

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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Contents

Useful Lives	183
The Scottish Reformation of 1560:	
5. Events Leading to the Reformation	185
Religious Impressions	188
For Junior Readers:	
Hurricanes	190
For Younger Readers:	
God's Thoughts	191
Only One Way of Salvation:	
6. Is It Enough to Be Sincere?	192
Looking Around Us	194
Scripture and Catechism Exercises:	
General Information 2010-11	195
Exercise 1 2010-11	196
Overseas Prizes and Awards 2009-10	199
Australia and New Zealand Youth Conference 2011	200

Cover Picture: *Rev Donald MacLean* (see pages 184,188).

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Vol 75

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No 10

Useful Lives

As I sat in a friend's house one summer evening I could see some lovely roses just outside the window; one was yellow and the others red. The next evening I sat in the same seat and again noticed the flowers, but the beauty of the yellow rose was past. Its petals had withered; it no longer looked nice. It could now be plucked off and thrown away. So human beauty passes. And David speaks of "man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more" (Ps 103:14,15).

One of the questions we should ask ourselves is: When death comes and carries *me* away into eternity, will I be able to say that I have been in any way useful? The yellow rose was useful; I enjoyed its beauty, and other people too would have looked at it and appreciated that beauty. God created flowers; He gave them their beauty. And as they show forth their beauty, they are fulfilling God's purpose in creating them, and so fulfilling unconsciously the call to every part of God's creation: "Bless the Lord, all His works in all places of His dominion" (Psalm 103:22).

Human beings have a particular responsibility to live useful lives. We have the capacity to understand that there is a God, that this God made us, and that He commands us to live to His glory. So we should be examining our actions and our attitudes to see if our lives are useful. We should, at least, ask ourselves if we are *seeking*, by God's help, to lead useful lives.

Some of you, at this time of year, are setting out on a new stage of life. You may, for instance, be starting a university course or your first job. Ask God, in your new circumstances, to give you grace to live to His glory. Living to God's glory includes trusting in Christ. And if you do not yet trust in Him, seek earnestly for salvation for His sake, for He died for sinners. Living to God's glory also means working hard and studying hard, and keeping away from sin and from everything that might lead you into sin. Do not trust in yourself; depend on God to keep you and help you.

Some of you may feel that you have no opportunity to be useful. You are out of school; there is no other course in education open to you and you can-

not find work. It is a difficult position to be in, but you can still find something useful to do while you seek employment. Can you do more to help your parents? Is there someone near you who is, perhaps, old or disabled and would appreciate some extra support? And your lack of work leaves you with more time to seek the Lord, to read the Bible and to pray. It also gives you more time to focus on the fact that a life without Christ, however useful it may be in many ways, does not really glorify God.

Many people's lives seem completely useless. They are not able to work; they cannot leave their home to go and help other people. They may be seriously ill; they may be severely disabled; they may be entirely dependent on other people. Yet even they need not be useless. One such woman, Catherine McColl from Ballachulish in the West Highlands, suffered nearly 30 years of increasing disability before she died in 1961. At last she could do little more than move her head. Was hers then an increasingly-useless life? By no means, for she spent her days in prayer. Who can tell how many people received a blessing from God in answer to this lady's prayers?

In other cases, a person's usefulness may be much more obvious. One thinks, for instance, of Rev Donald MacLean, who died recently at the age of 95. We can say about him what the Bible says of David: "After he had served his own generation by the will of God, [he] fell on sleep". He served God particularly in the pulpit, where he clearly and forcefully presented the truths of Scripture, and God blessed his work. After retirement he continued to preach, though less often in his last years. But even this year, he took at least one service. He remained unwavering in his loyalty to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and all that it stands for.

For a period of eight years from 1949, Mr MacLean was also editor of this Magazine. He was conscious that it was a time when religion in Scotland was drifting even further from the standard which God set in the Bible. He recognised that the Church has a duty to respect the authority of God speaking through the Scriptures. The Church must therefore promote the teachings of Scripture in every aspect of its life, and especially in its preaching. Every individual is under the same authority; everyone must believe what the Bible teaches and obey the commandments which it sets forth. And Mr MacLean's writing reflected these points as he addressed the false ideas of that time.

He has now, in the Bible's phrase, "fallen asleep". Yes, he has died, but that phrase points to the fact that the death of the believer will be reversed. There will be a resurrection, at the end of the world, when body and soul will be reunited. We still have opportunities for usefulness. Let us ask God for His blessing on such opportunities, and especially that we would trust in Christ as the only Saviour. Then ours too will be a glorious resurrection.

The Scottish Reformation of 1560

5. Events Leading to the Reformation

Rev D W B Somerset

Having described the state of Scotland before the Reformation we now give an account of some of the events leading up to the Reformation.

The dawn of the Reformation in the whole of Europe was marked by the raising up in England of John Wycliffe, who died in 1384. His followers were called Lollards, and it was one of these, an Englishman called James Resby, who was the first martyr in Scotland. He was burned at Perth 1407. A little later, Paul Craw, from Bohemia and a follower of John Hus, was burned at St Andrews in 1433. The Lollard movement continued and there still survives a hand-written Wycliffe Bible, dating from about 1520, which was used in Kyle in Ayrshire by Murdoch Nisbet.

Meanwhile Martin Luther had nailed his 95 Theses to the church door in Wittenberg in 1517. The first recorded sign of the Reformation proper in Scotland was in Aberdeen in 1525, when the importing of Lutheran books was banned there. Soon after this Patrick Hamilton was martyred in St Andrews, being burned alive on 29 Feb 1528. It was said that “his reik [smoke] infected all on whom it blew”, and the number of Protestants in Scotland started to multiply. Hamilton was followed as a martyr by David Straiton whom we mentioned in Part 1 of this series (*The Young People's Magazine*, June 2010). Straiton at first had no religion at all, but after he was falsely accused of heresy he became curious about religious things, heard the Bible read, was converted and professed Protestant principles before the Council in Holyrood. As a result he was burnt as a heretic in August 1534.

About 1543, George Wishart returned to Scotland from Europe, preaching around Dundee and in the south. It was at this time that John Knox was converted. Wishart was arrested and burned in St Andrews on 1 March 1546.

In 1547 Henry VIII died in England, and Edward VI came to the throne, establishing the Reformation in England. Thus from 1548 to 1553 there was a Protestant country next door to Scotland in which men like John Knox could take refuge. All this time the work of the gospel was advancing among the common people in Scotland.

A Swiss visitor who came with the English army in 1550 to Berwick, on the border with Scotland, wrote: “There appears to be great firmness and no little religion among the people of Scotland; but in the chiefs of that nation one can see little else but cruelty and ignorance, for they resist and oppose the truth in every possible way. As to the common people, however, it is the

general opinion that the greater number of them are rightly persuaded as to the true religion than here among us in England. This seems to be a strange state of things, that among the English the ruling powers are virtuous and godly, but the people have for a long time been most contumacious [stubbornly disobedient to authority]; while in Scotland on the contrary the rulers are most ferocious, but the nation at large is virtuous and exceedingly well-disposed towards our holy religion. I have no hesitation in writing this to you, for both what I say is true, and I perceive that this circumstance is frequently and seriously deplored by the English themselves.”

In 1553 Edward VI died, and “Bloody” Mary came to the throne of England. Knox and many others had to flee from England to the Continent, but it is said that the martyrdoms, under Mary, of men such as Thomas Cranmer, Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley had the effect of converting the English nation to Protestantism. All the while, the work of Reformation was advancing in Scotland. In 1555 Knox returned to Scotland for a highly-important preaching tour. During it he persuaded many Protestants who had been meeting privately, but had also been attending mass, that they should stop attending mass and separate themselves entirely from Romanism. At the same time, the persecution was continuing, and the last Protestant martyr, an 80-year-old priest called Walter Mill, was burned in St Andrews on 28 April 1558.

One incident which shows the strength of Protestantism shortly before the Reformation was the tumult at the St Giles procession in Edinburgh in 1558. The old image of St Giles, which was usually carried in these processions, had been stolen by some Protestants and first “drowned” in the North Loch and then burnt. Not to be defeated, the Romanists borrowed another one.

Here is an account of what followed, in the words of John Knox, in his *History of the Reformation*. He entitles it “The tragedy of Sancte Geile”: “A marmoset [monkey-like] idol was borrowed from the Greyfriars and was fast fixed with iron nails upon a fertour [barrow]. There assembled priests, friars, canons and rotten papists, with tabors, trumpets, banners and bagpipes, and who was there to lead the ring but the Queen Regent herself, with all her shavelings [priests and monks] for the honour of that feast? West about it goes and comes down the High Street to the Cannon Cross. The Queen Regent dined that day in Sandy Carpenter’s house betwixt the Bows [gates], and so when the idol returned back again she left it and passed in to her dinner.

“The hearts of the brethren [the Protestants] were wondrously inflamed, and seeing such abomination so manifestly maintained, were decreed to be avenged. They were divided in several companies, whereof not one knew of another. . . . Immediately after the Queen was entered into the lodging, some

of those that were of the enterprise drew nigh to the idol, as willing to help bare him, and getting the fertour upon their shoulders began to shudder, thinking that thereby the idol should have fallen. But that was provided and prevented by the iron nails, as we have said; and so began one to cry, 'Down with the idol, down with it,' and so without delay it was pulled down.

"Some brag [opposition] made the priests' patrons at first; but they saw the feebleness of their god – for one took him by the heels, and dadding [knocking] his head to the calsay [pavement] left Dagon without head or hands, and said, 'Fie upon thee, thou young Sancte Geile, thy father would have tarried four such' – this considered, we say, the priests and friars fled faster than they did at Pinkie Cleuch [the Battle of Pinkie in 1547]. There might have been seen so sudden an affray as seldom has been seen among that sort of men within this realm; for down goes the cross, off goes the surplice, round caps corner with the crowns. The Greyfriars gaped, the Blackfriars blew, the priests panted and fled, and happy was he that first got the house; for such a sudden fray came never amongst the generation of Antichrist within this realm before."

Knox then gives an account of what a "merry Englishman" said on seeing the priests in flight and concludes, "The Queen Regent laid this up among her other mementoes till she might have seen the time proper to have avenged it. Search was made for the doers; but none could be deprehended [arrested]; for the brethren assembled themselves in such sort, in companies singing psalms and praising God, that the proudest of the enemies were astonished."

Queen Mary died on 17 November 1558, marking the end of Roman Catholic power in England, and by mid-1559 it was starting to crumble in Scotland as well. John Knox returned to Scotland from Geneva on 2 May 1559 and a few days later, on May 11, the monasteries in Perth were sacked by "the rascal multitude". In June 1559, following a sermon by Knox, the town of St Andrews removed "all monuments of idolatry". By September 2 Protestant congregations were formed in eight of the leading towns: Edinburgh, St Andrews, Dundee, Perth, Stirling, Brechin, Montrose and Ayr.

There was a Kirk Session in St Andrews by October 1559, which was already dealing authoritatively with cases of marriage and divorce (which included summoning from Denmark a wife who had deserted her husband). In the same month the Dundee town council passed an act forbidding anyone to speak against the Protestant ministers, elders, or deacons of the congregation or their discipline. All this happened while the law of Scotland was that anyone who denied the Pope's authority was to be punished by death.

In 1560 things came to a head. The French army, which the Queen Regent, Mary of Guise, had been using to oppose the Protestants, was defeated, and

the Reformation was legally established. On 17 August 1560 Parliament ratified the Confession of Faith which Knox and others had drawn up, and on August 24 they abolished the Papal authority in Scotland and made the Mass illegal. A blessed day, indeed!

Religious Impressions

Rev Donald MacLean

This is one of the first articles Mr MacLean wrote for this Magazine after being appointed editor in 1949, but has now been abridged. It was important then to emphasise the need for true personal religion; it is no less important now.

The supreme importance of religious impressions cannot be stressed too often. Some of these impressions, through the blessing of the Holy Spirit, result in a saving conversion to God. In others, that solemn truth is fulfilled: "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? For your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away" (Hosea 6:4). Their impressions were at one time strong and produced an outward change in their lives but they have now faded away. Most who hear the gospel in their youth have some religious impressions.

The religious impressions we refer to are not those brought about by the voice or the manner of the preacher or tuneful singing. These are the outside of religion. The impressions we mean are caused by the Word of God throwing the person into a state of anxiety about his or her salvation. This leads to some outward reformation and includes attending on the means of grace more seriously, with a desire after salvation.

Some young people who read this may be in this state. A crisis has arisen in your life. Either these impressions will be deepened, and sealed effectively on your heart by the Holy Spirit, as the first step on your way to salvation, or they will fade from your mind and you will return to your former ways. You must therefore take great care to avoid doing anything which may quench such impressions. This is why the following words of advice are given – in the hope that, by the Lord's blessing, you may be delivered from the snares of spiritual death.

Multitudes who have had those impressions which cause you to pray and seek salvation are now in a lost eternity. Do you pray earnestly for salvation because you are alarmed about death and eternity? So did one of the thieves crucified beside the Redeemer. "If Thou be Christ," he said, "save Thyself and us" (Luke 23:39). Yet he died without an answer to his prayer.

Do you tremble at God's Word? So did Felix, when Paul reasoned of

righteousness, temperance and judgement to come. Yet he said, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25). Impressed at the time, he put the impressions away from him and clung to his former ways.

And when King Agrippa heard Paul tell about his conversion, he said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian". Still it was *almost*. The impression was quenched and King Agrippa remained in his sins.

Do you have times of joy when hearing the Word preached? So had those who received the seed into stony places. Yet Christ, who knows what is in man, said, "Yet hath he not root in himself and dureth for a while" (Matthew 13:2). The fact that such instances are recorded in God's Word should make you anxious lest you turn back to perdition.

We should realise that no one has the power to give such impressions or to maintain them in the soul except the Holy Spirit. There is no true heart godliness apart from His work. We must maintain a watchful spirit against all that would grieve the Holy Spirit away. We must seek strength and grace to forsake every known sin, as the Psalmist declared, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18). We must not have as our companions those who have little regard for religion, or have the spirit of the scorner.

We read recently of two young men who became seriously impressed about their condition as sinners and the importance of salvation. While in this state of mind, they were both invited to attend a dance and were strongly urged to go. One yielded and went, persuading himself that there was not much harm in it. The other went instead to his minister's house, where he spent the evening in a way more suited to his state of mind. That night the first man lost all his impressions; he returned to the world and became more hardened and careless than ever; soon afterwards the other found peace with God.

Use the means of grace, both in public and private, very diligently. It is through His Word that the Lord enlightens sinners. However useful the writings of godly men are, let the Bible be your constant companion. Read it prayerfully, asking the Lord to send forth His light with His truth and to visit you with His salvation. Listen attentively to the preaching of the Word, seeking to look beyond man and to hear the voice of Christ, whose words are spirit and life.

Take your difficulties to the Lord in prayer; ask Him to open up the way for you. The Queen of Sheba brought her hard questions to Solomon and had them answered. You are to bring your hard questions to Him who is greater than Solomon, who has the tongue of the learned to speak a word in season to him that is weary. Remember the promise: "I will bring the blind by a way

that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them and not forsake them” (Isaiah 42:16).

But remember that nothing you can do can ever procure salvation or make you any more fit to receive it. Salvation comes to the unworthy through free grace. Note what John Duncan said: Although seeking will not save you, finding will. Do not conclude that, because you have begun to seek, you are sure to find. It is true that, when the Holy Spirit has begun the good work, He will carry it on. Yet many who have had convictions were never brought to Christ. We are to rest by faith in the finished work of Christ, not to trust in religious impressions, mistaking an outward reformation for a change of heart. No soul taught by the Holy Spirit can find rest until he is brought to Christ Jesus. He is delivered from every false hope and, in a day of power, is united by faith to Christ, of whom he can now say:

Thou art my hiding-place, Thou shalt from trouble keep me free;
Thou with songs of deliverance about shall compass me” (Psalm 32:7).

For Junior Readers

Hurricanes

I am sure you know what a hurricane is – a severe tropical storm with very high wind-speeds, very heavy rain, high seas and storm surges. The hurricane season in the Atlantic Ocean lasts from June till November, although August and September are the most active months.

The hurricane forecast for 2010 points to an active season. Forecasting the arrival of hurricanes has taken a leap forward now that a new computer model has been developed. Even one hurricane hitting land can cause great damage; so the advances in forecasting using computer models should be very useful in helping people prepare for these frightening storms. They can board up their windows and get ready to evacuate if necessary. This will prevent so many lives being lost from the high winds and flooding.

The worst weather disaster in US history took place in Texas, on Galveston Island (not far from our Church's Santa Fe congregation). In 1900 a hurricane sent walls of water surging across the island killing around 8000 people. Only two years ago, in 2008, this area was hit by another hurricane, but this time most people managed to escape the worst effects of the storm. Because of the advances in forecasting, they knew it was coming and were able to prepare for it.

What has this to teach us spiritually? God has very clearly set before us

in the Bible a forecast of what lies ahead for sinners who do not turn to Him: "Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup" (Psalm 11:6).

He has given us these warnings so that we can prepare for the "furious storms" which lie ahead. He has also provided a shelter for sinners to hide in before the storm comes. He tells us of this special refuge in many places in the Bible, but Isaiah 32:2 describes it specially clearly: "A man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest" – just exactly what you need! The God-man Christ Jesus is all this and much more to every sinner who turns to Him. He bore the battering of the storms of God's wrath to protect those who shelter in Him.

Will you not then "flee from the wrath to come" and turn to this hiding place before it is too late!

J van Kralingen

For Younger Readers

God's Thoughts

How far have you learned to count? Can you count as far as 99 or 100?

Now can you think of going to a beach which is all covered in sand? You take up a handful of that sand. If you start counting the grains of sand in your hand, you will very quickly reach 100 – though it may be difficult to separate them all out and count them one by one; they are so tiny.

That beach may be a very small one, but the number of grains of sand there will be far, far more than you can ever count. So, if you could gather up all the sand on all the beaches of the world and count all the grains of sand on them, you would have a very big number indeed.

In Psalm 139 David speaks of God and His thoughts. He says, "If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand". So God's thoughts must be far too many for us to count. God is so great that we cannot possibly know all that He is thinking. That is what David meant.

But God has told us some of His thoughts. That is why He has given us the Bible. He has given it to us so that we may know some

of His thoughts. He is good to us and He has told us everything that He wants us to know.

So, when you learn to read, try to read a little of the Bible for yourself every day. It is important for you to do so, because then you can find out some of God's thoughts. And all of God's many thoughts are truly wonderful.

Only One Way of Salvation

6. Is It Enough to Be Sincere?

J C Ryle

This is a series taken from Ryle's book, *Knots Untied*, and is based on the verse: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). It has been edited. In the last article, Ryle began pointing out some consequences of this statement, beginning with: "All religion is utterly useless without Christ". Here is the last of these consequences – which is specially relevant now, in these days of multi-faith religion. This point is followed by some general comment.

(d) *It is utterly absurd to suppose that, just because someone is earnest and sincere, we ought to be satisfied with the state of his soul.* This is a very common heresy indeed, and we all need to be on our guard against it. There are thousands today who say, We have nothing to do with the opinions of others; they may perhaps be mistaken – though it is possible that they are right and we are wrong – but if they are sincere and earnest, we hope they will be saved, even as we. All this sounds charitable, and people like to think this is true of their own views! This false idea has run to such an extreme that many are content to describe a Christian as an earnest man, and they seem to think that this vague definition is quite enough!

I believe that such notions completely contradict the Bible, whatever else may be true of them. I cannot find in Scripture that anyone ever got to heaven merely by being sincere; I cannot find anyone who was accepted by God just because he held earnestly to his own views. The priests of Baal were earnest and sincere when they cut themselves with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out, but that did not prevent Elijah from treating them as wicked idolaters. Manasseh, King of Judah, was doubtless earnest and sincere when he burned his children in the fire to Moloch, but we know that he brought on himself great guilt by doing so. When Paul was a Pharisee and making havoc of the Church, he was earnest and sincere, but he mourned over it as special wickedness after his eyes were opened.

Let us beware of accepting, even for a moment, the idea that sincerity is everything. It will not stand; it will not bear the test of Scripture. If we once accept that such notions are true, we may as well throw our Bibles aside altogether. Someone's opinions may force us to conclude that his spiritual state is dangerous, even if he is earnest in holding them. Otherwise heathen sacrifices, the burning of the Reformers, and various other cruel practices might all be defended. Sincerity is not Christ, and therefore sincerity cannot put away sin.

I can be sure that these consequences sound very unpleasant to some who read them. But I say, calmly and thoughtfully, that a religion without Christ, a religion that takes away from Christ, a religion that adds anything to Christ, or a religion that puts sincerity in the place of Christ is dangerous and must be avoided, because all these ideas are contrary to the doctrine of Scripture.

Some readers may not like this. I am sorry about that. They think me uncharitable, narrow-minded, bigoted, and so forth. Be it so. But they cannot say that my doctrine differs from the Word of God. That doctrine is: salvation in Christ to the very uttermost – but out of Christ no salvation at all.

I feel it is my duty to bear solemn testimony against the spirit of the day we live in, to warn men against its dangers. It is not atheism I fear so much, in the present times, as pantheism (the idea that everything is God). I do not fear the system which says that nothing is true so much as the system which says that everything is true. It is not the system which says there is no Saviour I fear so much as the system which says there are many saviours and many ways to peace! It is the system which is so broad-minded that it dares not say anything is false. It is the system which is so charitable that it will allow everything to be true. It is the system which seems ready to honour others as well as our Lord Jesus Christ, to clam them all together and to think well of all.

Heathen thinkers, founders of false religions, Christian heretics and devil-worshippers – all are to be treated respectfully; none are to be condemned. It is the system which bids us smile uncritically on all creeds and systems of religion. The Bible and the Qur'an, the Hindu Vedas and the Book of Mormon – all are to be listened to; none are to be denounced as false. It is the system which is so scrupulous about the feelings of others that we are never to say they are wrong. It is the system which is so liberal that it calls a man a bigot if he dares to say, "I know my views are right". This is the system which I fear in these days, the system which I desire emphatically to testify against and denounce.

What is it all but bowing down before a great idol, wrongly called broad-

mindfulness? What is it all but sacrificing truth upon the altar of false charity? What is it all but the worship of a shadow, something unreal? What can be more absurd than to profess ourselves content with earnestness, when we do not know what we are earnest about? Let us take care not to be carried away by this delusion. Has the Lord God spoken to us in the Bible, or has He not? Has He shown us the way of salvation plainly and distinctly in that Bible, or has He not? Has He declared to us the dangerous state of all who are out of that way, or has He not? Let us gird up the loins of our minds, and look these questions fairly in the face, and give them an honest answer.

Tell us that there is some other inspired book beside the Bible, and then we shall know what you mean. Tell us that the whole Bible is not inspired, and then we shall know where to meet you. But grant for a moment that the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible is God's truth, and then I do not know how we can escape the doctrine of the text. From the liberality which says everybody is right, from the charity which forbids us to say anybody is wrong, from the peace which is bought at the expense of truth – may the good Lord deliver us

For myself, I frankly confess, I find no resting place between real biblical Christianity and downright unbelief, whatever others may find. I see no half-way house between them, or else I see houses that are roofless and cannot shelter my weary soul. I can see consistency in an atheist, however much I may pity him. I can see consistency in holding to full biblical truth. But as to a middle course between the two, I cannot see it; and I say so plainly. Let it be called narrow-minded and uncharitable; I can hear God's voice nowhere but in the Bible, and I can see no salvation for sinners in the Bible except through Jesus Christ. In Him I see abundance; out of Him I see none. The man who wrote the famous line: "He can't be wrong whose life is in the right", was undoubtedly a great poet, but he was a wretched student of the Bible.

Looking Around Us

The Church of Scotland Today

An article on the BBC website draws attention to the fact that it is now 450 years since the Scottish Reformation. At the same time, it points to rapidly-dropping figures for membership in the Church of Scotland.

The article gives two significant quotations from 1560. (1) from the Papal Jurisdiction Act passed by the Scottish Parliament ending Roman Catholic authority in the country. That authority, the Act stated, had been "very hurtful and prejudicial to our sovereign's authority and common weal [well-being]

of this realm". (2) from the Confession of Faith Ratification Act, which described the Reformed faith as "wholesome and sound doctrine grounded upon the infallible truth of God's Word".

It was on such foundations that the Scottish Church made the great progress it did after 1560. How many Scots over the centuries set out on the way to heaven through believing the wholesome and sound doctrine proclaimed in Scottish pulpits! Godly ministers preached such doctrines because they knew they were founded on the Bible, and they firmly believed that the Bible is the Word of God and completely without error.

The number of members in the Church of Scotland is now just a third of what it was 40 years ago. Even in the 10 years to 2009, it fell by over 137 000. Yet the number of members does not mean very much, when they are not even expected to turn up in church very often. And neither ministers nor members, in most cases, feel the need to be born again, believe in Christ and follow Him sincerely.

What does the Church of Scotland need today? It needs to return to the wholesome doctrine of the Bible. Some of its ministers preach more or less of the truth, but the Church as a whole has very definitely turned its back on what God tells us to believe and on how He tells us to live. And even in Churches which do hold to these things, there is a desperate need for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, so that God's Word would be applied to the hearts and minds of sinners. How much we need to pray for such a blessing!

Scripture and Catechism Exercises

General Information 2010-11

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

Please read the following rules very carefully before you begin:

1. Your section *for the whole year* is decided by your age on 1 October 2010. Stay in that section for the three sets of exercises. You may miss a prize or award by changing sections.
2. Exercises are to be in the correctors' hands before November 30, March 31 and June 30. So you have about two months in which to do each exercise. Please send it in time in case you lose marks for being late.
3. Each entry is to be the work of the person whose name is on it, except for beginners in the Lower Primary Section, who are allowed a little help.
4. Supplies of paper and envelopes will be distributed through ministers in their congregations, but any suitable paper can be used.

5. Prizes will be given in all sections except Lower Primary, and awards of books will be given to everyone in each section who does the three exercises. The names of the award and prize winners will be published in *The Young People's Magazine*.
6. Teachers and others working with young people can arrange for groups to do the exercises, and correctors will be glad to hear from them.
7. The exercises are based on the Bible Reading Cards which will be distributed through the ministers of the congregations (or which may be obtained from the Free Presbyterian Bookroom, 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE). It is very important that you read God's Word every day. The exercises this year are based on the following Bible readings, from cards D and A: *Exercise 1*: Jeremiah 47 to Daniel 4, and 2 Corinthians 5 to Hebrews 13. *Exercise 2*: Daniel 5 to Malachi 4, Genesis 1-23, James 1 to Revelation 22 and Matthew 1-11. *Exercise 3*: Genesis 24 to Exodus 34 and Matthew 12 to Mark 16.

Exercise 1 2010-11

All answers from *overseas* should be sent to *Mrs N M Ross, F P Manse, 10 Achany Road, Dingwall, Ross-shire, IV15 9JB, Scotland*. The correctors should have your answers before the end of November.

Senior Section (15 years old and over)

UK answers to *Miss C MacQueen, 32 Fraser Crescent, Portree, Isle of Skye, IV51 9DR*.

Old Testament

1. Read Ezekiel 33.
 - (a) Why do you think *watchman* is a good name for a preacher? (2)
 - (b) What is the preacher's message called? (2)
 - (c) Who is to be held responsible for the death of a person:
 - (1) if a warning was given (2) if no warning was given? (4)
 - (d) How ought we to react to the warnings of God's Word? (2)
 - (e) Give the number of a verse near the end of the chapter which describes those who are hearers but not doers of the Word. (2)
2. Read Ezekiel 34.
 - (a) Why do you think *shepherd* is the good name for a preacher? (2)
 - (b) Quote a verse which reminds you of Psalm 23. (2)
 - (c) Write briefly about these quotations:
 - (1) "the cloudy and dark day" (verse 12)
 - (2) "there shall be showers of blessing" (verse 26)
 - (3) "I will raise up for them a plant of renown" (verse 29). (6)
3. Read Ezekiel 36:21-38 and make a brief comparison of verse 26 with Psalm 51:10. (3)

New Testament

1. Quote verses from each of the following chapters where Paul gives instructions to believers about their conduct (their "walk"):
 - (a) Galatians 5 (b) Ephesians 4 (two verses) (c) Colossians 2
 - (d) Colossians 4 (e) 1 Thessalonians 2. (6)
2. Read Hebrews 11.
 - (a) Use verses 1-3 to express in your own words what faith is. (2)
 - (b) Why is it impossible to please God without faith? (2)
 - (c) Say briefly how the following people showed their faith:
 - (1) Joseph (2) Rahab (3) Moses. (6)
 - (d) From the Old Testament give two instances of women who "received their dead raised to life again". (4)

- (e) Complete the following verse from Hebrews 12: “. . . compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses . . .”. (2)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to question 86 in the Shorter Catechism: What is faith in Jesus Christ? (3)

Intermediate Section (13 and 14 years old)

UK answers to *Mrs E Couper, 17 Duncan Street, Thurso, Caithness, KW14 7HU.*

Old Testament

1. Read Daniel 1.
 - (a) Why did Daniel refuse to eat the King’s food? (1)
 - (b) What did he eat instead? (1)
 - (c) What was the result? (2)
2. Read Daniel 2.
 - (a) Why was King Nebuchadnezzar not able to sleep? (2)
 - (b) Why did he become angry with the magicians? (2)
 - (c) What did he threaten to do? (2)
 - (d) How did Daniel deal with the King’s problem? (3)
 - (e) Which verses show that Daniel acknowledged the Lord’s help? (2)
 - (f) What had the King to say about Daniel’s God now? (2)
 - (g) What honour was given to Daniel? (3)
 - (h) What lessons can we learn from what Daniel did? (2)

New Testament

1. Complete the following verses:
 - (a) “Abstain from . . .” (1 Thessalonians 5)
 - (b) “But my God shall supply . . .” (Philippians 4)
 - (c) “This is a faithful saying . . .” (1 Timothy 1). (6)
2. Read Colossians 3.
 - (a) List five evils which Christians should “put off”. (3)
 - (b) List five graces which Christians should “put on”. (3)
 - (c) Why especially should we forgive one another? (2)
3. Quote two verses from Ephesians 2 which show that salvation is all of grace. (3)
4. Read 2 Timothy 2.
 - (a) What is Timothy called to “shun” and to “avoid”? (2)
 - (b) Why should he obey these commands especially? (2)
 - (c) What is he called to “study” and to “follow”? (4)

Memory Exercise

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

Junior Section (11 and 12 years old)

UK answers to *Mrs C M Sutherland, Inchure, Saval Road, Lairg, Sutherland, IV27 4ED.*

Old Testament

1. From Jeremiah chapter 52:
 - (a) Who was king of Babylon when Zedekiah was king of Judah? (1)
 - (b) What city was besieged and eventually broken up by this king and his army? (1)
 - (c) What did the king do to Zedekiah’s sons? (1)
 - (d) After Zedekiah was captured how was he treated? (3)
 - (e) Who burned the house of the Lord? (1)
 - (f) What happened to everything that was in the house of the Lord? (1)
2. Read Daniel chapter 2.
 - (a) Why was king Nebuchadnezzar “angry and very furious”? (verse 12) (1)

- (b) What “mercies” did Daniel ask his three friends to “desire of the God of heaven”? (verse 18) (2)
- (c) For what was Daniel thanking and praising God in verse 23? (2)
- (d) What was Daniel asking of king Nebuchadnezzar in verse 49? (1)

New Testament

- 1. In Colossians, chapter 3, what duty is required of:
 - (a) wives (b) husbands (c) children (d) fathers? (8)
- 2. These six people are all mentioned in 2 Timothy:
 - Lois, Hermogenes, Alexander, Hymenaeus, Demas, Onesiphorus
 - State briefly what is said about each of them. (12)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to question 63 in the Shorter Catechism: Which is the fifth commandment? (3)

Upper Primary Section (9 and 10 years old)

UK answers to *Miss S M Gillies, 5 Balnabeen Drive, Dingwall, Ross-shire, IV15 9LY.*

Old Testament

- 1. Read Daniel 1:1-7.
 - (a) What is the name of the king of Judah who was taken captive by the king of Babylon? (1)
 - (b) Write down four things about those young men of the children of Israel whom the king of Babylon wanted to be taught the ways of the Chaldeans. (4)
 - (c) What food and drink did the king order them to eat? (2)
 - (d) Why were they being given such rich and expensive food? (1)
- 2. Read Daniel 1:8-16.
 - (a) Why did Daniel not want to eat the food ordered for them? (1)
 - (b) Did the prince of the eunuchs like Daniel? (1)
 - (c) What did Daniel and his friends want to eat and drink? (2)
 - (d) For how many days did Daniel ask that he and his friends be allowed to eat the food of their choice? (1)
 - (e) How did Daniel and his friends look, after these days had passed? (2)

New Testament

1. Read Ephesians 6:13-20. Paul is describing how Christians can prepare themselves against Satan’s attacks by putting on the armour of God. Copy and complete the table:

Protection	Description of Armour
For the loins	Girt about with truth
For the breast	
	Shod with the preparation of the gospel
From fiery darts	
For the head	

- (4)
- 2. Paul gave lots of advice to the early Christians in his letters and this advice applies to us. Read Philippians 4:4-8 and answer the following questions:
 - (a) Who are we to rejoice in? (1)
 - (b) What do we have to be “careful” or worried about? (1)
 - (c) How are we to make our requests known to God? (3)
 - (d) What shall “keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”? (1)

- (e) Write down two things that we are to think about? (2)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write down the answer to question 11 in the Shorter Catechism:
What are God's works of providence? (3)

Lower Primary Section (8 years old and under)

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

Old Testament

1. When Nebuchnezzar commanded everyone to worship the golden image that he had set up, did Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego obey him? (Daniel 3:12)
2. When Nebuchadnezzar threatened to throw them into a burning fiery furnace, what did they say that God was able to do? (Daniel 3:17)
3. What did the fire do to the men who threw them into the fiery furnace?
(Daniel 3:22)
4. Did the fire harm Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? (Daniel 3:27)
5. Who was the first president in the kingdom of Darius? (Daniel 6:2)
6. Where were Daniel's enemies going to put anyone who prayed to God?
(Daniel 6:7)
7. How many times a day did Daniel pray as usual? (Daniel 6:10)
8. Who tried to save Daniel from the lion's den? (Daniel 6:14)
9. What was put on the mouth of the den after Daniel had been thrown in?
(Daniel 6:17)
10. Who sent his angel and stopped the lions from hurting Daniel? (Daniel 6:22)

New Testament

All these verses say something about salvation. Write down the missing words.

1. For by g____ are ye saved through f____; and that not of yourselves: it is the g____ of God. (Ephesians 2:8)
2. This is a faithful s____ and worthy of a__ acceptance, that Christ J____ came into the world to s____ sinners; of whom I am chief. (1 Timothy 1:15)
3. Not by w____ of righteousness that we have done, but according to his m____ he saved us, by the w____ of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.
(Titus 3:5)
4. Wherefore he is a__ also to save them to the u____ that come unto G____ by h____, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25)
5. So Christ was o____ offered to bear the sins of m____; and unto them that l____ for him shall he appear the second t____ without sin unto s____ (Hebrews 9:28)

Overseas Prizes and Awards 2009-10

Senior Section

Prizes: *Chesley:* Audrey Zekveld. *Gisborne:* Heidi Haringa, Trudy Haringa, Louise van Dorp. *Grafton:* Chloe van Dorp, Cameron White. *Queensland:* Mary Brigden. *Sydney:* James Marshall.

Awards with Merit: *Auckland:* Auke de Boer. *Bulawayo:* Prudence Chibonda, Khulekani Dube, Sukoluhle Khumalo. *Chesley:* Jenny Bouman, Ruth Schuit, Rachel Winkels. *France:* Julia Davenel. *Gisborne:* Herman Haringa, Kirsten van Dorp.

Awards: *Bulawayo:* Nozihlobo Bhebe, Shylet Dube, Sithandazile Dube, Sasizani Moyo, Sothile Moyo, Pink Ncube. *Sengera:* Paul Lumumba.

Intermediate Section

Prizes: *Auckland:* Amy Thomas. *Connecticut:* Rachel Mack. *Gisborne:* Anne-Marie Geuze.

Holland: Gerben Bakker. *Queensland:* Rachel Bridgen. *Sydney:* Keith Marshall. *Texas:* Anna Smith.

Awards with Merit: *Auckland:* Dieuwe de Boer, Bianca Jago, Laura McCrae. *Chesley:* Jacob Zekveld.

Holland: Nathalie Macdonald. *Sengera:* Ondari Onang' o, Marty Onwong' a, Drusillah Orenge.

Awards: *Bulawayo:* Natash Makwezwa, Maria Maphosa. *Gisborne:* William Haringa. *Sengera:* Bonface Isoc, Finlay Mogari, Vane Omweno, Dick Ontiri, Eric Onwong' a, Moses Orenge, Stephen Onyancha, Eunice Rabiki, Gideon Ratemo.

Junior Section

Prizes: *Auckland:* Anne Roos de Boer, Lachlan McCrae. *Chesley:* Samuel Zekveld. *Gisborne:* Emma van Dorp. *Holland:* Samantha Macdonald. *Sydney:* Duncan Marshall. *Texas:* Gerrit Smith.

Wisconsin: Calvin Smith.

Awards with Merit: *Gisborne:* Annika van Dorp. *Grafton:* Chelsie Cameron, Jackie Cameron, Joshua Kidd, Alexandra van Dorp, Abraham Wallis. *Sengera:* Truus Mosiria, Christine Mosoti, Christine Ombura. *Sydney:* Anna van Dorp.

Awards: *Auckland:* Rita de Bruin. *Bulawayo:* Mitchel Makwezwa, Blessing Mlozi. *Connecticut:* Rebecca and Sarah Mack. *Mbuma:* Mbiko Masuku. *Sengera:* Josinah Aboki, Bonface Ang' asa, Gesare Daudi, Judith Gesare, Kembero Kebwaro, Macdonald Matara, Jackson Mokoro, Rodha Mokoro, Bernard Nyakwara, Rebecca Nyamao, Mary Nyamwembe, Adams and Dennis Nyang' au, Joseph Obiye, Nyakwara Ombura, Vincent Ondieki, Priscah Onduso, Samuel Ontiri, Wycliffe Orenge, Dolvine Orina, Jane Ouko, Rusiah Rabiki, Evans and Nehemiah Torori.

Upper Primary Section

Prizes: *Auckland:* Nathanael de Bruin, Jarrod Jago. *Gisborne:* Hannah Geuze. *Sengera:* Deborah Andrew, Happiness Momanyi. *Wisconsin:* Josiah Smith.

Awards with Merit: *Mbuma:* Langelihle Masuku. *Sengera:* Brian Matara, Nelson Mogusu, Donald Oganda, Brian Omweno, Isabella Ontiri, Calvin Orina, Faith Richard.

Awards: *Mbuma:* Sandulelo Khumalo. *Sengera:* Linah Aboki, Faith Bogita, Janet, Kerubo and Orina Nyabuto, Philes Nyandwaro, Violet Ontunya, Eduine Ratemo.

Lower Primary Section

Awards: *Auckland:* Abby de Bruin, Danielle and Monique Jago. *Chesley:* Joel Bouman. *Gisborne:* Matthew Geuze, Sarah van Dorp. *Grafton:* Christina Kidd, Rachel van Dorp, Andrew White.

Holland: Thaddeus MacDonald. *Mbuma:* Ntombiyethu Ngulube. *Sengera:* Sharon Andrew, Mary Batasi, Job David, Napoleon Makora, Peter Makori, Mackenzie Maosa, Damaris Matara, Catherine and Elizabeth Mokoro, Brian Mokua, Nehemiah and Winner Momanyi, Silvia and Wycliff Nyabuto, Kevin and Naom Nyamao, Catherine, Jonathan and Omabeni Nyandwaro, Mbane Oganda, Simeon Ogoti, Simeon Ondieki, Nyabuto Onduso, Bonface and Macmillar Ongenchi, Daniel Ontunya, Nyambeki Onwong' a, Albert Orina, Alice Rabiki, Elizabeth Sigara. *Sydney:* Calum Marshall, Hugh Marshall. *Wisconsin:* Abigail Smith.

Australia and New Zealand Youth Conference 2011

This Youth Conference will be held, God willing, from Tuesday, January 11, to Thursday, January 13, at the Winmalee Christian Conference Centre in the Blue Mountains. The normal lower age limit is 16. The cost is A\$100. Payment can be made when you arrive at the conference *but* please e-mail jnvp@bigpond.com as soon as possible to say that you intend to attend.

Price 70p