He is later to receive the George Medal for his bravery.

The Court was told that "luck intervened" when Newby noticed Farooq. No, luck had nothing to do with what happened; "luck" has no real existence. We must look higher; we must consider God's kind providence.

Newby himself acknowledged, "On that day, I was in [hospital] for a reason and it was not to get better; I was in there because that [danger] was happening." He seems to be pointing to the action of some superior being, but whether he is acknowledging the God of the Bible is not so clear.

But God is in control of everything and can restrain people who are ready to do harm. No doubt there are godly people who pray that God would prevent terrorist activity. God heard them and, in His providence, placed a man in the hospital who had the skills needed to calm down the terrorist.

Speaking after Farooq was convicted, Detective Superintendent Paul Greenwood said that Newby "was the right person in the right place at the right time". All credit to Nathan Newby, but we should acknowledge God's kindness in His providence in preventing large numbers of deaths.

Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2025-26

Exercise 3

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

Senior Section (15 years old and over)

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

Old Testament

Turn to Isaiah 52-53, a prophecy about the "servant of God".

1. How is God's servant described in Isaiah 52:13? (3)
2. What is going to happen to his appearance? (1)
3. What is distressing the prophet in verse 1 of chapter 53? (2)
4. How were people going to react to the servant of God when they see Him (53:2-4) (3)
5. Why was this so ungrateful? What is the reason for His wounds and bruises? (2)
6. (a) How are we like sheep? (b) How is God's servant like a lamb? (2)
7. How did God feel about His servant's suffering? Why? (Refer to verse 10.) (2)
8. How does the servant feel as He looks on His suffering? Why? (Refer to verse 11.) (2)
9. Who is the servant spoken about here? (1)

Turn to Isaiah 55.

10. What is offered in verse 1? What does it cost? (4)
11. How is God able to offer salvation to us freely? (Look back to Isaiah 53.) (1)

New Testament

Turn to Romans 10.

1. What was Paul's desire and prayer for Israel? (1)
2. What did they have? What did they lack? (2)
3. What mistake were they making? (see verse 3.) (2)
4. How does Moses describe the righteousness that comes from the law? (1)
5. Find and write out a verse where Paul explains what you must do to be saved. (3)
6. Who will not be ashamed (at the end of the world)? (1)
7. Is there any difference between the way of salvation for Jews and Greeks (Gentiles)? (1)
8. What is the duty of Christians to the world? Why? (see verses 13-15.) (2)
9. Many people would think that if Jesus was from God, then the Jews, God's chosen people, would have accepted Him. What proof does Paul give that the Jewish rejection of Jesus was prophesied in the Old Testament? (See verses 19-21 and look at what Paul says about Moses and Isaiah, and what God says about Israel.) (4)
10. Turn to chapter 11. Paul is arguing that God has not cast off Israel entirely. What arguments does he give to support this in:
(a) verse 1 (b) verses 4-5 (c) verse 11 (d) verses 23-24

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 85 in the Shorter Catechism:

What doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse, due to us for sin? (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 Jeremiah 1:1-10.

- (a) The Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah during the reign of three kings of Judah.
Name them (3)
- (b) What had the Lord done to Jeremiah before he was born? (2)
- (c) Why was Jeremiah sent to the nations? (1)
- (d) What objection did Jeremiah make? (1)
- (e) How is Jeremiah encouraged not to be afraid? (1)

2. Read Jeremiah 17:5-10.

- (a) Describe the man who is cursed. (3)
- (b) What is he compared to and where will he live? (2)

- (c) Describe the man who is blessed. (2)
- (d) The man who is blessed is compared to a tree. What else is said about this tree? (4)
- (e) What is true about the heart? (2)
- (f) Who searches the heart and the reins (the kidneys)? (1)
- (g) Why does He search the heart and the reins ? (2)

New Testament

Read Acts 26:32 and Acts 27.

1. Why was Paul being sent to Rome? (1)
2. (a) What circumstances made the voyage difficult? (1)
- (b) What was Paul's warning to the centurion? (2)
- (c) How did the centurion react? (1)
- (d) Whose advice did the centurion take? (1)
- (e) What actions did the crew take to lessen the impact of the tempest? (3)
- (f) When they had given up hope of surviving the storm, Paul spoke to them. Describe briefly what he said. (4)
- (g) What was the eventual outcome of this part of the voyage? (2)

3. Read Acts 28:17-31.

When he reached Rome, Paul called the Jews who lived there together to meet him.

- (a) What effect did Paul's preaching have on the Jews? (2)
- (b) What does Paul say about the heart, eyes and ears of the unbelieving Jews ("gross" here means *stupid*) (verses 26,27). What are the results of these actions? (4)
- (c) What did Paul continue to do in Rome for the next two years? (2)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 85 in the Shorter Catechism:

What does God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin? (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 Isaiah 53.
 - (a) Who is referred to as "a man of sorrows"? (1)
 - (b) Why was this "man of sorrows" wounded and bruised? (1)
 - (c) Give the number of the verse that tells us that this "man of sorrows" suffered meekly. (1)

Read Isaiah 54:1-6, 15-17.

- (d) Give two different names given to the Lord in these verses. (1)
- (e) Write out the promise given to the servants of the Lord (1)
- (f) Read Isaiah 55:10,11 and, in your own words, explain the comparison given between snow and rain, and God's word. (2)

Read Isaiah 64:6.

- (g) What four things does this verse tell us about all mankind? (4)
2. Read Jeremiah chapter 36. God told Jeremiah to write in a book all the prophecies He gave him.
 - (a) Who wrote these words for Jeremiah and then read them to the people? (1)
 - (b) Why could Jeremiah not go the Lord's house and read them himself? (1)
 - (c) Who read the book to King Jehoiakim and what did the king then do with this book? (2)
 - (d) What punishment came upon the king for this wicked deed? (3)

New Testament

1. Read Acts 20:17-38, where Paul addresses the elders of Ephesus before he parted with them.

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

- (e) How did the elders feel as they parted with Paul? (1)
2. In Romans 10:13-15, there is a chain of truths linked to each other. Read these verses carefully and then write down the words missing from the following passage. (There are six different words to be filled in, with some words used more than once.)
- If preachers are not _____ by God, they cannot _____. If preachers do not _____, people will not _____. If people do not _____, how shall they _____? And if they do not _____, how shall they _____ on the name of the Lord? If they do not _____ on the name of the Lord, they will not be _____. (6)
3. Read 1 Corinthians 13, where “charity” means *love*.
- (a) Give an example of something that is worthless without charity. (1)
- (b) Read verses 4-8, and in your own words, give six descriptions of charity. (3)

Memory Exercise

- Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to Question 59 in the Shorter Catechism: Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath? (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

The questions are all from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah.

1. Read Jeremiah 1:1-10.
- (a) Name the three Kings who ruled during the time that Jeremiah prophesied. (3)
- (b) Jeremiah was young when called by God. True or False. (1)
- (c) God encouraged Jeremiah when he was “afraid” by giving him a promise. (1)
- Write out that verse. (1)
2. Read Jeremiah 18:1-10. Fill in the correct missing words in this paragraph:
- Jeremiah watched the _____ make a vessel that was _____. The potter then remade it so that it was _____. The _____ told Jeremiah to tell Israel that if they turned from their _____ ways, He would _____ and not bring about the promised punishment for their sins.
- The words are: marred (that is, spoiled), good, repent, potter, evil, Lord (3)
3. Read Jeremiah 25:1-11.
- (a) Verse 3 gives the total number of years that Jeremiah had been speaking God’s word to the people of Judah. Write the number. (1)
- (b) Verse 6 tells of their great sin. What was it? (1)
- (c) Verses 8-11 tell of their punishment.
- (1) Write the name of the King who was to destroy their land. (1)
- (2) How many years were they to serve this King? (1)
4. Read Jeremiah 32:36-42. Write the number of the verse which tells that God was going to bring back the people of Judah to live “safely” in their own land. (1)

New Testament

1. Read Acts 23:6-8.
- Fill in the missing word: Paul believed in the r _____ of the dead. (1)
2. Read Acts 24:14-16 and 24,25.
- (a) Fill in the blanks. Everyone shall be raised from the dead, both the _____ and the _____. (2)
- (b) Paul spoke to Felix about the judgement day. What was his reaction? (1)
3. Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.
- (a) Verse 3 gives the reason why Christ died. What is it? (1)

- (b) On which day did He rise from the grave? (1)
 (c) Name two people who saw Christ after His resurrection? (2)
 4. Now read verses 51,52. What will we all hear on the resurrection day? (1)
 5. Read 2 Corinthians 4:3-6
 (a) We read of one god and then of the true God. Fill in the blanks:
 The god of this _____ and _____ who is the image of God. (2)
 (b) Which one blinds our minds so that we do not believe the glorious gospel? (1)
 (c) Whom did Paul preach about? (1)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write down the answer to Question 37 in the Shorter Catechism:
 What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death? (3)

Lower Primary Section (8 years old and under)

UK answers to *Mrs A MacLean, 12 Craigs Crescent, Edinburgh, EH12 8HT*
mrs.a.maclean@proton.me.

Old Testament

Read Isaiah 42:5-7 and write the missing words

people open created out prison

1. God the Lord _____ the heavens, and stretched them out. He spread forth the earth, and that which comes out of it. He gives breath to the _____ upon it, and spirit to them that walk in it (Isaiah 42:5).

Jesus was given for a light of the Gentiles:

2. To _____ the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the _____, and them that sit in darkness _____ of the prison house (Isaiah 42:7).

New Testament

Paul had been angry with people who followed Jesus and treated them terribly. Paul's life changed on a journey to Damascus. Write the missing words: harm light sins Jesus viper sticks

1. At midday, Paul saw in the way a _____ from heaven, brighter than the sun. Acts 26:13

2. Paul heard a voice speaking to him and asked who it was. The Lord answered, "I am _____, whom thou persecutest." Acts 26:15

Jesus now made Paul a minister to the Gentiles:

3. To turn them from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of _____. Acts 26:18

God kept Paul safe to carry on this work. In chapter 28 we read:

4. When Paul had gathered a bundle of _____, and laid them on the fire, there came a _____ out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. Acts 28:3
 The people looked to see if he would swell up or fall down dead suddenly.

5. And he shook off the snake into the fire, and felt no _____. Acts 28:5

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