

# The Young People's Magazine

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## Short Cuts

**L**ife is a serious matter. We are all sinners; we have offended God. If we do not look by faith to Christ for salvation, we will certainly arrive in a lost eternity. All who do not believe in the Saviour are, as He Himself made plain, on the broad way which ends in destruction. We should be clear that there is no hope for anyone unless they turn off into the narrow way, which leads to heaven. And we should apply this truth to *ourselves* especially.

This road to destruction is broad; people can go along it at all sorts of speeds. Some act as if they were absolutely determined to ignore the narrow way and make sure of going to hell. And some of them act so foolishly that you might think they are looking for shorts cuts so that they will get there even more quickly than others. We will take a brief glance at four possible shorts cuts.

Let us first think of someone who has been brought up to go to church. For him it may be just a habit, but it is a good habit, for it is everybody's duty to gather together to worship God. Of course, no one can worship God properly unless they have a new heart. But to go to church is to go where you can hope to hear the teachings of the Bible explained, at least if the minister believes these teachings himself; sadly, too many ministers do not take the Bible seriously and so they are dangerously misleading their congregations. In a church where the truth is proclaimed, you can hope that God, by the Holy Spirit, will apply the teachings of the Bible to your soul. If the Holy Spirit will so work in your soul, you will understand how awful it is to be a sinner and you will look to Christ for salvation. But to stop going to church is to turn your back on such opportunities. It is to turn your back on the possibility of entering on the narrow way, the way which God has appointed to bring sinners to heaven. It is to take a short cut to hell.

Let us now think of someone who has been taught to believe the Bible. He learns that this is a holy book, given by God to show us how we should live and how we may obtain salvation from sin. Even although he may not be very interested in it, he accepts that it is perfectly reliable. Maybe he rarely looks at its pages, but he knows that he *should* read it regularly. But new

friends, perhaps when he leaves home, influence him against the Bible. They mock him as old-fashioned because he still has some respect for God's book. He is told that no one who has a grain of self-respect believes the Bible today. He submits to such influences and decides he can safely disbelieve the Word of God. His conscience will now be quieter, so he hopes, because he will not now feel any obligation to search the Scriptures. He wants to feel secure in the unbelief of the generation. But, whatever he persuades himself to believe, and however few follow its teachings today, the Bible remains as reliable as ever. To reject it is to reject the one sure guide to heaven. It is to give up all hope of finding eternal life. It is to take a short cut to hell.

A third short cut to hell is drunkenness. How many sins – indeed how many crimes – are committed by those who are under the influence of alcohol! Alcohol needs to be handled with very great care; it is addictive. It is liable to take control very quickly of those who are careless about how much they drink. The Bible makes it plain: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1). People do not need to drink much before they begin to lose control of themselves. That is serious; it is to open the way to sins they would not otherwise commit. But those who set out to get drunk are totally irresponsible. Drunkenness is bound to have a hardening effect on the soul and to make sinners more resistant to the authority of God's Word.

The last short cut to hell that we will look at is immorality – the breaking of the Seventh Commandment. God has provided the institution of marriage – between one man and one woman – as a blessing. It brings a closeness that cannot be matched anywhere else, and the fact that marriage is for the whole of life should give both husband and wife a confidence in each other that no two human beings can hope to find in any other relationship. But God tells us that immorality brings special condemnation: "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). However common this sin may be today, it is offensive to God and dangerous to the soul.

There are, of course, many other short cuts to hell. But the fact is that every unconverted sinner will reach a lost eternity, sooner or later. No one should presume that all is well just because they are not guilty of gross sins. Remember that the way to destruction is very broad, and Satan does not really care what part of that way you are travelling along, so long as you do not leave it for the narrow way – so long as you do not believe in Christ. No one should be complacent about death and eternity. Only by looking to Christ is there safety. Sinners – of all kinds – are called to leave the broad way at once. Christ is calling "Look unto Me and be ye saved".

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## “In the Beginning”

### 3. Creation Ordinances

*Rev David Campbell*

The earlier parts of this Youth Conference paper examined five points: (1) God is the Creator of all things; (2) He created all things out of nothing by His power, (3) to display His glory, (4) in the space of six days; and (5) the Creation was very good.

God as creator of the world established laws and ordinances to guide His creatures in prosperity and happiness. These tell us what duty God requires of man. If we are to appreciate fully what the Bible teaches us about the creation and its significance, we must consider closely these important and ever-relevant creation ordinances. They are: marriage, birth of children, subduing the earth, dominion over the creatures, labour, and the Sabbath. We will consider them briefly in turn.

**(1) Marriage.** Our first parents were commanded to be fruitful and multiply; they were also instructed about the proper limits within which this should take place. The provision of a wife for Adam signalled the will of God that they would live together. Adam would have understood that he was to have only one wife; it was probably he who said, “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). Christ reminded the Jews of this verse (Mark 10:6-9), and it is a perpetual standard for all mankind. Paul referred the Ephesians to this creation ordinance when he instructed them about the duties of wives and husbands (5:31). Marriage was designed for the mutual good of man and woman, and it is “honourable in all” (Hebrews 13:4). But it is not a sacrament of the New Testament as Roman Catholics teach. We can see that polygamy (having more than one wife) was never the will of the Creator, by the fact that in every generation the number of males and females has been almost perfectly equal. Polygamy brought much sorrow and suffering in Old Testament times, and among heathen nations in later times. How highly we ought to prize marriage as a God-given institution! And how ready we should be to defend it, when it is so persistently attacked and undermined in our society today!

**(2) The birth of children.** God’s mind for His creature man was that he would be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. There was a clear need for this in the beginning, when only one human couple existed. That need has not become less since the entrance of sin, for death now deprives the world of its people and it must be constantly repopulated. This ordinance of God therefore continues to have significance for mankind. God’s creatures have

been designed so that they can fulfil it and it is joined to God's blessing. We are to regulate our behaviour in the light of His law, which has a bearing even on human genetic manipulation. Much wisdom is needed to guide us in the age of science lest we forget God's command.

**(3) Subduing the earth.** God created the world full of His riches. He made grass to grow for cattle and other plants for man. All the resources of the created world were provided by God. He provided also for the wise use of these resources. He gave man an emphatic command to subdue the earth. The understanding which God had given to man fitted him for the task of providing for himself. In the Garden of Eden he would need to care for the fruit trees and other plants, to gather in the harvest and prepare for future sowing. The command to subdue the earth comes down to us still and affects our management of every natural resource. Man had to establish an order in which all his needs would be adequately met by God's provision. This was coupled with God's blessing on the natural world, so that He "crowns the year with His goodness". Adam must have seen this clearly, and it would have encouraged him to be diligent in cultivating the ground. This ordinance also affects many current questions such as farming methods, use of natural fuels and pollution of the environment. Also the Third Commandment requires a "holy and reverent use" of all God's works, as well as His names and titles. The Bible is not silent on these things.

**(4) Dominion over the creatures.** God's crowning act of creation was to make man, a creature capable of communion with heaven. It was altogether fitting that such a being should be appointed as God's ruler in the world. So he was to name the animals, and to subdue the earth. Adam was told to "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth". Again we read in Psalm 8: "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas." This dominion was given to man in the state of innocence, and it would have been a kindly rule had sin not entered. This remains the duty of man, and it affects all we do in relation to the rest of creation – we are to be stewards of it.

**(5) Labour.** Man was not created to be idle. Adam had work to do in Eden and it always yielded satisfaction. Sin has made labour wearisome. The Word of God makes clear that man is to work; it is a law established at the creation: "Six days shalt thou labour . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth". God's work in creating the universe was to be a pattern for man to

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employ himself in worthwhile exertion. Subduing the earth was to involve Adam in continual activity of body and mind. Thought, skill and energy were required even in an innocent man, in order to use the earth's resources wisely. Paul reaffirmed this ordinance in the New Testament: "This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat . . . we command and exhort by Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread" (2 Thessalonians 3:10,12). We are to earn our bread by honest and lawful means. God has ordained that "the labour of the righteous tendeth to life" (Proverbs 10:16). The man who fears the Lord is promised: "Thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee" (Psalm 128:2).

**(6) The Sabbath.** The command to rest on the Sabbath day would have no meaning if there was no command to work. The Fourth Commandment teaches us that our duty to rest on the Sabbath is derived from the example of our Creator who then ceased from His works. This pattern of six days' labour and a day of rest was clearly intimated to Adam: "On the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made" (Genesis 2:2,3). The ordinance of the Sabbath involves more than resting from labour. On the seventh day God stopped one kind of activity – the work of creation – but His rest was not from weariness, rather from perfect satisfaction in His work. So on the Sabbath man is to engage in spiritual activities; he is to consider the works of God and worship God as His good creator.

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## No Man's Debtor

The lady was sitting in the departure lounge waiting for her plane. I was waiting for the same plane, feeling rather tired after a long international flight. The lady had a peaceful expression on her face and smiled when she saw me. We soon started to talk and she told me that she was a missionary in the north of Brazil. We began to speak of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the privileges of being the daughters of the Most High and of the precious hope of eternal life in Him.

Her name was Conceição. She told me that, because her church did not have much money to look after their missionaries, she also worked as a teacher in a primary school. Even with this job she still had very little money, but she was thankful to the Lord for providing the means to enable

her to continue in His work. She used to live near a large city in the south of Brazil, and it was 20 years since she had last seen her fellow missionaries and brethren in Christ who lived there. So she had been saving for a long time so that she could go back to her home town and visit them. She needed to travel by air – which is very expensive – because covering the huge distance by road would have taken several days and she felt she would have been in danger of robbers.

At the end of December she finally had enough money for her ticket and she began to get ready for her trip. However, just at that time, she heard that there were some poor children in her school who were in great difficulty. They had so little money that they couldn't buy any food and they badly needed some clothes. She thought seriously about it; she really wanted to spend some time at home and visit the friends that she had not seen for so long. But after wondering and praying about it, she realised that the right thing to do was to spend her savings on helping those children and their families. She remembered that the Bible teaches that we should look after the poor and needy. If we are in Christ and do this for God's glory, it will be acceptable in His sight. So she committed the matter to the Lord, knowing that "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof", and spent the money on helping the poor children. She told no one about it, preferring to keep it between herself and the Lord.

She phoned her friends to let them know that she would no longer be able to see them but that she hoped to go when the Lord found her another opportunity. No doubt her friends were disappointed, as they too had been looking forward to seeing their friend.

We are told in the Word of God that He is the rewarder of those that fear and honour Him, and that He is always ready "to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20). He also says: "He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack" (Proverbs 28:27).

A few days later, Conceição had a visit from her minister. Someone had given him an envelope and asked him to give it to her. When she opened it, she found a cheque inside. The cheque was for exactly the amount of money she had given to help the poor children in her school! You can imagine her joy in finding out that she would be able to go and see her friends after all. But more important was the great joy and peace she felt as she now knew that she had the Lord's blessing for her trip.

How beautiful and reassuring it is to see how the godly live. They trust in the Lord for all things. They look to Jesus for guidance and wait patiently for an answer to their prayers. When we are in a difficult situation we should always pray and wait patiently for an answer. If God delays in answering,

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we should still be patient and wait on. One of the Puritans – those godly ministers of the seventeenth century – once said that the Christian who carves for himself is likely to cut his finger. What did he mean? If we live by faith in the Lord, we should always make sure that we do not rush into things. We should ask the Lord to show us His will in the decisions we are about to make. It can be an important decision or even a small matter. Nothing is too small or unimportant for God. He knows how weak we are, and how much we need Him at all times of our lives. The more we depend on God, the more He will delight in giving us the strength and the guidance we need for everything.

We would do well to follow the psalmist's advice: "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:5).

*C Johnson*

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## Bianchi

### 2. The Whole Armour of God

Bianchi was an Italian who joined a German army and was afterwards converted. One day he went to his captain to ask permission to go to a prayer meeting in another regiment. Permission was refused with a flippant reference to the devil, followed by the suggestion that Bianchi would not go to the devil only because he did not know his address. Bianchi was about to reply and stopped. When he refused to say what was in his mind, he was sent to prison. That evening the Major sent soldiers to bring Bianchi in to give him an explanation.

Half an hour later Bianchi was standing before the Major, who asked him: "Why are you imprisoned?"

Bianchi told him.

"Has nothing else happened between you and the Captain?"

"Nothing, Major."

"Would you have any objection to telling me what you were thinking?"

"Not at all, Major. I was just going to say to the Captain that I was sorry to find that he was so well acquainted with the evil one as to be able to give me his address. And I meant to express my hope that he would give up that companionship soon and go to a better friend."

"Do you really believe that there is such a being as the devil?"

"Yes, I do. The Word of God tells us most clearly that there are fallen angels as well as fallen men, and that their chief captain, Satan, goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour."

"If that is true, we are all undone. I see a chance of putting to flight an army of 100 000 Austrians, but what are we to do against invisible spirits?"

“Certainly very little with lead and powder; spirits can only be fought with spiritual weapons.” And Bianchi quoted Paul’s words in Ephesians 6: “Put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. . . . having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” And he went on: “So you see that we are not left destitute in this warfare and . . . we are assured that the devil will flee from us if we resist him”.

The Major was quiet as he thought over what Bianchi had said. When he spoke, it was to say that he believed he had often been attacked by the devil. Why else, he asked, did so many wicked and blasphemous thoughts come suddenly into his mind? “And I tell you,” he added, “I have tried to resist a thousand times, but all in vain. He won’t flee from me, Bianchi.”

“Allow me to ask, Have you put on the *whole* armour of God that I was describing just now?”

“Yes, I think I have”, the Major told him. “You know I regularly attend worship and I say my prayers every morning and evening. I also read my Bible every day.”

But Bianchi went on to explain that his trust in religious activities could not protect him from the devil. “These are very good and useful pieces of armour in the holy battle,” he told the Major, “but you will remember that the apostle tells us to put on the *whole* armour. And surely he is right there, for a soldier who has only half his weapons about him will not be able to stand such a cunning, able and powerful enemy as we have to deal with. . . . If your enemy only attacks you with his sword, you may have a fair chance by brandishing yours as well. But if he attacks you from a distance with his fiery darts, your sword is of little use for the moment, and you will be lost if you have no shield. . . . Our enemy seldom fights us hand to hand. He prefers attacking us from a distance, in the dark, from an ambush. We get his wicked thoughts without noticing it. He dims our minds with all kinds of doubts and perplexities. . . . He has no other object in view when shooting his darts at us but to chase us away from God and to make us run into the arms of the world.”

“Very true, very true. You really tell the history of my every day, Bianchi. I wonder how you know all that. Has my wife told you all about it?”

Of course she hadn’t, and Bianchi explained: “I know all that from my own experience and from the Word of God. If you have told me your history, I told you mine at the same time. But it appears to me that – pardon

my boldness, Major – you are committing the same fault which I have so often committed.”

“And what is that fault?” the major asked in deep concern.

“You neglect to put on the *whole* armour. You leave parts of your armament aside, and these are exactly the weapons which are most necessary in the battle we are engaged in. You remember that the Apostle says, ‘Above all, taking the shield of faith’. He evidently points to that weapon as the first piece required for good success.”

“But I think I have faith. I do believe the gospel. I do believe in Christ. I do not believe that anybody or anything can save me except Christ.”

“Very well, that is the shield the apostle points at. But allow me to ask you, Have you *taken* that shield? For you will admit that it is of little use to the soldier if it is hanging on the side of his tent instead of being tied to his arm.”

“Well, yes, I think I have taken it,” the Major replied after thinking for a few minutes. “I truly believe that Christ is the only Saviour of sinners.”

“I beg your pardon, but that is not *taking* – that is only describing – the shield. The devil himself believes the same as you. He will not deny that Christ has come into the world to save sinners. But he knows, at the same time, that Christ has not come to save him.”

“What then do you want me to do?” asked the Major as he looked eagerly at his soldier.

“Do you believe, Major, that Christ is your Saviour?”

“Yes, certainly so. I do believe that Christ has come into the world to save me, but I am a sinner – a great sinner indeed.”

“Very well. Then do you believe that he *has* saved you?”

The Major found it awkward to reply. He felt it would be serious to say what was not true. So he asked: “What do you mean by that question?”

“I mean”, Bianchi told him solemnly, “whether you believe that you are a saved sinner, that your sins are forgiven, that your debts are paid, that you are a child of God, and an heir of the heavenly inheritance, through Him who suffered and died and rose again from the dead?”

“No, I cannot say that. I hope our good Lord will take me into His paradise after my death. But to say that I am saved and that heaven is mine, that’s a great matter, Bianchi, – a very great matter which, I believe, only very few come to.”

“Well then, allow me to say, Major, that you have not yet taken the shield of faith. It may be in your tent; it may even lie close to your feet; but it is not on your arm.”

“True, but what would you have me to do?”

## Ambition

### 3. What to Seek First

*W G T Shedd*

This further part of a sermon by a well-known American preacher has been edited. His text is: "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not" (Jeremiah 45:6). In last month's section, he gave his second reason for not seeking the great things of this world: If we could reach them, they would ruin the soul.

A third reason for not seeking "great things" lies in the fact that "great things", so far as they are attained at all in this world, are usually *reached indirectly*. Saul the son of Kish was sent out by his father to find the asses that had strayed, but he found a kingdom instead. Disappointed in his search for the lost animals, he went to the prophet Samuel for information, and Samuel anointed him king over Israel. He did not obtain what he went for, but something greater and better. This illustrates the way in which "great things" are generally obtained in this world. They come indirectly.

Look into the world of trade and business and see how often great and lasting success comes by the way, rather than as the result of some plan. The person aimed simply at carrying out his duties to his family, to his country and to his Maker. He made no plans to gain a huge fortune, but aimed only to provide for the present and future needs of those who were dependent on him. But he obtained far more than he expected. Wealth came in upon him quickly, and what he did not greedily seek – what he never in the least gloated over with a miser's feeling – was the actual result of his career.

The words of our Lord are true for the things of the world, as well as for holy things: "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life shall find it". If we directly seek "great things", we shall never find them. There are a few exceptions to this general rule, it is true. But if we carefully watch the ordinary course of events, we will see that it is those who are not specially anxious about them who obtain fame, wealth and various blessings for this life. Those who pursue their aims with wisdom and restraint may, in God's providence, receive more of the good things of this life, although they were not part of their original purposes and hopes. On the other hand, the great majority of those who set up fame, wealth or pleasure as their idol, and made everything else take second place, have been miserably disappointed. They were sure to fail. If they obtained the glittering object they aimed at, it grew pale and dull, like the shining little insect the child chases on a summer evening and grasps in his hands, only to find a repulsive black bug. And if they altogether failed to gain what they sought, their anxious efforts after it have left them disgusted with human life.

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Seekest thou then great things for thyself? Seek them not. They will not come by this method. Seek first of all the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and then there shall be added unto you all these minor things which the world and the deceived human heart calls “great things”. Be faithful to your duties in the family, in the nation and in the church, and then you are likely to receive greater blessings than what you would obtain even by the most violent efforts. If you will lose your life, you shall find it; but if you insist upon finding your life, you shall lose it.

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*For Junior Readers*

## The Time Is Short

**T**he time is short, the season near  
when death will us remove,  
To leave our friends, however dear,  
and all we fondly love.

The time is short. Sinners, beware,  
nor trifle time away;  
The word of “great salvation” hear,  
“while it is called today”.

The time is short. You rebels, now  
to Christ the Lord submit;  
To mercy’s golden sceptre bow,  
and fall at Jesus feet.

The writer of these verses was the godly minister Robert Murray M’Cheyne, whose own life in this world was to be very short. He would like you to realise how quickly your time in this world will be over. So he would like you to realise that you must not waste your time here. Instead you should use your time to seek salvation – to prepare for eternity.

David prayed to God that he would learn this lesson. “Lord,” he said, “make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am” (Ps 39:4). Then he went on: “Behold, Thou hast made my days as an hand-breadth; and mine age is as nothing before Thee”. (And a hand-breadth is one of the shortest measurements – just the breadth of your hand.) The Lord had showed him that life in this world – even at the longest – is very short. The Apostle James compares our lives to steam: life “is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away”.

Does that not show you how uncertain and brief life is? How important then to use your time wisely!

James Laing was a boy in M'Cheyne's congregation. He was converted when he was about your age. He died before his fourteenth birthday. Although he was unwell, he was very concerned about the other children in the congregation. One week they called in to see him after Sabbath School, and he spoke seriously to them. You should read his words as if they were spoken to you personally. This is what he said:

"You all know what I was. I was no better than you, but the Holy Spirit opened my eyes, and I saw that I was on the very brink of hell. Then I cried to Jesus to save me and give me a new heart. I put my finger on the promise, and would not come away without it, and He gave me a new heart. And He is as willing to give you all a new heart. I have sinned with you; now I would like you to come to Christ with me. You would be far happier in Christ than at your play. There are sweeter pleasures in Christ. . . . I would give you all a prayer to pray tonight. Go and tell Jesus that you are poor, lost, hell-deserving sinners, and ask Him to give you a new heart. Remember, He's willing; and O be earnest! Ye'll no get it unless ye be earnest."

Should you not be as earnest about your own soul as James Laing was about his, because "the time is short"?

*J van Kralingen*

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*For Younger Readers*

## **A Good Prayer**

A minister was staying at a hotel in Holland. He spoke to a maid who was working there. He asked her if she prayed.

No, she didn't. She was probably working all day – from when she got up in the morning till she went back to bed at night. She hardly had time to eat, she told the minister. So how could she have time to pray?

The minister taught the maid a very short prayer. It would not take long to say. It had just a very few words: "Lord, save me". And he promised to give her a little money if she could tell him that she said these three words of prayer every night and morning. He was going to ask her about it the next time he came to the hotel.

For two weeks she said her little prayer without thinking about the meaning of the words. But one night she wondered what they meant and why the minister asked her to say them. She opened the

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Bible to see if she could find the answer there. It was God who made her do this. The Bible is God's book. In it He tells us many things that we should know.

The maid read some verses in the Bible that night and she liked what she read. She was probably still very busy, but the next morning she took time to read some more verses. And she went on doing this, day after day.

And did God answer her prayer? Yes, He did. Through what she read in the Bible, God showed her that there is salvation for sinners. He showed her that Christ died for sinners, to save them from their sins. In her prayer, she was asking the Lord to save her, and He did.

At last, the minister came back to the hotel. He was surprised when another maid brought his food to the table. The visitor wondered what happened to the other maid. Later he asked the man who ran the hotel. He told the minister, "She got too good for my place and now lives with the minister". She probably helped with the work in his home.

The visitor went to call on the minister of that place. When the maid saw him at the door, she said to him, "Is it you, you blessed man? I shall thank God through all eternity that I ever saw you." She did not now want the money he promised her. She got a better reward for saying her little prayer when God heard her prayer and saved her soul. That was the best possible reward.

You too could use this prayer: "Lord, save me". Is it not a good prayer for you?

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## Looking Around Us

### In Danger from an Asteroid?

One day earlier this year, an astronomer in the USA noticed an asteroid which nobody had spotted before. It was estimated to be only 30 metres across but it seemed to be hurtling directly towards the earth. It looked as if it was on course to explode a few miles up in the atmosphere with the force of a one-megaton hydrogen bomb. So it would have caused havoc on any communities directly below.

A few more observations of the asteroid made it clear the earth was not in danger. But what could have been done to protect people if it had been on course to hit the earth? Possibly, if the communities in danger could have

been pinpointed with sufficient accuracy and with enough time to spare, the people could have been evacuated to safety. One assumes that everything possible would have been done to save as many lives as possible.

Certainly the threat of an asteroid colliding with the earth would have been at the top of every news bulletin. Those in danger of being in the area of impact would have been in terror of their lives. And no wonder!

But what of the fact that every one of us must die, and we do not know how soon that might happen? We are all on our way to eternity and we need to be prepared. Yet people everywhere go on as if life was guaranteed to continue indefinitely. God's Word tells us: "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." This is the only way to escape the ultimate disaster of a lost eternity. And escape is possible because of what Christ has done for sinners.

### **Religious Education**

Great concern has been expressed because of the shortage of teachers of religious education who have the right qualifications. Many schools have given up teaching the subject because they cannot find suitable teachers.

This raises the question: What are the proper qualifications? One can understand schools wanting teachers who have studied the subject to a high level and have themselves passed the relevant exams. Yet it is far more important that teachers of religious education should understand that there is right and wrong in religion and that they should know where to go to find out what is right and what is wrong.

The main qualification should be that they accept the authority of the Bible. It is through this book that the one true God has chosen to reveal Himself. The Bible is the one sure source of religious knowledge. If we ignore it, we are bound to go wrong.

The Institute of Public Policy Research has complained in a recent report that religious education too often has a "pro-religious" bias. In other words, it too often does not give atheism the same place as religion. And why should it? It is not reasonable to complain that someone is biased in favour of the truth. Would they complain that a court was biased in favour of the truth? The fact is that atheism is not truth; there is a God. What is more, this God has revealed Himself in the Bible. So biblical Christianity is true. Therefore the Bible should be taught in schools, and it should be taught as truth.

Because Christianity is the one true religion, it follows that all other religions are false. People today may not like the idea of rejecting particular

religions as false. But if we are to face reality, there is no avoiding this idea. God is God, and we are duty bound to acknowledge the fact.

## Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2003-04

### Exercise 3

All answers from *overseas* should be sent to Mrs N M Ross, F P Manse, 10 Achany Road, Dingwall, Ross-shire, IV15 9JB, Scotland. The correctors should have your answers before the end of 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 1 Samuel 1. Copy the words which say:
  - (a) why Samuel was so named,
  - (b) how Hannah fulfilled her vow,
  - (c) that she prayed in her heart. (6)
2. Read 1 Samuel 2.
  - (a) How was Samuel occupied in the Lord's house? (2)
  - (b) What did his mother bring him yearly? (1)
  - (c) How did the Lord reward Hannah? (2)
  - (d) State briefly how Eli failed in his duties as priest and parent. (see also 1 Samuel 3) (5)
3. 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)
4. Jonathan displayed (a) absence of jealousy; (b) brotherly love; (c) bravery; (d) loyalty; (e) leadership. Match these with the passages from (1) 1 Samuel 14:11-18; (2) 20:41,42; (3) 18:1-4; (4) 14:6-10; (5) 20:30-34. (Answer example: (c) 4.) (5)

#### New Testament

1. Read Acts 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 and what condition was attached? (3)
  - (e) What did the sailors plan to do that would have contradicted the angel's revelation? (2)
  - (f) How did the soldiers come near to doing this? (2)
  - (g) For whose sake was their purpose thwarted? (2)
  - (h) Describe how all escaped safely to land. (3)
2. Complete the following verses from 1 Corinthians 15:
  - (a) "And last of all he was seen of me also . . ."
  - (b) "For as in Adam all die . . ."
  - (c) "The first man is of the earth, earthy . . ."
  - (d) "For this corruptible must put on incorruption . . ."
  - (e) "O death, where is thy sting? . . ." (5)
3. In your own words say how believers obtain victory over death. (3)

#### Memory Exercise

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

**Intermediate Section (13 and 14 years old)**UK answers to *Mrs J Hymers, Achavarn, Thurso, Caithness, KW14 7YH.***Old Testament**

1. Read 1 Samuel chapters 1 and 2.
  - (a) Why was Hannah sad? (2)
  - (b) In what ways did Elkanah try to comfort her? (3)
  - (c) Where did she go in her trouble? (2)
  - (d) To whom did she go in her trouble? (2)
  - (e) What did she plead for, and what did she promise? (4)
  - (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)
2. Read Judges chapters 6 and 7.
  - (a) Which tribe was invading Israel? (1)
  - (b) Why did Gideon feel that he could not save Israel? (2)
  - (c) How did the Lord encourage him? (3)
  - (d) Why did the Lord want him to have fewer soldiers? (2)

**New Testament**

1. Complete the following quotations from Romans.
  - (a) "For all have sinned . . ." (chapter 3) (2)
  - (b) "But God commendeth his love . . ." (chapter 5) (2)
  - (c) "The gift of God is . . ." (chapter 6) (2)
  - (d) "If God be for us . . ." (chapter 8) (2)
  - (e) "For whosoever shall call . . ." (chapter 10) (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 the resurrection of Christ such an important part of the Christian faith? (verses 13-19) (3)
  - (e) What great advice and encouragement is given to those who "work for 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. From your reading of 1 Samuel chapters 1-9
  - (a) give the name of the father of (1) Saul (2) Hophni (3) Samuel (4) Ichabod; (4)
  - (b) write down who said the following words, and to whom were they spoken:
    - (1) "What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me." (2)
    - (2) "For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him." (3)
    - (3) "Why eatest thou not? And why is thy heart grieved?" (2)
    - (4) "Why do ye such things? For I hear of your evil doings by all this people." (2)
    - (5) "Go in peace; and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him." (2)
2. Read 1 Samuel chapter 8.
  - (a) Give two reasons why the Israelites wanted a king. (2)
  - (b) How did Samuel feel about their request? (1)
  - (c) What answer did God give him when he prayed? (1)
  - (d) Write down *one* lesson we can learn from this chapter. (2)

**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 them who persecute us,
  - (f) to those that weep,
  - (g) to those that rejoice? (7)
2. Read 1 Corinthians chapter 15.
  - (a) Why did Paul think he was “not meet to be called an apostle”? (1)
  - (b) What is referred to as “the last enemy”? (1)
  - (c) What is the sting of death? (1)
  - (d) Read verse 21. Two different persons are referred to in this verse. Say who they are. (2)
  - (e) What corrupts good manners? (1)

**Memory Exercise**

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

**Upper Primary Section (9 and 10 years old)**

UK answers to *Mrs Sheena Campbell, 2 Silverknowes Midway, Edinburgh, EH4 5PP.*

**Old Testament**

1. Read Judges 4:4-9.
  - (a) What was the name of the person who was judging Israel at this time? (1)
  - (b) Who did she send for? (1)
  - (c) Who was going to be delivered into his hand? (1)
  - (d) What did he want the Judge of Israel to do? (1)
 Read verses 14-24.
  - (e) Where did Sisera flee to? (1)
  - (f) What did he ask to drink and what was he actually given? (2)
  - (g) What two things were used to kill Sisera? (2)
2. Read 1 Samuel 22:1-13.
  - (a) What cave was David hiding in? (1)
  - (b) How many men were with him? (1)
  - (c) What did Ahimelech the priest give David? (2)
 Read verses 14-23.
  - (d) Who obeyed Saul and killed the priests? (1)
  - (e) What was the name of Ahimelech’s son who escaped? (1)
  - (f) Write out the verse which contains David’s kind words to Ahimelech’s son. (1)

**New Testament**

1. Read Romans 12:9-21. Find and write out the verse which mentions:
  - (a) “Not slothful in business . . .” (1)
  - (b) “. . . Provide things honest . . .” (1)
  - (c) “. . . live peaceably . . .” (1)
  - (d) “. . . heap coals of fire . . .” (1)
2. Read 1 Corinthians 11:20-34.
  - (a) What was wrong with the way the people were taking the Lord’s Supper? (2)
  - (b) What did the Lord Jesus do before he broke bread? (1)
  - (c) What does eating the bread and drinking the cup show? (1)

- (d) What are the people to do before eating the bread and drinking the cup?  
(verse 28) (1)
- (e) Explain what will happen to people if they do not take the Lord's Supper as they ought to. (4)

#### Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out the answer to question 97 in the Shorter Catechism: What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper? (3)

#### Lower Primary Section (8 years old and under)

UK answers to *Mrs R J Dickie, 11 Churchill Drive, Stornoway, Lewis, HS1 2NP*. Most questions can be answered in one or two words but older children can write in sentences if they wish.

#### 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)