

The Young People's Magazine

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Taking Risks

Nine years ago a new form of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) was identified and dubbed variant CJD (vCJD). It seems to have been the result of eating contaminated beef, from cattle suffering from BSE, short for bovine encephalopathy and popularly known as mad cow disease. By 1996, when ten people had died from vCJD, there was a huge scare about the danger of eating beef. Some scientists were predicting that up to 10 million people would die from the disease. If that assessment was right, there was obviously a huge risk of contracting vCJD. And so a large number of people gave up eating beef altogether. But in fact the danger was very much less.

Of course vCJD is a very serious disease. Those infected suffer rapid brain decay and then they die, often at a tragically young age. But one can imagine someone deciding to stop eating beef because of the risk of contracting vCJD, yet carrying on smoking, an activity which carries a far higher risk – of death from lung cancer. In fact, helped presumably by all the efforts to root out mad cow disease, estimates of the risk of vCJD have plunged dramatically. By February this year, the number predicted to die from vCJD by the year 2080 was down to 7000 and by May the figures were only between 40 and 540.

People are not always wise in the assessment of danger. They take risks when there is a serious danger, and they may be afraid when there is no real danger at all. But what about the greatest danger of all – the danger of coming to the end of one's life while still under condemnation because of sin, the danger of being sent to a lost eternity? Does anybody think about that? Many people are afraid of taking the slightest risk in the ordinary affairs of life, but totally ignore the danger of a lost eternity. Of course, we should not rush into risky situations, and we should be careful to avoid what will damage our health, especially what may lead to death. But is it not foolish to be extremely cautious about these things if, at the same time, we never think about the dangers threatening our souls? Surely we should take to heart how necessary it is to find salvation before it is too late. We are sinners. We deserve to be punished. Our lives will soon be over. Yet God directs us to seek the Lord

while He may be found, to call upon Him while He is near. How dangerous to risk being found without Christ when death comes!

And how dangerous too to get entangled in particular sins! When Daniel Baker was preaching in 1840 in Texas, which was then a separate country, one of its Senators came under conviction of sin. One day he was riding along beside the minister. "Mr Baker," he said, "I wish to ask you one question and I wish you to give me a plain answer." There was to be a horse race somewhere not far away, the Senator explained. "I am a candidate for re-election to the Senate and I am expected to be there to make a political speech. Would it be wrong for me to go?" Baker gave him good advice: "You are now under the strivings of the Spirit. If you go, I believe it will cost you your soul, and what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

The Senator was not yet altogether convinced; he seemed to think that the risk to his soul was a risk worth taking. "I don't care about being elected," he added, "but I don't like the idea about being defeated." But Baker replied in the same plain, honest language: "Very well, I have nothing more to say. If you do go, I believe it will cost you your soul." And the minister's plain speaking had the desired effect; the next day the Senator was not at the race ground; he was in church. He had looked again at the danger and realised it was a serious matter to trifle with God.

Writing some years later, Baker referred to the Senator's death and commented on how he kept away from a place where he would have involved himself in sin: "I think he will bless God for ever that he did so, for while I am writing these lines, I do believe his ransomed soul is bending before the eternal throne". Baker clearly believed that the Senator had been converted. Whether or not the Senator was re-elected doesn't matter now. What does matter – and matters very much – is that he avoided the danger of being trapped in a way of sin and found salvation for his soul. There are people who will do anything rather than eat foods which have some questionable additive, yet will do nothing to avoid sinful situations. Be careful to take even more care of your soul than of your body.

Some of you are moving on to a new stage in life as you begin your studies in college or university. Others of you have recently begun permanent employment. As you move on in life, you will meet fresh temptations. Do not treat these lightly. Always think of the risk to your soul. Do not trample on your conscience by going into sin when you know it is wrong. When you are tempted to do evil, always ask God to help you. If you ignore the claims of God, you may provoke God to leave you to hardness of heart. It is a risk you should treat with the utmost seriousness.

*For Junior Readers***Goodbyes**

Perhaps some of you have been away visiting relatives over the summer. Although you really enjoyed your holiday, the time came when you had to return home. And you had to say, "Goodbye".

Goodbyes are never easy, especially if you are parting with loved ones whom you may not see again for a long time. Partings and farewells are among the sorrows of this sinful world. Nothing is perfect here and we have to learn, as God's people of old did, that we are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13). Like them we should learn to "desire a better country, that is, an heavenly".

Have you ever thought of what the word *goodbye* means? It is a shortened form of the phrase, "God be with ye", which people long ago used when they had to part from their friends. The French used a similar word *adieu*, which literally means "to God", or, "I commend you to God". These words date back to a time when people were much more conscious of God in their daily lives, when they were not ashamed to acknowledge that "God is the Lord, and our God, and Redeemer".

John G Paton was a missionary to the New Hebrides, a group of islands in the Pacific Ocean. He tells very touchingly about having to say goodbye to his father. When he was a young man, he left home in the south of Scotland to go to work in Glasgow. In those days that meant walking for 40 miles and then catching a train. In his autobiography he wrote:

"My dear father walked with me the first six miles of the way. . . . For the last half mile or so, we walked on together in almost unbroken silence. . . . His lips kept moving in silent prayers for me, and his tears fell fast when our eyes met each other in looks for which all speech was vain. We halted on reaching the appointed parting place; he grasped my hand firmly for a minute in silence, and then solemnly and affectionately said, 'God bless you, my son! Your father's God prosper you and keep you from all evil!'

"Unable to say more, his lips kept moving in silent prayer; in tears we embraced, and parted. I ran off as fast as I could, and, when about to turn a corner in the road where he would lose sight of me, I looked back. . . . I watched through blinding tears till his form faded from my gaze; and then, hastening on my way, vowed deeply and oft, by the help of God, to live and act so as never to grieve or dishonour such a father and mother as He had given me. . . . The memory of that scene not only helped, by God's grace, to keep me pure from the prevailing sins, but also stimulated me in all my studies, that I might not fall short of his hopes, and in all

my Christian duties, that I might faithfully follow his shining example.”

There is also an account in the Bible of Laban taking leave of his son-in-law Jacob, his daughters and grandchildren. You can read about this farewell in Genesis, chapter 31. They did not know when, if ever, they would see one another again; so they built a heap of stones as a memorial between them. They called it *Mizpah*, which means a *watchtower*. Laban said, “The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another”. They committed each other to the Lord for care and keeping, knowing that, wherever they were, they were under God’s eye.

This should be a comfort to us too, when we have to leave loved ones. If we trust in Him, we may have the same confidence the Psalmist had when he wrote Psalm 121: “The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.”

J van Kralingen

Saved by an Infinitely Gracious God

Rev Neil M Ross

William Chalmers Burns spent a large part of his life as a most zealous missionary in China. Already in 1839, as a young minister, his preaching was much blessed in the congregation of Robert Murray M‘Cheyne in Dundee, who was then abroad for a time. As a youth, however, he seemed a most unlikely candidate for the ministry. Yet, at the age of 24, in many places in Scotland besides Dundee, he was used by God to bring many sinners into His kingdom.

Before a man may preach the gospel to others and be used in the conversion of sinners, he must himself be saved from spiritual death and united to Christ by faith. How did this happen in Burns’ case? Here is the story as gleaned from one of his biographies.

As a lad, William Burns was quite careless about his soul, even although he was the son of godly W H Burns, the parish minister of Kilsyth, near Glasgow. Young William loved the outdoor life and often went fishing and hunting. When he was 12 he went to live with his uncle in Aberdeen, where he attended the prestigious Aberdeen Grammar School and did well, especially in languages. Then, in the city’s Marischal College, he was again well placed in his studies. After four years in Aberdeen he became a legal apprentice in Edinburgh under another uncle who was a lawyer there. He chose law simply because he saw it as a career in which he could make a lot of money and have a good standing in society.

However, his worldly ambitions were first shaken on a visit to his home. He overheard his father praying for his salvation, and he was influenced by the conversion of one of his sisters. He also felt uncomfortable on those Sabbath afternoons while he was at home, when some of the family read aloud to the others from a religious book. He would then slip quietly out of the room and even out of the house. To the converted members of the family, William seemed the least likely of them all to become a believer, but they did not stop praying for that essential change.

Other things also had an effect on him – some sermons by John Bruce, an Edinburgh minister; his fear of dying from cholera, which was approaching the district; and a letter from his sisters, who spoke of themselves as pilgrims going to heaven and expressed their concern at leaving him behind. This letter especially affected him deeply, but he “yet was a stranger to grace and to God”.

Another letter – this time one from the whole family – deepened his concern about spiritual things. In his reply he requested them to recommend, or send to him, a good religious book. They promptly gave him Thomas Boston’s *Human Nature in its Fourfold State* – a popular book that has proved useful to many down through the years. However, it was not this book which was specially blessed to him but another which was also popular at that time, *Persuasives to Early Piety* by J G Pike, which his father sent to him in Edinburgh. In what way was it blessed to him? The answer is to be found in an entry in his diary ten years later, when he no longer lived there but had returned for a visit.

“I walked over the scenes which were indeed fitted to speak aloud of mercy to my favoured soul,” he wrote. “I walked along York Place, and looked up to the windows of the room where, when reading Pike’s *Early Piety* on a Sabbath afternoon, I think about the middle of December 1831, an arrow from the quiver of the King of Zion was shot by His almighty sovereign hand through my heart.”

Now awakened to realise his guilt as a sinner, William was anxious and afraid. At the same time he was not in complete darkness, he said – in the sense that he felt God was willing to save him, and that God was now sovereignly touching his heart and drawing him to Himself.

He remembered before then feeling very moved by noticing the wonders of God’s law. But he added: “My peace following on from this was far different indeed from a settled, quiet frame of mind. I had many fears and many awful struggles with sin and Satan, and many sleepless nights of mingling joy and fear.” However, when looking back to that time, he believed that his heart was still spiritually dead.

He also records that, in his walk around Edinburgh, he went on from York Place to revisit his old lodgings at 69 Broughton Place, where, as he said, "my earliest days as a child of grace were spent, and where first the Spirit of God shone with full light upon the glory of Jesus as a Saviour for such as I was. This was, I think, about 7 January 1832" (about three weeks after his awakening).

That day the set time came, he said. "I sat down, with solemn impressions arising from the causes already mentioned, to read a part of Pike's *Early Piety*, which my dear father had given me at leaving home . . . and in one moment, while gazing on a solemn passage in it, my inmost soul was in one instant pierced as with a dart. God had apprehended me. I felt the conviction of my lost estate rushing through me with restless power. I left the room and retired to a bedroom, there to pour out my heart for the first time with many tears in a genuine head-rending cry for mercy. From the first moment of this wonderful experience I had the inspiring hope of being saved by a sovereign and infinitely gracious God; and almost in the same instant I felt that I must leave my present occupation and devote myself to Jesus in the ministry of that glorious gospel by which I had been saved.

"From that day to this, blessed be Jehovah, I have been conscious, more or less deeply, of the possession of a new and holy principle, leading me to live by the faith of Jesus to the glory of God, and in the communion of the Holy Ghost. Salvation unto our God, who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb!"

Thus, at the age of 16, William Burns was brought to have the first vital qualification for being a minister – that of faith in Christ. He returned to Aberdeen and graduated from university, having gained two first prizes in mathematics. In Glasgow he studied divinity and became a probationer minister in 1839 – the year he went to preach in Dundee at the invitation of Robert Murray M'Cheyne. Later, as a missionary to China, he was involved in a remarkable work of God when many congregations were established in Pechuia, near Amoy, a city on the Pacific coast. He died in China at the age of 53, and among his last words were these: "For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory".

We see from the account of his conversion that William Burns was not left to rest in any religious experience short of relying only upon Christ. It is a good when someone is brought by the striving of the Holy Spirit to feel the emptiness of worldly ambitions, to have a consciousness of guilt before God, to believe that God is not willing that any should perish, and to know that Christ is the only Saviour. But that is not enough. May you, young friend, never be satisfied until you are found in Christ. May you never rest

until, as the Shorter Catechism says, you “receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered to us in the gospel”.

We see too how important it is for believers to pray for the conversion of their loved ones who are still unsaved, however unlikely their conversion may seem. Although William seemed the least likely in the Burns home to turn from sin to God, his family did not give up pleading with God for him. And he was not only blessed with salvation but also made a great blessing to others. Let us follow the example of that praying family.

The Apostle of the North

2. His Parents

Rev D W B Somerset

The first part of this paper – given at the 2003 Youth Conference – dealt with the background to John Macdonald’s life, particularly the state of the Scottish Church in his time. He was once a well-known minister in the Highlands whose preaching was much blessed to the conversion of souls.

John Macdonald was born on 12 November 1779 at Brawlbin in Caithness, at the south end of Loch Calder. His father James Macdonald was a remarkable man. He was born in 1735, and died in 1830 at the age of 95. He came from the Strath of Kildonan, a part of Sutherland best known for the fact that many of its inhabitants were evicted by the Duke of Sutherland in 1813. Driving up the Strath today, it is sad to think that several thousand people were living there not so very long ago, many of them eminent for godliness, while now there are only a few, and perhaps hardly a church-goer among them. Godly Highland men such as James Macdonald came from a background where dozens of deeply exercised Christians were thinking continually about the Word of God and speaking to one another about it. In this way they were stirring one another up during the course of each day. How different from today!

James Macdonald was converted at the age of 18. Soon afterwards he tried to emigrate to America because of a shortage of work and also of food, but he was shipwrecked on the Orkney Islands. He returned home and, sometime before 1770, he became the catechist of the parish of Reay in Caithness. He continued in this activity for more than 40 years. The work of a catechist was to gather the people of a district together, in a room or a barn, and to question them individually about religion. He would begin with questions along the lines of the Shorter Catechism, but he would then try to lead them on in order to find out about their religious experience.

People were much more ready to be catechised in these days, partly because there was more religion but also because there were fewer distractions and diversions and the catechising might be an occasion of entertainment. Often there would be a clash of wits as the catechist and the man being questioned tried to catch one another out. Here are a couple of the sort of questions that a catechist might ask to keep people on their toes: (1.) "Are there any believers in hell?" (2.) "Which is stronger, grace or holiness?" The answers expected were along these lines: (1.) Yes, there are believers in hell, in the sense that "the devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19). (2.) Grace is stronger, because Adam had holiness and he fell, but Joseph, for instance, had grace and he stood when he was tempted.

James Macdonald was gentle as a catechist. Some people claimed he was not stern enough, but he told one of them: "If you and I would go to the mountain to catch wild horses – you with a whip and I with a bunch of corn – who would take the most home? Catch them first with the corn, and after that take the whip to them when necessary." He was good at getting on with people, which was a useful gift for a catechist, and his son took after him in this. When John Macdonald went over to St Kilda and met the people there for the first time, he was able to engage them in conversation about ordinary things; he hoped to find out what their views and their habits were, especially with regard to religion. He discovered, he said, that they liked hearing news, so he tried to satisfy them as much as he could, and in this way he won their confidence.

Not only was James Macdonald gentle and godly; he was also cheerful. John Calvin says that "laughter is the gift of God and it is a Christian duty to practice it in due season". James Macdonald and his son John had many trials in their lives but, like Luther before them and Spurgeon after them, they were often able to see a comic side to these, and this helped to sustain their spirits. In December 1806, James Macdonald was visiting his son John at Berriedale in Caithness. John was preparing to move at the time, having accepted a call to Edinburgh. On December 25 an immense wind came and blew the roof off the house, "scattering it all over the landscape". When the old catechist saw this, he told his son, "John, I think it is high time for you to leave Berriedale".

James Macdonald believed that people should be short in public prayer; long prayers wearied him. To one man who had been tedious in prayer he said, "If you have liberty in public prayer, be short, for there will be few to follow you; and if you are in bondage, be short, for if not you will weary yourself and others". "Then", said the man, "you would always have me to be short?" "Just so!" was his reply. When Sandy Gair, one of the famous

men of the North, was young, James Macdonald told him that he had three faults to find with his public prayers, “Firstly, you mention the divine name too often and not with sufficient reverence; secondly, you have too many repetitions; and thirdly, you continue too long”.

James Macdonald had no English, and he could not even read Gaelic, except that somehow he could read the Gaelic Psalms. But although he could not read, he had an excellent knowledge of the Scriptures. He would have known the New Testament by heart, and much of the Old Testament too. For the last eight years of his life he was blind. He had an impression that he was going to lose one of his senses, and he was in the habit of praying that the Lord would not take from him the ability to *hear* God’s Word, or to *speak* to God’s praise. And so it proved.

In the last week of his life he ordered a supply of food for his house. When his housekeeper asked why, he replied with a joyful smile that it would be needed for those who would attend his wedding. This was the view that he had of his death. For his friends left behind in the world it would be a funeral, but for him it would be a wedding in heaven.

He was twice married, and John was the second child of his second wife. Strangely enough, she was not a pious woman. She was described as being very small, inclined to be idle, “and apparently good for nothing but for abundant talk of vanity and of the world”.

A Praying Mother

I have a very special friend in my home town in Brazil. She was the first believer in the Lord Jesus Christ that I ever met. She lives her life as the Word of God tells us to, and this made a deep impression on me. I have never forgotten it.

She had three children and, when they grew up, one of them – her son – went abroad to study. For several years, he only returned home for short holidays. During his visits, his mother noticed from his conversation and conduct that he seemed to have forgotten the way in which he had been brought up – the way of the Lord – and was treating sin very lightly. Naturally this grieved her very deeply. She daily went to the only One that can help us when we are burdened with the troubles of life: the Mighty God. She used to plead for his soul and commit him to God’s care.

She had been doing this for 13 years when her son became very ill. He decided to go back home in the hope that he would recover from his illness there. Doctors had told him that he was seriously ill, but he did not believe

them. He tried to live as normally as possible. His mother, however, knew that his life was coming to an end, and one day she asked him: "Son, shall we pray?" He answered: "Mother, I'm not ready. I don't feel I can pray from the heart, and I cannot lie to God."

His mother grew more alarmed that he was not willing to turn to the Lord when he was so near death! She continued pleading for his soul, until one night she went to his bedroom at 3 am. He was awake and, when he saw her, he asked her to read the Bible to him. She started reading a passage in which Jesus was rebuking the Pharisees and he said: "No, mother, I don't want to hear about the Pharisees. Read me something about Jesus."

She told me that she then pleaded with the Holy Spirit that He would guide her to a suitable passage. She was led to the Gospel of John, chapter 4, where she read the account of the Samaritan woman who met Jesus at the well. Jesus said to her: "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). At the end of the chapter he went very quiet. Then he said, "Mother, I can see how much I need Jesus and I would like to pray to God now".

They both knelt down, which he was hardly able to do because he was so weak. He started his prayer like this: "Lord, Thou knowest all about me. Thou knowest my folly and all my sins." His mother told me that this was the most beautiful prayer she had ever heard. She thought she was dreaming as she heard her son pour out his heart to the Lord confessing his sins, and asking for forgiveness. He prayed that the Lord would have mercy on him, pleading the blood of Jesus Christ, who had died for sinners like him. The Bible tells us about God: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

After this he went to sleep and seemed very peaceful. The next morning, when his doctor came to visit him, he was very happy. He told the doctor that he was now ready to die, because his soul was safe in Jesus. His doctor was not a believer in the Lord Jesus, so he found it all very strange. But he was glad that his patient seemed so peaceful about dying. A while later, he started to feel very poorly and, sometimes, because of the strong medicines he was taking, he would become delirious – his mind was not working properly.

When he was in his right mind he would ask his mother to bring the telephone to his bed and he would phone his friends to tell them about the Lord Jesus. He started with his friends abroad. He told them that he was ready to die because the Lord Jesus had forgiven his sins and that he now had a home to go to until his resurrection. His friends thought he had gone mad.

How could it be? He was telling them that he was going to die at any moment but that he was happy because he was going to be with Christ. He was also telling his friends about the importance of making peace with God; they must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who had died so that sinners could have eternal life with Him in glory.

We read in the Bible about the Apostle Paul standing before King Agrippa and telling of his conversion and of Christ dying for sinners and rising again. Then a man called Festus exclaimed: "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad" (Acts 26:24). So we should not be surprised if people find it madness when we tell them about the gospel message of peace with God through faith in Jesus.

Only seven days passed by before he finally fell asleep in Jesus. Despite his mother's sorrow and pain over the loss of her son, she was greatly comforted by the thought that he had gone to glory.

This is a story about God's mercy towards sinners. What encouragement for those who think they are too sinful to come to Christ! He has said: "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). This is the only reason why He came into the world: to save sinners.

This is also a story about praying in faith. The Lord Jesus said that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:10). May the Lord's people never forget His precious promises about prayer, but go on pleading for the conversion of souls. One of the Puritans – those godly ministers of the seventeenth century – said: "Good prayers never come weeping back". We should keep on praying, believing in our hearts that God will answer our prayers.

C Johnson

For Younger Readers

God Can Keep Us Safe

One day the people on the street started shouting. A horse was running down the street out of control. Everyone was frightened. There was no one riding the horse; there was no one to lead it along. It must have run away from its owner.

Everyone tried to get away as quickly as they could. Everyone except one young girl. She did not know what to do. She could not see. She was blind. So she did not know where to run. What could she do?

She just went down on her knees where she was and looked up

to heaven. She prayed to God. She asked Him to take care of her. That was the best thing she could do.

The horse kept on running towards her. She was in great danger. It looked as if she was going to be badly hurt. Perhaps she would even be killed. She must have been very frightened as she heard the horse galloping towards her.

But God heard her prayer. The horse moved to one side and carried on running past her. She was safe. She suffered no harm. Although she could not see the horse, God could see it. And He kept her safe.

There are many dangers we cannot see. But God sees every one of them. And He can keep us safe through them all.

Of course we should pray to God when we feel danger. But not just when we are in danger; we should pray to God every day.

We should pray to God in the morning when we get up. We should ask Him to keep us safe all through the day. We should ask Him to protect us in all those dangers we do not know about. We should ask Him to help us in everything we do.

We should also pray to God before we go to sleep. We should ask Him to keep us safe all through the night.

God warns us that Satan is very dangerous. We cannot see him, but he is always trying to make us sin. God tells us to be good, but Satan wants us to be bad.

How can we be safe? It is God who must keep us safe. So we should also ask God to keep us safe from Satan. And we should ask God to make us always want to do what is right.

Looking Around Us

Proving the Bible?

During Hezekiah's reign, the Assyrians, under their king Sennacherib, laid siege to Jerusalem. To make sure of a water supply, Hezekiah organised the digging of a tunnel from a spring at Gihon right into the city, a distance of more than half a kilometre. It was a tremendous feat of engineering. Workmen dug through the rock from both ends of the tunnel.

An inscription carved into the side of the tunnel, and now in a museum in Istanbul, records what happened when the two groups of men met: "While there were still three cubits to be cut through, [there was heard] the voice of

a man calling to his fellow, for there was an overlap [or crack] in the rock on the right. And when the tunnel was driven through, quarrymen hewed [the rock], each man toward his fellow, axe against axe; and the water flowed from the spring to the reservoir for 1200 cubits, and the height of the rock above the heads of the quarrymen was 100 cubits.”

We are told about this work in 2 Chronicles 32:30: “Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David”. It has now been announced that Israeli scientists have worked out dates for the digging of the tunnel which are consistent with the account in the Bible.

It is always good when some detail of Scripture is confirmed from elsewhere. But in no way does any such confirmation *prove* the Bible. The Bible does not need to be proved. It comes to us as a revelation from God our Creator.

But each such confirmation of the truth of Scripture is helpful; it takes away an excuse that people have used to reject the truth of the Bible. Most people today act on the assumption that the Bible cannot be relied on. They are wrong. The Bible is true in every detail. It is the only sure guide through life; it shows us the only safe way to heaven.

Scripture and Catechism Exercises

General Information 2003-2004

There will be three exercises, the first in this magazine, the second next February and the third in May. Study hard, 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 2003. 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. You therefore 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 A and B: **Exercise 1:** Exodus 35 to Numbers 21, and Luke 1 to John 6. **Exercise 2:** Numbers 22 to Joshua 13, and John 7 to Acts 19. **Exercise 3:** Joshua 14 to 1 Samuel 25, and Acts 20 to 2 Corinthians 4.

Exercise 1 2003-04

All answers from *outside the United Kingdom* 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

The questions are based on Exodus chapters 35-40.

1. (a) Indicate how the people were cheerful givers and how their liberality abounded? (chapter 35) (2)
- (b) What intellectual gifts were bestowed on Bezaleel and Aholiab when God appointed them to oversee the work? (chapter 35) (2)
- (c) With what artistic genius and practical skills were they equipped? (chapter 35) (2)
- (d) Why had they to be "apt to teach"? (chapter 35) (1)
- (e) Choose any three of the furnishings or utensils which were crafted and match each with the various skills required to make it. (6)
2. (a) Why is it significant that one phrase is repeated so often in chapter 39. Write it out and note the number of times it occurs. (2)
- (b) Which of the high priest's garments for "glory and beauty" illustrates particularly the Saviour's intercession for His people? Describe it briefly. (chapter 39) (4)
- (c) Which one of the garments impresses upon us a particular attribute of God? Say why you chose it. (Answer 4 in the Shorter Catechism gives you a list of God's attributes.) (2)
- (d) Describe the ornate hem of the blue robe. Why would the people be pleased to hear the sound? (2)
- (e) Write briefly about the furnishing which Moses placed behind the veil. Here was the holy of holies where the high priest alone entered once every year "not without blood". (37:1-9) Read Hebrews 10:9-14 and explain how the Levitical priesthood came to an end with the death of the Saviour. (6)
- (f) What happened when Moses "finished the work" that indicated its acceptance with God. (chapter 40) (1)
- (g) How were the people led on their journeyings? (chapter 40) (1)

New Testament

1. Read Luke chapter 7.
 - (a) Contrast the approaches of the penitent woman and Simon the Pharisee to the Saviour. (3)
 - (b) We read in Luke 6:8: "But he knew their thoughts". How are we reminded of this in chapter 7? (1)
 - (c) Outline the parable Jesus told to teach Simon. (3)
 - (d) With what comforting words did Jesus send the woman away? (1)
2. Read Luke chapter 23.
 - (a) Trace the steps by which Pilate yielded to the importunity of the Jews. (3)

- (b) Write briefly about the people and events, at the Saviour's crucifixion and death, which confirmed His Messiahship. (4)
- (c) What sacred work did the women postpone because of their regard for the Sabbath? (1)
3. Read Luke chapter 24.
- (a) Three groups received news of Jesus' resurrection: (1) The women at the sepulchre; (2) The eleven disciples; (3) The two on the way to Emmaus. In each case, How did they hear? What was their first reaction? And how did they respond afterwards? (6)
- (b) When the disciples saw Jesus after the resurrection, they "supposed that they had seen a spirit". How did He convince them that He was not a spirit? (1)
- (c) What was the basis of the "Stranger's" teaching to the Emmaus travellers? What do we, as well as they, require so that we may benefit by God's Word? (2)
- (d) Looking back, how did they express what they felt in His company? (1)
- (e) In what words did Jesus tell his disciples that the gospel is for Jew *and* Gentile? (1)
- (f) What frame of mind were the believers in after witnessing His ascension? (1)
- (g) What instructions did Jesus give them before parting? (1)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to question 25 in the Shorter Catechism: How doth Christ execute the office of a priest? (2)

Intermediate Section (13 and 14 years old)

UK answers to *Mrs J Hymers, Achavarn, Thurso, Caithness, KW14 7YH.*

Old Testament

1. Read Leviticus chapter 10.
- (a) In what way did Nadab and Abihu sin? (3)
- (b) What happened to them? (2)
- (c) What lessons can we learn from this? (2)
2. Read Numbers chapters 20 and 21.
- (a) What complaints did the children of Israel have? (4)
- (b) How did Moses and Aaron react to them? (2)
- (c) What did the Lord instruct these leaders to do? (3)
- (d) Why was the water called Meribah? (2)
- (e) What effect did the fiery serpents have on the people? (2)
- (f) In what way were they healed? (3)
- (g) How does this remind us of the gospel message? (See John 3.) (3)

New Testament

1. Complete the following verses from the Gospel of Luke:
- (1) "I came not to call the righteous . . ." (chapter 5)
- (2) "Fear not, little flock . . ." (chapter 12)
- (3) "Strive to enter in at the strait gate . . ." (chapter 13)
- (4) "For the Son of man is come . . ." (chapter 19)
- (5) "Heaven and earth shall pass away . . ." (chapter 21) (5)
2. From your reading about the Prodigal Son, answer the following:
- (a) How did he spend his portion of goods? (2)
- (b) How did he occupy his time after he "spent all"? (2)
- (c) When "he came to himself", what thought struck him? (2)
- (d) What did he then decide to do? (2)
- (e) In what way did his father welcome him back? (3)
- (f) What two reasons did the elder son give for wanting a feast for himself? (2)
- (g) What three lessons can we learn from this parable? (3)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to question 99 in the Shorter Catechism: What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer? (3)

Junior Section (11 and 12 years old)UK answers to *Mrs C M Sutherland, Hawthorn Cottage, Main Street, Lairg, Sutherland, IV27 4DB.***Old Testament**

1. Read Numbers chapter 11.
 - (a) Why was the "anger of the Lord kindled greatly"? (verse 10) (1)
 - (b) Describe how Moses felt at this time. (2)
 - (c) How did God help Moses? (1)
 - (d) When God said He would provide meat for the people in what way did Moses think this would happen? (2)
 - (e) How did God provide the meat? (1)
 - (f) What happened as the Israelites were eating the meat? (1)
 - (g) Write down one lesson we can learn from this chapter. (1)
2. Read Numbers 21:1-9.
 - (a) What plague do we read about in these verses? (1)
 - (b) What was the sin of the children of Israel on this occasion? (1)
 - (c) What cure did God provide and how were they to use the cure? (2)
 - (d) Jesus refers to this cure in John chapter 3. Find and copy out the verse. (2)
 - (e) To whom did Jesus speak these words in John chapter 3? (1)

New Testament

1. Read Luke chapter 7. To whom did Jesus say these words?
 - (a) "Arise."
 - (b) "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."
 - (c) "Weep not."
 - (d) "Thou gavest me no kiss."
 - (e) "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." (5)
2. Read Luke chapter 18.
 - (a) What does the parable of the importunate widow teach us about prayer? (3)
 - (b) What does the parable of the Pharisee and the publican teach us about prayer? (3)
 - (c) Who tried to discourage the blind man when he was praying? (1)
 - (d) How did the blind man react to this? (1)
 - (e) What reward did he receive? (1)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to question 21 in the Shorter Catechism:
Who is the Redeemer of God's elect? (3)

Upper Primary Section (9 and 10 years old)UK answers to *Mrs Sheena Campbell, 34/6 Meadow Place Road, Edinburgh, EH12 7RY.***Old Testament**

1. Read Numbers 11:4-10. The children of Israel have left Egypt and are in the wilderness.
 - (a) Why were the children of Israel crying? (1)
 - (b) What six things did they remember eating in Egypt? (3)
 - (c) What sort of seed was the manna like? (1)
 - (d) How did they prepare the manna for eating? (2)
 - (e) At what time did the manna come? (1)
 - (f) How did God react to the weeping of the children of Israel? (1)
2. Read Numbers 11:31-5.
 - (a) What did the Lord send with a wind? (1)
 - (b) What happened to the children of Israel while they were eating the food that God sent? (1)

- (c) Write out Hebrews 13:5, which tells us to be content with the things we have. (1)

New Testament

1. Read Luke 4:1-13. These verses tell us about Jesus being tempted by the devil.
 - (a) Where was Jesus led to by the Spirit? (1)
 - (b) For how many days was He tempted by the devil? (1)
 - (c) What did the devil tempt Jesus to do to satisfy His hunger? (1)
 - (d) What did the devil say he would give to Jesus if He would worship him? (1)
 - (e) What did Jesus reply to this? (1)
 - (f) When Jesus was on the pinnacle of the temple what did the devil tell Him to do? (1)
 - (g) Did Jesus do any of the things the devil tempted him to do? (1)
 - (h) Sometimes we might be tempted to do something bad, but we should follow the advice we read in James 4:7. Write out this verse. (1)
2. Read John 3:1-5.
 - (a) What was the name of the Pharisee who came to Jesus? (1)
 - (b) When did he come? (1)
 - (c) Why do you think he came to Jesus at this time? (1)
 - (d) How did he know that Jesus must be a teacher come from God? (1)
 - (e) What did Jesus tell him must happen before a man can see the kingdom of God? (1)
3. We read about Nicodemus again at the time when Jesus was being buried. Read John 19:38-42.
 - (a) Who else was helping to bury Jesus? (1)
 - (b) What things did Nicodemus take to be used in the burial of Jesus? (2)
 - (c) Where did they place the body of Jesus? (1)

Memory Exercise

- Learn by heart and write out the answer to question 31 in the Shorter Catechism:
What is effectual calling? (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. When the Children of Israel complained against God and Moses, what did God send among them? (Numbers 21:6)
2. What happened when the serpents bit the people? (Numbers 21:6)
3. What did God tell Moses to make? (Numbers 21:8)
4. What was it made of? (Numbers 21:9)
5. What did Moses put it on? (Numbers 21:9)
6. If anyone was bitten by a serpent, what happened when he looked to the serpent of brass? (Numbers 21:9)
7. Jesus speaks about this in John Chapter 3. Fill in the missing words: As M ___ lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the S ___ of m ___ be lifted up: that whosoever b ___ in him should not p ___ but have eternal l _____. (John 3:14,15)

New Testament

1. What was the name of the wife of Zacharias? (Luke 1:5)
2. Did Zacharias and his wife have any children? (Luke 1:7)

3. Who appeared to Zacharias when he was offering incense? (Luke 1:11)
4. What was his name? (Luke 1:19)
5. What happened to Zacharias when he did not believe he would have a son?
(Luke 1:20)
6. What did Elisabeth's neighbours and cousins call the baby? (Luke 1:58,59)
7. Zacharias wrote down the baby's name. What was it? (Luke 1:63)
8. Who told Zacharias to give the baby that name? (Luke 1:13)
9. What happened to Zacharias when he named his son? (Luke 1:64)

Overseas Prizes and Awards 2002-3

Senior Section

Prizes: *Auckland:* Evan and Yulia Whetton. *Dunedin:* Warwick Worth. *Grafton:* Andrea van Dorp. *Sengera:* Mishael Mosiria. *Sydney:* Jennifer Marshall. *Wellington:* Naomi Hicklin.

Awards with Merit: *Grafton:* Steven Kidd. *Sengera:* James Matara, Justus Mosoti, Moses Nyanchongi, Elizabeth Oganda. *Sydney:* Iain Marshall. *Texas:* James Smith.

Awards: *Auckland:* Sergei Whetton. *Chesley:* Everdena Kuiper. *Sengera:* George Burundi, Zablou Marube, Alice Mbaka, Andrew Mosiria, Vincent Mouti, Lucas Nyandwaro, Pamellah Maranga, Esther Ongori, Francis Oyaro. *Texas:* Nathanael Smith. *Wellington:* Esther Hicklin.

Intermediate Section

Prizes: *Auckland:* Christa van Kralingen, Anya Whetton. *Dunedin:* Hayley Worth. *Grafton:* Susanna Kidd, Cassandra van Dorp, Emma and Natalie White. *Texas:* John Smith. *Wellington:* Thomas Hicklin.

Awards with Merit: *Auckland:* Lucy and Kirsten McCrae, Susan Thomas, Jessica van Kralingen. *Sydney:* Laura Marshall.

Awards: *Chesley:* Margaret Kuiper. *Gisborne:* Mark and Stephen Geuze. *Grafton:* David Kidd. *Pennsylvania:* Philip Gerace. *Sengera:* Benard Mosoti, Linet Ondieki, Ednah Paul. *Singapore:* Yong Shang Ning.

Junior Section

Prizes: *Grafton:* Shelley van Dorp. *Holland:* Peter Bakker. *Pennsylvania:* Alyssa Gerace. *Sydney:* Alison Marshall.

Awards with Merit: *Auckland:* David Thomas. *Chesley:* Martha Bouman. *Gisborne:* Anita Geuze. *Holland:* Anne Bakker. *Texas:* Sarah Smith. *Wellington:* Joanna Hicklin.

Awards: *Auckland:* Charlotte McRae. *Gisborne:* Trudi Haringa. *Sengera:* Joan Abel, Carolyne Omony. *Singapore:* Yong Shang Yu. *Sydney:* Madison van Praag.

Upper Primary Section

Prizes: *Auckland:* Jonathan van Kralingen. *Chesley:* Jenny Bouman. *Grafton:* Matthew White. *Sydney:* Andrew Marshall. *Texas:* Joshua and Samuel Smith. *Wellington:* Rebekah Hicklin.

Awards with Merit: *Chesley:* Audrey Zekveld. *Dunedin:* Richie Worth. *France:* Julia Davenel. *Gisborne:* William Geuze, Louise van Dorp. *Wellington:* Elizabeth Hicklin.

Awards: *Auckland:* Sam MacRae. *Chesley:* Rachel Winkels. *Grafton:* Jennifer Kidd. *Sengera:* Lilian and Peter Kamanda, Dolfine Moses, Milcah Paul.

Lower Primary Section

Awards: *Auckland:* Laura McRae, Amy Thomas. *Chesley:* Jacob Zekveld. *Connecticut:* Rachel Mack. *Dunedin:* Gresham Worth. *Gisborne:* Anne-Marie Geuze, Heidi Haringa, Alexander, Emma and Kirsten van Dorp. *Grafton:* Bethany McAlpine, Chloe van Dorp, Cameron White. *Pennsylvania:* Richard Gerace. *Sengera:* Betty Bochere, Evans Mekenye, Judith Moses, Salome Ontiri. *Sydney:* James and Keith Marshall, Heather and Zoe van Praag. *Texas:* Anna Smith. *Wellington:* Abigail and Lydia Hicklin.