

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

The Lord's Supper	83
Yeddie's First and Last Lord's Supper	85
What the Bible Teaches About Sin:	
6. Conviction of Sin	87
Abraham – the Friend of God:	
2. Faith Is the Basis of Friendship with God	90
For Junior Readers:	
The Worst Journey in the World	92
Through the Alphabet with the Bible:	
Behold	93
Looking Around Us	94
“I Love God Sincerely”	94
For Younger Readers:	
God Kept Him Safe	96
Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2011-12:	
Exercise 3	97

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No 5

The Lord's Supper

It was the night when God was to bring the Children of Israel out of Egypt. He told them to take one last meal before they left. It was to be a special meal, one that had spiritual significance. It was the Passover.

Each family was to take a lamb; it was to be killed; its blood was to be sprinkled on the door posts and lintel of the house. The most important part of the meal was to be the flesh of the lamb roasted in the fire.

The lamb pointed forward to Jesus Christ, who is the Lamb of God. He too was to be killed, to be offered as a sacrifice. The roasting of the lamb in the fire pointed to the intensity of Christ's sufferings. In a spiritual sense, we are to feed on Christ – in other words, to receive Him into our souls, to believe on Him for our salvation as the One who died for sinners.

Every year, the Passover meal was to be repeated. This was to remind the Israelites, even many hundreds of years later, of God's goodness to them in bringing them out of Egypt. And if they properly understood God and His goodness, they would also remember that, no matter how much their circumstances changed, He was still the same. And they would look to Him to supply all their needs, of every kind.

Year after year, after He became old enough to do so, Jesus would have gone up to Jerusalem to keep the Passover. Then that last year came, when He was to suffer unto death – which was what the Passover was pointing to. That year, especially, He would not fail to keep the Passover.

He and His disciples gathered in an upper room. The Passover which they were now to keep was to be the last one that pointed forward to Christ's sacrifice. The Passover's purpose was now fulfilled; so He brought in another sacrament to take its place, which we know as the Lord's Supper.

At that first Lord's Supper, Jesus began by taking some bread and giving thanks to God. We should always give thanks to God for our food, but it is even more appropriate to give thanks for spiritual food. Then He broke the bread – as a sign of His body being broken through suffering. He told His disciples: "Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me" (1 Corinthians 11:24). They were to eat the bread as

a sign of receiving Christ by faith. As believers take the bread and eat it, they are to remember what Christ did when He took the punishment of their sins upon Himself, when He suffered unto death instead of them. He had to die, “for the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

But He is not dead now; He has risen; He is at the right hand of God giving out the blessings which He has purchased, through His death. As believers take the bread into their bodies and eat it, so they are to feed spiritually on Christ, who suffered for them; they are to look to Him for these blessings and receive them by faith.

After the bread, Jesus took the cup of wine and said, “This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me”. Just as the bread represents Jesus’ body, so the wine represents His blood. His blood was poured out; it points to the fact that He died.

But it is the blood of the new *testament*, or covenant. In the Lord’s Supper, true believers are being assured that they will indeed receive all the benefits that Christ purchased for them in His death. They can be perfectly sure of obtaining these benefits because Christ represents them in the covenant of grace – but the word *testament* may also be used, because of the connection with Christ’s death. And it is the *new* testament because Christ has come and put an end to the provisions of the old testament; He has fulfilled everything in it, including the Passover. So, at the Lord’s Supper, God’s children are to believe the promise that is being made to them of all these blessings that their Saviour purchased for them.

Under the old testament, the Passover spoke of the deliverance from Egypt and pointed to the blessings of the promised land. The Lord’s Supper speaks of deliverance from more awful bondage than there ever was in Egypt; it speaks of deliverance from Satan’s kingdom and from the power of sin, and it points to the blessings of God’s care and grace in this life and of eternal safety and happiness in heaven.

But who is the Lord’s Supper for? It is for believers, God’s children, and for no one else. It is a serious matter to go to the Lord’s table “unworthily” (Paul’s word, in 1 Corinthians 11:29) – that is, in an unworthy way. And those who are unconverted cannot remember Christ’s death in a worthy way. So those who go to the table must examine themselves as to whether they are believers or not. That implies that they must be mature enough to do so.

The most important matter in life is to find Christ, to look to Him for the salvation of our souls. Those who have done so have the great privilege of coming to the Lord’s table for “their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace” (*Shorter Catechism*, answer 96). For them it is a special opportunity, following the preaching of the Word, to feed on Christ by faith.

Yeddie's First and Last Lord's Supper

Everyone called him an idiot; that was the word people used at one time to describe people whose mental powers were very limited. Yet, in another sense, Yeddie was no fool, for he loved God. He had little to say to other people, but he often seemed to be muttering to himself as he walked along the local roads or as he did what he could to help his neighbours. But he was not muttering to himself; he was praying to the God who loved him and who had taught him to love Him in return.

The local boys used to tease him, and Yeddie too readily believed what they told him. They told him a silly story about what would happen if he rode on a cart, and he believed them. So he would always refuse when a kind farmer would offer him a lift to church. "I'll go on my own feet, he would say, "and be talking to Himself as I go".

One day a boy heard him pleading earnestly with someone unseen and asked him teasingly: "What ghost or goblin are you begging favours from now, Yeddie?"

"Neither the one nor the other," he replied; "I was just having a few words with Him that neither yourself nor I can see, and yet with Him that sees both of us." Yeddie was talking to God when others thought that he was just talking to himself.

Another day Yeddie went to see a minister whose church was some distance away from where he lived. He asked the minister: "Please, minister, let poor Yeddie eat supper on the coming day with the Lord Jesus." He wanted to go to the Lord's table.

The minister, a good man, was busy and he did not want to be disturbed. Perhaps he did not take Yeddie's request seriously. Probably he did not know Yeddie well and did not realise that he really was a godly lad. He tried to put Yeddie off as gently as possible.

But Yeddie would not be put off. So he pleaded, "O minister, if you but knew how I love Him, you would let me go where He's to sit at table!"

These words so touched the minister's heart that he allowed Yeddie to go to the Lord's table. He would now have understood that, limited though Yeddie's powers of mind were, he loved God and trusted in Jesus Christ.

The Sabbath came, and Yeddie, who had to walk many miles over hill and moor, was at the church very early. During the first part of the sermon Yeddie was in tears; he seemed to be very disappointed. When the name of Jesus was mentioned, he would shake his head sadly and whisper, "But I don't see Him".

After the Lord's Supper, everything seemed to change. Yeddie raised his

head and wiped away his tears. He looked up at the minister; he was smiling now. When the service was over and the people began to drift away, Yeddie stood up too. His face seemed full of joy, yet there was a solemnity about him. One and another of the people from his district spoke to him, but he said nothing.

At last, when some of the boys pressed him to say something, he said to them: "Ah lads, don't ask Yeddie to talk today! He's seen the face of the Lord Jesus among His own ones. He got a smile from His eye and a word from His tongue, and he's afraid to speak lest he lose his memory of it, for it's but a bad memory he has at the best. Ah, lads, lads, I have seen Him this day that I never saw before. I have seen with these dull eyes yon lovely Man. Don't you speak, but just leave poor Yeddie to his own company."

Clearly Yeddie had seen Jesus by faith through the Word and sacrament. He had seen Jesus, it would seem, in a much clearer way than ever he had seen the Saviour before. Very possibly it was the first time that Yeddie was conscious of having seen Jesus by faith. But no one can love Jesus unless he is trusting in Him. Yeddie had told the minister that he loved Jesus; so he must have been looking to the Saviour by faith before then. That was why he was always praying to the Lord as he walked along the road.

As Yeddie spoke to them, the boys looked on in wonder, and one whispered to another: "Sure he's no longer daft! The senses have come into his head, and he looks and speaks like a wise one."

At last Yeddie reached the little cottage he called home. He scarcely dared to speak to the old lady he called Granny, who was paid to look after him. He was afraid, he told her, that he would lose "the bonny face" he had seen. He did not want any of the porridge and treacle the old lady had prepared for him, but he smiled pleasantly to her so that she would not think he was in a bad mood.

Then he climbed the ladder to the loft where the straw mattress was on which he used to sleep. He wanted, he said, to get another look at "yon lovely Man" and another word from Him. And Granny could hear his voice, saying quietly: "Aye, Lord, it's just poor me that has been so long seeking Thee, and now we'll stay together". Yeddie was, for one last time on earth, holding communion with God. But his voice became quieter and quieter, until it faded away completely. No doubt Granny assumed that Yeddie had fallen asleep.

The next morning, Granny cooked some porridge for breakfast. She thought Yeddie might be tired and left him to sleep on for some time. Then she was afraid he would be hungry and she called to him again and again from the bottom of the ladder. There was no response. So she did what she had not done for several years; she climbed up the rickety ladder to the loft.

But Yeddie was dead. He had gone to enjoy eternal communion with the One to whom he was so often praying as he walked along the road.

The boys were right in the end. Yeddie was “a wise one”. The Bible tells us that “they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament” (Daniel 12:3). This does not refer to those who are wise in the things of this world but to those, like Yeddie, who have sought the Lord and trusted in Him. So “if any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise” (1 Corinthians 3:18) – let him do what seems foolish to worldly people: let him seek Christ and salvation through Him more than anything else in this life. All who do so will shine as stars in heaven for ever.

What the Bible Teaches About Sin

6. Conviction of Sin

Charles Hodge

Another article shortened from the book, *The Way of Life*. Last month's article answered some objections to the Bible's teaching on this subject.

Though people are generally so careless about their sinfulness and danger, it may please God to arrest their attention and convince them deeply that what the Bible teaches about sin is true. The effects of such convictions vary, because people's nature, knowledge and circumstances are different. If the sentence of death was passed on a hundred men, it would probably affect them all differently. Someone might focus on the evil of his crime, another on the disgrace which it involved, a third on what his friends had suffered as a result, and a fourth on the horror of appearing before God. So it is impossible to describe the experience in a way that applies to all cases. It is enough to state briefly what the Scriptures teach on this subject.

There must be some correct knowledge of sin. The Scriptures teach clearly that people naturally are very blind on this matter. They are ignorant about God's holiness, so they do not see that sin is opposed to His nature; they think more about its effects on themselves and on society. They judge of it by a wrong standard, and so all their ideas about it are flawed. They do not notice the real nature of sin; so they overlook a thousand things which are indeed sinful.

They consider, not so much the state of the heart before God, as the way that one person treats another. So they often think of themselves and others as really good, though they may have a wrong attitude to their Maker. They tend to estimate the number of their sins by the number of outward acts of

disobedience to the moral law; they overlook their lack of love, faith and reverence towards God.

Nor have they any proper idea of the guilt of sin. As it exists in themselves, they think of it as a trifle. They consider any great concern about it unreasonable, and where others are concerned, they look on it as hypocritical or fanatical. Sin deceives people into forming wrong judgements of its nature, its extent, its evil and its power. Their eyes must be opened to see sin as the Word of God describes it: a very evil and bitter thing. It not merely includes outward acts but it is something deeply seated in the heart, polluting the whole of life. It really deserves the punishment which God has pronounced against it; it has such a hold on our nature that its power cannot be broken by any ordinary effort.

This insight into what the Bible says about sin comes with a firm conviction that it is true. This conviction does not come either by argument or by human authority. Those who are convinced see that what God has declared about the nature and evil of sin is true. So the conviction is irresistible even when it is most unwelcome. We often see it taking sudden, powerful possession of the soul when conscience is roused from sleep and assents to what God says with a force which cannot be resisted. When Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgement to come, Felix trembled. The truth, presented from outside, found such a response in the mind of the Roman governor that he could not disbelieve.

This often happens. People raise objections against the unreasonable strictness of God's law and the justice of its awful penalty, but they vanish in a moment when their eyes are opened to see what the law really is, and what sin against it is. As long as this awareness lasts, the conviction remains. But if they can succeed in shutting out the light, and in quieting their conscience, they return to their former unbelief. Yet it is often impossible to resist conviction, especially when near death, or when God is about to rescue them. Then their old objections, and their friends' arguments, have no effect. People may accept what the Bible teaches about sin without ever believing in Christ, but those who do believe cannot be entirely without them.

This knowledge of sin is derived from the law, for "by the law is the knowledge of sin". "I was alive without the law once;" said Paul, "but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." Such passages clearly teach that the Apostle at one time did not know the extent and spirituality of the law; so he did not understand sin. He thought he was as good as could reasonably be expected. But when the law was revealed to him in its true character, his views of sin were at once changed. He came to know what it was, and to feel its power over him. A thousand things which before had

appeared trivial, he now saw to be serious offences – especially the secret, deep-seated evil of his heart. He had not noticed it before, but he now saw it was the source of all other sin.

The law was the means of conveying this knowledge to him, because it expresses the perfect holiness of God. So long as people judge themselves by themselves, they will never know their true character. Not until they judge themselves by the perfect standard of God's law, can they have any proper knowledge of their real character.

There is no doubt a great variety in the experience of Christians as to the clearness of their views on this subject. In some cases everything is seen as through a glass, darkly; others so find out the infinite excellence of God and of His law that it fills their mind with the greatest reverence and humiliation. Sometimes this knowledge steals upon the mind very gradually; at others, the truth is disclosed in all its awful purity at once. The man who one moment was unconcerned, the next is astonished at his former blindness. He wonders how it was possible for him to be so ignorant of the excellence of God and His law. He now sees that the rule by which he is to be tried is infinitely pure, and he cannot overlook the least sin. We are nowhere taught what degree of clearness of conviction of sin is necessary to salvation. We only know that people must have such a knowledge of sin as to submit to what God says about it – that it is true and just.

In genuine conviction there is a sense of unworthiness. Holy beings may clearly see the nature of sin, as presented in the Word of God, but they can have no sense of its evil. And people may have a clear understanding of this doctrine, and accept that it is generally true, without being properly convinced that what the Bible says about sinners applies to them. So it is not enough for us to know what the Scriptures teach about sin, we must feel that it is all true about ourselves. We must become conscious that our heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; that in us, that is, in our flesh, "dwelleth no good thing". This sense of personal unworthiness is the main part of conviction of sin.

A sense of guilt before God brings shame with it. "O my God," cried Ezra under a sense of sin, "I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God, for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens." And Daniel said: "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of face as at this day". "I have heard of Thee", said Job, "by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." And in another place he says, "Behold I am vile, what shall I answer Thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth."

Abraham – The Friend of God

2. Faith Is the Basis of Friendship with God

Rev Neil M Ross

This series of articles is based on a paper given at the 2011 Youth Conference. It is intended to highlight some lessons to be learned from Abraham's life. In the first part we noted our need of being friends of God, and so of being reconciled to Him.

No one can be a friend of God without having faith; this is the next lesson. Faith is absolutely necessary if we are to be reconciled to God, "for without faith it is impossible to please Him [that is, God]: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Abraham is famed for his faith. He is referred to in Galatians 3:9 as "faithful Abraham" – that is, a man of faith – he is the only person in Scripture of whom it is said that he "was strong in faith" (Romans 4:20), and he has more written about him in Hebrews 11 than any of the other eminent people of faith listed there. His faith was shown by his believing the word of God, leaning on the promises of God, believing in the Saviour who was yet to come, and trusting in the Lord during his long pilgrimage to heaven.

If we do not have faith, it is impossible for us to be saved. "By grace are ye saved," says Paul, and then he adds, "through faith" (Ephesians 2:8). To be without faith in Jesus Christ is to be classed with unbelievers, and thus with the enemies of God. Scripture clearly warns us of the dreadful consequences of unbelief – not least that unbelievers shall be shut out from heaven and closed into hell, for in chapter 21 of the Book of Revelation we read that the "unbelieving . . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (verse 8). And Christ said, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins". How much we need faith in Jesus Christ!

It is Christ who is the object of saving faith; have we learned this further lesson? The eye of faith must be fixed on Christ alone if we are to be saved now and for ever. Abraham's faith was in Christ; that is, he believed in the Messiah who was yet to come. The fact that he believed in Christ is implied by this other description: "the father of us all" (Romans 4:16); that is, the spiritual father of everyone who believes in the Saviour.

Abraham saw Christ in the distance, as it were. Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). Matthew Poole, the commentator, says that Jesus was telling the Pharisees, in effect: "This father of yours foresaw My coming into the world, and My dying upon the cross. He saw it by the eye of faith, in the promise

which was made to him: that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed.” Also, Abraham had the eye of faith fixed on the Messiah as the Lamb of God. We cannot say if Abraham was referring to the Messiah when he said to Isaac, “My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering,” but we can say that he did believe that a final sacrificial lamb would be provided in the person of the Messiah.

Without beholding Christ, the Lamb of God, we cannot possibly be the friends of God and we must remain alienated from Him. To behold Him is to have faith in Him; and “faith in Jesus Christ,” says the *Shorter Catechism*, “is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the gospel” (answer 86).

Faith is the gift of God; this is another important lesson. We cannot generate faith in our hearts. The Bible is clear: faith is “of the operation of God” (Colossians 2:12); it is “the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8). Abraham “believed God”, but not because he had a natural inclination and ability to do so; his belief in God and in the word of God was not of his own making. Whatever notions he may have had about the true God, he was actually living in ungodliness and unbelief for many years in Ur.

But then God appeared to him when he was 70 and revealed Himself to him. That was a wonderful day for Abraham. “The God of glory” (as Acts 7:2 says) appeared to him. “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house,” God said to him, “unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:1-3). So Abraham believed God and His way of salvation through the Messiah to come, because God Himself had put saving faith in his heart.

To God we must pray if we lack faith; He will give it willingly and freely to those who ask for it. Hebrews 4:16 instructs us to go boldly to the throne of grace to find grace, including the grace of faith. “Ask and ye shall receive.” To have faith in Christ will not only mean that we will be saved from perishing and have everlasting life, but also be a friend of God.

Faith comes through Scripture: have we learned this further lesson? As well as going to the throne of grace to obtain faith, we must turn to the Word of God. Abraham believed God’s word about salvation through the Messiah. He believed God’s word about his duty to separate from the idolatry of Ur and set out for the “better country”, even heaven, of which Canaan was a type. He believed also the words of promise about the great, good things God would do for those who came after him in his family and what he would

give to them. He had full trust in the bare word of God, and therefore he was justified by God; that is, he had all his sins pardoned and was accepted by God as a righteous man. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Romans 4:3). Thus, at the call of God, Abraham began his pilgrimage. He left Ur, accompanied by his wife Sarah, father Terah and nephew Lot, and migrated 300 miles up the plain of the River Euphrates to Haran, where he encamped with his large party.

Let us then make good use of the Word of God, reading it often and hearing it preached regularly, for it is the main means God uses to bring sinners to faith in Christ and to peace with Himself. Romans 10:17 says, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God," and our *Catechism* states, "The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners" (answer 89). "The gospel of Christ," said Paul, "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." As soon as a sinner believes the record God gives of His Son (that is, believes in Christ), God forgives him, accepts him as a righteous person, and makes him one of His friends. What a wonderful privilege!

For Junior Readers

The Worst Journey in the World

Have you heard of Apsley Cherry-Garrard? He was one of the men who went on the 1910-1913 British Antarctic Expedition led by Captain Robert Scott. The expedition hoped to be the first to reach the South Pole; they also aimed to collect scientific information on the way.

One of their goals was to recover some eggs from Emperor penguins for scientific study. As the bird nests during the Antarctic winter, it was necessary to mount a special expedition in July 1911 from the expedition's base at Cape Evans to the penguins' rookery at Cape Crozier. Cherry-Garrard and two other men were chosen to go on this incredible journey in complete darkness with temperatures below minus 40°C. Amazingly they survived the experience and he later wrote a book about the fearful hardships they endured; it was called *The Worst Journey in the World*.

It took them 19 days to reach Cape Crozier – days of plodding through snow, pulling sledges with their provisions. They faced bitter winds and the cold was so severe that sometimes they even got frostbite in their sleeping bags inside the tent. When they reached the Cape they set about building an igloo which was to be their base when they were collecting eggs.

They then had to find their way to the rookery, struggling along in the darkness, often on their hands and knees. How amazing when eventually they glimpsed 100 birds huddled on the ice – with eggs on their toes! “After indescribable effort and hardship,” Cherry-Garrard wrote, “we were witnessing a marvel of the natural world, and we were the first and only men who had ever done so!” They succeeded in collecting five eggs and in gale force winds found their way back to the igloo with great difficulty.

But disaster struck during the night when their tent blew away in the gale. Then the canvas roof and door of the igloo were whipped off by the wind. For 48 hours the men lay in the open igloo in darkness, without food or drink, covered in snow!

Cherry-Garrard admitted that he had no hope of survival. Death stared him in the face. How did he react in this awful situation? He was not a religious man. But, as he faced death, his thoughts were about his past life. How sorry he was that he had wasted so much time and had lost so many opportunities! How he wanted those years back again!

What about you? The Bible tells us: “The time is short”. My time is short. Your time is short. So how are you using it? God has given you time so that you can prepare for eternity. What are you doing with it?

What about the sermons you hear? Do you act on them? What about the warnings you have been given? Do you heed them? What about the invitations to come to Christ? Have you accepted them?

If you do not want to spend eternity regretting wasted time and wasted opportunities, remember that “*now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation”. “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found.”

Through the Alphabet with the Bible

Here are five verses from the Bible containing the word:

Behold

I said, *Behold* Me, behold Me, unto a nation that was not called by My name (Isaiah 65:1).

Precept: *Behold* the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

Promise: Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall *behold* the land that is very far off (Isaiah 33:17).

Prayer: That I the beauty of the Lord *behold* may and admire (Psalm 27:4).

Encouragement: He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold His righteousness (Micah 7:9).

Looking Around Us

“He Made the Stars Also”

Perhaps some of you noticed recently a very bright “star” – brighter than all the others – in the western sky in the late evening. You were looking at the planet Venus. Venus and other planets and stars form the Milky Way, the galaxy to which the earth belongs. Although we can see numerous stars in the Milky Way, there are billions of others which cannot be seen with the naked eye.

But now, says a news report, astronomers from various countries who have worked together over a ten-year period (using infra-red radiation to see through the dust of the Milky Way) have produced a stunning picture of part of the galaxy. It shows masses of countless stars, many of them having beautiful red, orange and green rays. I said “countless stars”, but according to Wikipedia, scientists estimate them to be between 200 and 400 billion – and that is in the Milky Way alone. There are many more galaxies, “probably more than 170 billion galaxies in the observable universe”, says Wikipedia, and almost every one of them having billions of stars.

Now, here is something more wonderful, as Psalm 147:4 says: God “tellecth (or, counts) the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names” (however many trillions in number). More wonderful still is the fact that God made each one of those trillions of stars. “And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: *He made the stars also*” (Genesis 1:16).

Let us then heed the call of Isaiah, “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth” (40:26). Let us also humble ourselves as sinful creatures, before our holy Creator, giving glory to Him as the Psalmist did when he looked up to the stars in the heavens: “Great is our Lord, and of great power: His understanding is infinite” (Psalm 147:5). NMR

“I Love God Sincerely”

Matthew Henry became well known as a minister. He wrote several books, but today he is best known for his commentary on the whole Bible, based on the sermons he preached. Older readers may find it very helpful when they want to know what some part of the Bible means.

He was converted when he was just a young boy. One December day in

1673, when he was only 10, he wrote in his diary what follows (it has been edited a little). Clearly he was a remarkably mature lad, but he is a wonderful example – even for those who are much older – of someone who learned to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

On a Sabbath morning, he says, I heard a sermon that had in it marks of true grace. I tried myself by them and told my father the evidences I found. He liked them and said that if those evidences were true (as I think they were) I had true grace. Yet after this, for two or three days, I was under great fear of hell, till the Lord comforted me. I was examining seriously what hope I have of being received into heaven when I die. Then I found several marks that I am a child of God.

1. There is true conversion where there have been covenant dealings between God and the soul. And I have found that there have been such dealings between God and my soul – I hope in truth and righteousness. If I never did this before, I do it now, for I take God in Christ to be mine. I give myself up to be His, in the bond of an everlasting covenant never to be forgotten. But has it been done in truth? As far as I know my own heart, I do it in truth and sincerity. I did so on December 7 and September 5 and October 13 and many other times. I do it every day.

2. There is true conversion when there has been true repentance for sin, and grief and shame and sorrow for it – with all the parts of repentance, such as confession, self-judging, self-condemning. And I have found this in myself, though not in the measure that I desire. I have been heartily sorry for what is past. I judge myself before the Lord, blushing for shame that I should ever insult Him as I have done. And ministers have assured me that, having repented of sin and believed in Christ, I am to believe that I am pardoned.

I *have* done this and I really believe I am forgiven for Christ’s sake. This is founded on several scriptures: Proverbs 28:13, Isaiah 1:18, Isaiah 55:7, Matthew 5:4, Acts 2:37,38, Acts 3:19, 1 John 1:9. And there are many other scriptures where God calls people to return and repent. But has this sorrow been *true*? As far as I know my own heart, it has been. But I sin often. I am sorry for it before the Lord, and I try, by the grace of God, to do so no more.

3. There is true conversion where there is love to God. To love the Lord our God with all our soul and with all our strength is better than whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. Now, as far as I know my own heart, I love God sincerely. But is that love indeed sincere? As far as I can judge, it is so, for:

(1) I love the people of God; all His people shall be my people.

(2) I love the Word of God. I value it above everything. I find my heart leaning that way. I desire it as the food of my soul. I delight in it greatly, both in reading it and hearing it. And my soul can bear witness that it is

subject to God's Word in some measure. I think I love the Word of God because it is pure. I love the ministers of the Word. I am often reading it. I rejoice when it has good success. All of these were given as marks of true love to the Word in a sermon I heard recently on Psalm 119:140: "Thy word is very pure, therefore Thy servant loveth it".

For Younger Readers

God Kept Him Safe

Mr Merlin was a minister. He was in danger. The soldiers were not far away, and they would kill him if they caught him.

Merlin had his Bible under his arm as he ran upstairs with some other men. They all escaped through the roof. Each of them went a different way. Merlin climbed over the roofs of other buildings, jumping from one roof to another.

In the darkness, his foot slipped as he tried to jump to another building. He fell into a building which held hay, which was used to feed animals. He was not hurt, and this was probably the safest place he could be in. He knew that God brought him there.

He felt frightened as he heard the soldiers shouting in the streets around him. He hid under the hay, so that no one would see him. I am sure that he prayed earnestly to God to keep him safe. And when daylight came, he could read his Bible. Perhaps he carefully looked up the promises that God makes to those who trust in Him.

But he had nothing to eat, and he began to grow hungry. He knew it was not safe to go out to look for food. Then he heard a slight noise. Was it a soldier? He looked out carefully from under the hay and saw that it was a hen. She was looking for her nest. She laid an egg and went away.

"Surely", Merlin thought to himself, "the Lord is feeding me." He believed that God sent the hen to provide him with some food. He crawled carefully out from the hay and over to the nest. In it were three eggs. He took two of them, broke the shells and sucked out the good food inside.

He left one egg, hoping that the hen would come back to lay there

again. Next day the hen came back and laid another egg. Merlin was very thankful because he felt very hungry. He hid under the hay for three days. Each day the hen came back and laid an egg. On the third night he left and went to a friend's house. There he was out of danger. And he lived for many years afterwards.

God kept Merlin safe in a time of danger. God even gave him something to eat. God is good to all those who trust in Him.

Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2011-12

Exercise 3

All answers from overseas should be sent to *Miss C E Dickie, c/o Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland 133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LE*. The correctors should have your answers before the end of June. These exercises are based on Joshua 14 to 1 Samuel 25, and Acts 20 to 2 Corinthians 4.

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 the Book of Ruth.
 - (a) Write out the two well-known verses expressing Ruth's determination to go with Naomi. (It would be good to learn them by heart.) (2)
 - (b) Explain why Naomi thought she would be better called Mara. (2)
 - (c) Why did Boaz wish to be kind to Ruth? (2)
 - (d) Quote a few words which describe how Ruth had faith in the God of Israel. (2)
 - (e) How did Ruth provide for herself and her mother-in-law? (2)
 - (f) How was Naomi occupied after Ruth's marriage to Boaz? (2)
 - (g) How is Ruth's son Obed related to David? (1)
2. Read 1 Samuel 3.
 - (a) Explain briefly how God called Samuel. (2)
 - (b) How did Eli react to the Lord's message? (2)
 - (c) How did all Israel know that Samuel would be the Lord's prophet? (2)
3. Jonathan displayed: (a) absence of jealousy; (b) bravery; (c) loyalty; (d) brotherly love; (e) leadership. Match these with passages from 1 Samuel (write down each letter and the corresponding number): (1) chapter 14:11-18; (2) 20:41,42; (3) 18:1-4; (4) 14:6-10; (5) 20:30-34; (5)

New Testament

1. Read Acts chapter 27.
 - (a) Why did Paul advise that they shelter near Lasea? (3)
 - (b) Where did the ship's master prefer to winter? (1)
 - (c) Describe briefly some measures taken to weather the storm. (4)
 - (d) What did the angel reveal to Paul? (2)
 - (e) What condition was attached to the promise? (1)
 - (f) What did the sailors plan to do which would have contradicted the angel's revelation? (2)
 - (g) How did the soldiers come near to doing this? (2)
 - (h) For whose sake was their purpose thwarted? (2)
 - (i) Describe how all escaped safely to land. (3)

- 2. Complete the following from 1 Corinthians 15:
 - (a) “And last of all he was seen of me also . . .”
 - (b) “For as in Adam all die . . .”
 - (c) “O death where is thy sting? . . .”

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to question 57 in the Shorter Catechism: What is the fourth commandment? (3)

Intermediate Section (13 and 14 years old)

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

Old Testament

- 1. Complete the following quotations from Ruth:
 - (a) “Intreat me not to leave thee . . .” (2)
 - (b) “Call me not Naomi . . .” (2)
 - (c) “Why have I found grace . . . ?” (2)
 - (d) State (1) who spoke these words (3)
 - (2) to whom they were spoken (3)
 - (3) why they were spoken (6)
- 2. Read 1 Samuel 1 and 2.
 - (a) Why was Hannah sad? (2)
 - (b) In what ways did Elkanah try to comfort her? (3)
 - (c) To whom did she go in her trouble? (2)
 - (d) What did she plead for? (2)
 - (e) What did she promise? (2)
 - (f) Why was Samuel called by that name? (2)
 - (g) Write down statements which tell us of Samuel’s progress. (3)
 - (h) What lessons can we learn from the life of Hannah? (4)

New Testament

- 1. Read Romans chapter 12.
 - (a) What should be our attitude to evil? (1)
 - (b) How should we act in trouble? (1)
 - (c) In what way should we carry out our daily work? (2)
 - (d) What advice is given about prayer? (1)
 - (e) How should we treat our enemies? (2)
- 2. Read 1 Corinthians chapter 15.
 - (a) What basic truths had Paul set before the Corinthians in his preaching? (verses 1-4) (2)
 - (b) Why did he consider himself “the least of the apostles”? (2)
 - (c) Who saw Christ after His resurrection? (3)
 - (d) Why is Christ’s resurrection such an important part of the Christian faith? (verses 13-19) (3)
 - (e) What advice and encouragement is given to those who abound in the “work of the Lord”? (3)

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)

Junior Section (11 and 12 years old)

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

Old Testament

- 1. Read Judges chapter 7.
 - (a) God raised up Gideon to deliver Israel from which enemy? (1)
 - (b) How many soldiers did Gideon have at first? (1)
 - (c) Why did God say the number was too many? (1)
 - (d) How many of the solders turned back because they were afraid? (1)

- (e) How many did he have when he went to fight? (1)
 (f) What three things did each soldier carry when he went to fight? (3)
2. Read Ruth chapter 1.
- (a) Give the names of the family of four who went to live in Moab. (4)
 (b) Which of them died in Moab? (3)
 (c) When Naomi left Moab, who went with her? (2)
 (d) Who stayed with Naomi until she reached Bethlehem? (1)
 (e) What did Naomi wish now to be called by the people of Bethlehem? (1)
 (f) What reason did she give for wishing to be called by that name? (1)

New Testament

1. Read Romans chapter 12. How are we commanded to behave
- (a) towards that which is evil
 (b) towards that which is good
 (c) in business
 (d) in tribulation
 (e) towards those who persecute us
 (f) to those that weep
 (g) to those that rejoice? (7)
2. Read 1 Corinthians chapter 15:35-58.
- (a) "Corruption" is one word used to describe the body of a believer as it is "sown" or laid in the grave at death. Find three more words used to describe the believer's body at death. (3)
 (b) Now find four words used to describe the same body as it is raised again at the resurrection. (4)
 (c) Verse 45 mentions the first Adam and the last Adam. Who was the last Adam? (verse 47 will help you) (1)

Memory Exercise

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

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

The questions are taken from the Book of Ruth. Read chapter 1 from the beginning.

1. Why did Elimelech take his family from Bethlehem-Judah to the land of Moab? (1)
 2. What was the name of his wife? (1)
 3. What happened in Moab to make her very sad? (verses 3,5) (1)
 4. Why did she decide to leave Moab and go back home? (1)
 5. Who left Moab with her? (2)
 6. Which of them went back to Moab? (1)
 7. Why do you think Ruth decided to go with Naomi? (verses 16,17) (2)
- Now look at chapter 2
8. Ruth began to work in a field. Whose field was it? (1)
 9. Why was he so kind to Ruth? (verse 11) (2)
 10. What happened because of their friendship? (chapter 4:13) (1)

New Testament

In Acts chapter 22, Paul tells about his conversion.

Read verses 1-5.

1. Where was Paul born? (1)
2. What was the name of his teacher? (1)
3. Describe how Paul carried out his persecution of the Christians. (2)

Now read from verse 6 to verse 15.

4. Where was Paul going? (1)
 5. What did he see and hear? (2)
 6. Did his companions also see and hear the same things? (2)
 7. Who restored his sight in Damascus? (1)
 8. What message did he give to Paul? (2)
- Now read from verse 17 to verse 21.
9. What message did Paul receive in Jerusalem? (1)
 10. What was to be his life's work from now on? (verse 21) (1)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write down from memory the answer to question 30 in the Shorter Catechism: How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ? (3)

Lower Primary Section (8 years old and under)

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

Old Testament

1. Elkanah had two wives. What was the name of the one who had no children? (1 Samuel 1:2)
2. What did she ask the Lord to give her? (1 Samuel 1:11)
3. What was the name of the priest who saw her praying and thought she had drunk too much wine? (1 Samuel 1:13)
4. What did the priest say when she explained that she was praying to God? (1 Samuel 1:17)
5. What did she call her son? (1 Samuel 1:20)
6. Was he old when Hannah brought him to Eli in Shiloh?(1 Samuel 1:24)
7. What did Hannah make and take to him every year? (1 Samuel 2:19)
8. Who called Samuel one night when he was lying down to sleep? (1 Samuel 3:4)
9. Who did Samuel think was calling him? (1 Samuel 3:5)
10. What did Eli teach him to say if God called him again? (Fill in the missing words): S____, LORD for thy servant h____. (1 Samuel 3:9)

New Testament

Complete these verses from Paul's Epistle to the Romans:

1. As it is written, There is n___ righteous, no, not o___. (Romans 3:10)
2. For a__ have sinned and come short of the g___ of God. (Romans 3:23)
3. For the w___ of sin is death; but the g___ of God is eternal l___ through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)
4. For whosoever shall c___ upon the name of the L___ shall be saved. (Romans 10:13)
5. So then faith cometh by h_____, and hearing by the w___ of God. (Romans 10:17)

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