

The Young People's Magazine

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How Do We Live?

A young woman was in church for the first time. It was a service at which 10 young people were baptized. After the baptism, the minister asked if anyone wanted to give their heart to Jesus. She looked at the woman beside her and saw that her friend's hand was up and thought to herself: "I could never do that. Never." Then the minister's wife came over and told the young woman: "I'm so glad you gave your heart to Jesus".

At that point the young woman looked at her hand and, so she claims, she saw that her hand was up although she had not realised that she had raised it. It seems almost unbelievable. But that is not the important point. Far more serious is the rashness of the minister's wife. She presumed that this woman had actually believed in Christ just because she had put her hand up in response to an invitation to show that she *wanted* to give her heart to Jesus.

It is not for me to judge whether this woman is converted or not. For one thing, I do not know her. And she may have believed in the Saviour at some time since then. But what is clear is that the experience described here is not a true conversion experience. And it is tragic that books are being sent out which present such experiences as if they were genuine (this one was published by Christian Focus Publications). In any case, there is no authority in Scripture for calling on people in a congregation to indicate their desire to come to Christ. Peter never did so; Paul never did so; neither did any of the other apostles; and neither should any of today's ministers.

In looking at ourselves to see if we are converted, we must apply the teaching of the Bible. It is also helpful to remember the Shorter Catechism answers – in particular, the answer to the question: *What is effectual calling?* "Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, He doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel." From this scriptural answer we can conclude that converted people have been convinced of their sin and misery as those who have rebelled against God and are far away from Him; the Holy Spirit has also enlightened their minds so that they know something

about Jesus Christ as the Saviour whom God has appointed for sinners; because their wills have been renewed, they want to believe in Christ and to live as God wants them to live; and, finally, they do actually trust in Christ alone for salvation.

Those who believe in Christ are forgiven all their sins; they will never be condemned to a lost eternity. So Paul tells us: "There is . . . no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). Note that he does not just say: They are "in Christ" – that is, they are united to Christ by faith; they have believed in Christ. He asks: How do they live? Do they walk after the flesh – that is, do they live according to their old nature, as unconverted people live? Or do they live after the spirit – according to their new spiritual nature, the result of the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts? And we should ask ourselves: Do we love God? Do we value the salvation that God has provided through Christ? Do we really want to depend only on Him, not on ourselves, so that we may be delivered from hell? Do we hate sin, even the sin of our hearts? Do we want to live holy lives?

Some people have had highly-dramatic religious experiences and yet they are not converted. They never really believed in Christ; the Holy Spirit never called them effectually. They never stopped walking after the flesh; they never began to walk after the spirit. They never began to hate sin and to love holiness. So it is no wonder if, after some time, they give up their religion. This should not surprise us if we remember the Saviour's teaching in the Parable of the Sower. He referred to those who receive the Word with joy, but fall away in a time of temptation. And He spoke about those whose religious impressions are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. No wonder we are told to make our calling and election sure!

Others may have had no dramatic experience. They were presented with a few facts about sin and salvation. And, because they believed these things are true, they were assured that they had saving faith – that they were indeed converted. A present-day minister has written about what he calls "the wretched habit of counting men as converts to Christ when they have merely gone through a mental exercise about basic gospel facts. With no evidences of regenerating grace or fruits of initial sanctification, worldly men have been pronounced *Christian*." He is right. So we all need to examine ourselves to see if we are truly converted – to see if the Holy Spirit has indeed called us effectually.

Yet some who are truly converted may be afraid because they do not know when they first believed in Christ. But it is far more important to know if we are converted *now*. Do we walk after the flesh or after the spirit?

The Book of Ruth

77. Marring the Inheritance

Rev Keith M Watkins

Ruth 4:5,6. "Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it."

The nearer relative did not want to marry Ruth. Why? Because it would harm his own inheritance: "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance". Ruth was a widow, "the wife of the dead". He knew that if he married her, their children would inherit the land of her first husband, now dead, rather than his existing family. To protect his own interests, he would not marry Ruth. So he let Boaz do so instead.

Ruth was a foreigner. Boaz called her "Ruth the Moabitess". The relative had been willing to buy the field for Naomi. She was a true Israelite, a woman of Bethlehem. But he would not marry a woman like Ruth, who came from Moab, a land of idolaters who had departed from the true and living God. There was nothing that he could offer a woman like that. He knew the law: "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord" (Deuteronomy 23:3). He felt that he could not marry a Moabitess.

But Boaz felt no such restraint. His inheritance would not be marred by marrying Ruth. He would redeem the widow from Moab. The kindness of Boaz could find a way to accept Ruth. "Mercy rejoiceth against judgement" (James 2:13). The mercy of Boaz could redeem Ruth, when the apparent law-keeping of the relative could do nothing for her.

What Paul said about Hagar and Sarah, we can say about the relative and Boaz: "These are the two covenants" (Galatians 4:24). Like Hagar, the relative illustrates the covenant of works – the law. Like Sarah, Boaz illustrates the covenant of grace – the gospel. God appointed one "inheritance" for the first covenant. He appointed a different "inheritance" for the second. Spiritually, the law cannot redeem sinners without marring its inheritance, whereas the gospel can.

What "inheritance" has God given to the law? Considered as a covenant, it is to preserve the honour of His justice. With Adam as he was created, the law could unite, just as the relative could with Naomi as representative of her family. The law is happy to be one with a creature giving perfect obedience to its every demand. But what of union with a sinner? What can the law do for a lawbreaker? What can it do for someone like Ruth – a

foreigner, a stranger, a covenant-breaker, an idolater, a sinner? What can the law do for *you*?

The law can do nothing but reject and condemn sinners. It is holy, just and good. Sinners are unholy, unjust and evil. To unite with them, this is “what the law could not do” (Romans 8:3). It is a “ministration of condemnation” (2 Corinthians 3:9). Under its terms, sinners must reap death, not life. Their iniquities have separated them from God (see Isaiah 59:2). To preserve its inheritance, the law has to say to every sinner: “I cannot redeem you. I must maintain the glory of God’s justice at all costs, even to your eternal damnation. I cannot bring strangers to God near to Him. I cannot mar my own inheritance. I must condemn sinners to a lost eternity.”

There was no use Ruth going to the nearer relative for marriage. He would only reject her. There is no use any sinner going to the works of the law to obtain God’s favour. The covenant of works cannot redeem sinners. It can only condemn and reject. “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20). Would you be right with God? Would you have God to be your God? Would you enjoy fellowship with the Lord of heaven? You must find a way other than the law to obtain those things. That other way is the gospel – the covenant of grace.

What “inheritance” has God given to the gospel? In other words, what is the purpose of the gospel? Is it the same as the law? Not at all. The gospel’s great purpose is to reveal and magnify God’s grace in saving sinners through Christ. This is its “inheritance” from the Lord. Whereas the law keeps sinners separate from God, the gospel draws them near. It can say: “Come now, and let us reason together . . . though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18). Instead of keeping sinners at a distance, it can welcome them into marriage with the Lord, saying “I accept you, I befriend you, I betroth you, I marry you” (see Hosea 2:19).

Boaz could marry Ruth the Moabitess without marring his inheritance. So also the gospel can marry sinners to God without any harm to its inheritance. For the holy Lord of glory to marry the wretched, the undeserving, the idolater, the stranger and foreigner, even to marry the chief of sinners – this magnifies divine grace and makes it honourable.

The law stopped a Moabite from entering the congregation of the Lord, but Boaz found room in his heart and home for Ruth the Moabitess. So the gospel of divine grace finds a way for sinners to be received into fellowship with God. It passes by transgressions. It takes the unrighteous and accepts them as righteous. It unites the unworthy to the holy Lord Jesus. It accepts and

justifies those who are rejected and condemned by the law. It sanctifies the ungodly until they are made perfect in holiness. Only the gospel can perform these wonders of grace.

Far from marring the gospel, it is its glory to befriend sinners. The self-righteous Pharisee thought that Jesus was marring His reputation when he allowed the woman to wash His feet with tears. But the truth was far different. It is the glory of Jesus to receive sinners. "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17). Many Jews thought that the cross of Christ was to His everlasting shame. After all, "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men" (Isaiah 52:14). But the truth was far otherwise. "When He had by Himself purged our sins . . . He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name" (Hebrews 1:3,4). Through His shameful sufferings, the Saviour's inheritance has been glorified in His eternal exaltation at God's right hand.

Boaz has inherited a good name among all the godly for his willingness to take Ruth as his bride. It did not mar his share of "the inheritance of the saints in light" (Colossians 1:12). Likewise, the Saviour's willingness to take the Church for His bride has not marred His inheritance. On the contrary, the gospel will be to the praise of His glory for ever and ever. Make sure that it is also to your everlasting salvation!

Carl and Lisa

2. "Love Your Enemies"

Carl and his wife Lisa lived in Gouda, in Holland, which was then under the control of Spain. Lisa had just heard that Carl had been put to death because he would not give up his religion.

It was all almost too much for Lisa; she could easily have given in to the desolation she felt. But she had responsibilities and she settled down to look after the children. She sewed for other people to earn the money she needed. And she took comfort from the words of Martha in the Bible: "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day". Yet there were days when she wondered why God allowed such things to happen. But at such times she prayed and trusted in her Saviour.

She taught the children from the Bible which Carl had committed to her care before he fled, but there was one verse she found very difficult: "Love your enemies". How could she love Carl's murderers? she asked herself. And she would add: "Does Jesus ask me to do this? It is not in human

nature." Then she would remember the Saviour's prayer, "Father, forgive them". She tried to feel, or at least to do, as He had done. But she always had to confess, "O Lord, I cannot. Help me." Yet, when she had a clear opportunity to show such love, she was remarkably helped to give it. Her prayer was heard.

Lisa showed she had become as firm a Protestant as her husband. She never went to mass or to confession. Hans, her husband's friend, told her she was not wise. What would happen to her children if she was arrested? One day she told Hans: "God will take care of the children if anything happens to me, as He has taken care of me and of them these three years. But let the consequences be what they may, I will not go to idol worship." And no one troubled her. Perhaps, because her health was not good, it was seen as reasonable that she should not go.

Four years later, the news reached Gouda: "The Sea-beggars are here". These were the followers of the Prince of Orange, who were fighting against the Spaniards for freedom for Holland. Soon Gouda was free. Now it was the Spaniards who had to flee, and the Dutch who had served the Spaniards were in even greater danger. Many in Gouda took revenge for the killings of past years. What would Hans have done to the mayor if he had found him? That night Lisa was terrified at the uproar in the usually-quiet town. Her son Franz helped her to bar the doors and windows securely. She prayed for those who were injured in the disturbances and gave thanks for the possibility of freedom.

There was a loud knock at the door. Lisa hesitated. Almost at once, there was another loud knock. She took a small lamp and went to open the door. "Help. Shelter. Save me from my enemies", came the voice of a man from the darkness outside.

Who is it? Lisa asked.

"Let me in", insisted the man, sounding even more desperate than before. "They are coming. Here, down this street."

The man came a little closer to the half-open door. In the dim light of her little lamp, Lisa recognised the frightened figure outside. It was the mayor, who had been responsible for her husband's death.

Without hesitation she brought him inside. She told Franz to bar the door again and make it secure. The mayor followed her through the hall and into the sitting room. In his terror, he had not realised whose door he had come to; he still did not recognise the woman who pulled aside the panel and pointed him into the hidden pantry behind.

"Shall I be safe here?" asked the terrified mayor.

"O yes," Lisa told him calmly, "quite safe." And she added, "It was here

my husband was hidden while you and your officers searched the house for him in vain. Enter without fear; I will be answerable for your safety.”

God had heard Lisa’s prayers. She was now able to show kindness to her worst enemy. So Christ’s words were fulfilled: “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”

Religion in Eastern Europe

6. Free Presbyterian Mission Work

Rev David Campbell

This is the final instalment in a series based on material presented to the 2004 Youth Conference. Last month’s article dealt with the period since Communism fell.

In early 1948 a young man from the Ukraine arrived in Inverness. Vladimir Wenz had survived the rigours of the Ukrainian famine and the hardships of the Second World War, including life in a Nazi concentration camp. After some time he came into contact with professing Christians from the Free Presbyterian Church who showed him a great deal of kindness.

Before his untimely death in May 1951, at the age of 24, after a long and painful illness, those who knew him regarded him as savingly changed – turned from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. His delight in the Scriptures was evident to all. His great desire and constant prayer was that his own people would have the Bible, and that in reading it they too would find the way to eternal happiness. “Our people are not ignorant, as some suppose,” he once remarked. “It is the religious teaching that is at fault. They have 45 holy days, but I see in the Bible that God’s day is the only holy day, and His commandment is, ‘Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.’” An article by Rev William MacLean in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* in 1979 details the conversion and deathbed testimony of this early contact between our Church and Eastern Europe.

Vladimir Wenz’s prayers received something of an answer when Communism fell and large numbers of copies of the Scriptures were sent into formerly-Communist countries. The contribution of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland to this effort has since then taken a small, but more permanent, hold in Vladimir Wenz’s country – the Ukraine. The first substantial contact came in 1996, after Rev D A Ross had for some years been sending Bibles to various contacts in Eastern Europe. When a

letter, sent with a Bible to a woman in Crimea, was brought to the attention of Mr Igor Zadorozhniy of Odessa, he made contact with Mr Ross. Through Mr Zadorozhniy's untiring labours, many thousands of Bibles and other sound books have been sent out by the Free Presbyterian Church to needy souls all over Eastern Europe and Russia. Thus the desire of grace which longs to see the Word of God in the possession of their people has been marvellously accomplished, long after the prayers which carried that desire to heaven have been ended by death.

Mr Zadorozhniy is a native of Poland and his mother was a Jewess. Brought up as a Communist, he worked as a journalist for a number of years as well as serving in East Germany in the military. In 1976 Mr Zadorozhniy obtained a copy of the New Testament from the Slavic Gospel Association. Under the guidance of the Spirit of God he received its teaching and was brought out of the spiritual darkness of atheism and unbelief. For many years he has been engaged in distributing Bibles and religious literature to an ever-increasing list of contacts. He advertises in local newspapers and responds to requests from those who have no easy access to the Bible; as a result many thousands of people now have the Word of God in their hands. It is quite breath-taking to see the cabinet at Mr Zadorozhniy's home filled with correspondence and to know that, for each letter, some portion of Scripture has been posted out, and often other items as well. Truly the Lord has set before Mr Zadorozhniy, and our Church through him, an open door. Ought we not to pray earnestly that no man will be able to shut it?

Besides the work of sending out the Scriptures, the Confession of Faith and other worthy books and tracts in various Eastern European languages, Mr Zadorozhniy and his like-minded wife Tanya have been engaged in much-needed humanitarian work among their people in the Ukraine. It is difficult for anyone who has not visited that country to appreciate the real poverty that exists. The health service in particular is always in need of money and other help. In God's providence a door has been opened in this area also; requests for help have come from a children's hospital near where Mr and Mrs Zadorozhniy live. Thus the fruits of Western prosperity have been trickling through to Ukraine for some years now under the watchful care of Rev D A Ross and others.

While this part of the work is always to be viewed as secondary to the spreading of the gospel, it is a most worthy and necessary missionary activity. The apostle Paul called it an evidence of the sincerity of love. The Free Presbyterian Church has been recognised, both in the Ukraine and here in Scotland, as a regular provider of aid. Raigmore Hospital in Inverness has co-operated over the years in providing medical supplies, and the Ukrainian

embassy in London once asked the Church to send aid to a region which had been badly affected by floods. It is a great privilege to be able to answer such calls and to spread God's Word at the same time. The significant contributions made by the people of the Church, and others, to the Eastern Europe Fund indicates that the hearts of our people have been opened to respond to a need that is both temporal and spiritual. Long may this continue!

Representatives of the Church have visited several Eastern European countries, besides the Ukraine, down through the years. Bibles, religious books and tracts, and humanitarian aid have been sent to, for instance, various contacts in both Romania and Hungary. A small group of young men with an interest in the Reformed faith, who were at that time within the Hungarian Reformed Church – a body badly affected by unbelief – were also contacted; they have been receiving support and encouragement from the Church. At present attempts are being made in the city of Odessa to establish a permanent charity organisation. This is to act as a basis for further expansion in the future, if the Lord will. The charity, while supported and financed by the Church, is organised and run by Mr Zadorozhniy, and his activities are the same as before. Plans are presently being made for the construction of a building to house this charity and to store supplies.

These are only small endeavours and little fruit seems to be borne at present. But the Lord of the harvest works in His own way and in His own time to fulfil His purposes and while we have the opportunity, we should be ready to seize it and do what good we can with "all our might".

For Younger Readers

Is He Speaking to Me?

The woman did not go to church often. One day she went out with her young daughter. I don't know where they meant to go, but they made a mistake. They wandered into a service instead.

The preacher was speaking about people worshipping God in their own homes. But, he said, many people do not worship Him. They do not read the Bible at home. They do not pray. They do not come together for family worship.

The little girl was listening closely. She could see that the man was describing a home like hers. She knew that her parents did not read the Bible. They did not pray. And they did not have family worship.

So she looked up and said quietly to her mother: "Is the minister speaking to you?"

The mother did not answer. But inside herself she had to say, Yes. The question made her see that she was doing wrong.

I hope she did not forget the question and that she began to pray and read the Bible. I hope too that she and her husband and the rest of the family began to gather together for family worship.

The young girl asked a very good question. But it is not just a question for other people.

Often the minister may be speaking about things which are too difficult for young children like you to understand. Yet that is not always so. Always ask yourself: Is he speaking to me?

Do you know who else was speaking to the woman at the same time as the minister? Do you know who speaks to you at every service?

It is God. You cannot see God. But the minister has come to speak for God. That is why it is so important to listen to him. That is why it is so important to do what the minister says.

Yes, you should ask: Is the minister speaking to me? But you should also ask: Is God speaking to me?

The Mock-Sermon

A man called Thorpe took great delight in opposing George Whitefield, a minister whose preaching God was blessing to a very great extent. Thorpe may have been an actor, and he had a remarkable talent for mimicking other people. He not only interrupted Whitefield when he was preaching, but ridiculed his sermons among his friends. One day, Thorpe and three friends were together in a gathering of people who worked in theatres. They decided to compete against each other to see who could most effectively imitate Whitefield's preaching. Each of them was to stand on the table, open the Bible at random and preach a mock-sermon from the first verse that caught their eye; the rest of the party were to act as judges.

After each of the other three had taken their turn, Thorpe stepped confidently onto the table, telling his friends: "I shall beat you all". They handed him the Bible and he opened it at Luke 13:3: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish". Thorpe read the words and at once felt something of their meaning, as the truth went through his soul like a flash of lightning.

He was convinced of his guilt as a sinner against God. He knew that the verse was speaking to him personally and that, if he did not repent, he would perish in a lost eternity. And he spoke as he felt – of guilt, death, eternity and the judgement to come. As a guilty, lost, dying sinner, he preached to his companions as also guilty, lost and dying, and told them about their need of repentance. As he went on, there was more and more energy in what he was saying, and he felt more and more gloomy in his own soul. He felt so terrified at the awfulness of his words that it seemed to him that his hair would stand on end. The truth of his text, it seemed to him, was like a blast from the lake burning with fire and brimstone.

But in all he said there was not one word about God’s grace – about salvation through Christ Jesus. As yet Thorpe understood nothing about that. Although the others were somewhat angry at his message, no one interrupted him; they recognised, from the solemnity that had gripped the speaker, how impressed he himself was by what he was telling them. All were spellbound.

At last the address was over and Thorpe came down from the table. Everyone was silent. No one mentioned the competition or gave any opinion as to who had won it. Thorpe quickly went away and never returned to such a gathering. After a time of severe conviction of sin, he believed in Christ. Some time afterwards he became a preacher of the gospel, and God blessed his work. He was taking his place among those, like Whitefield, whom he used to mock.

There are times when God is pleased to awaken sinners to a sense of their sin in the most unlikely situations – even in the midst of God-provoking wickedness. Yet we should remember that to act wickedly is to invite God to leave us to our sins and to the lost eternity that Thorpe spoke about so vividly. Remember, there is no suggestion that any of the others, who joined with him in dishonouring God, was savingly impressed by Thorpe’s stirring words. As someone has said, “space to repent is not always grace to repent”.

For Junior Readers

Do not Delay

A huge red poster on a massive billboard had a word written right across it in large print: *Procrastination*. Do you know what it means? If you look up *procrastinate* in a dictionary, you will find it means *to delay, or postpone action*. It comes from a Latin word which means *to defer till the morning*, in other words, *to put off till another time*.

Can you think of anyone in the Bible who procrastinated? What about the

rich farmer in the parable? He had a wonderful harvest; he didn't even have enough space to store all his crops. So he decided on a project – he would pull down his old barns and build much bigger ones. Once he had done that, he would relax and enjoy himself for many years to come. He probably would not have procrastinated. He would have started his project very soon. There was no time to waste. His crops might be ruined if he didn't get them into the new barns as quickly as possible.

But what about his soul? He had no thought about it. He knew that God had told him to seek salvation for his soul. But he didn't. He procrastinated. And what happened? That very night God said to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee". He was to die. His opportunities were gone. There was no time to seek God. It was too late.

And what about Felix, in Acts 24? Paul was preaching to him about faith in Christ and the judgement to come. Felix was so affected by what he heard that he trembled. But did he begin to seek the Lord? No. He procrastinated. He put off the concerns of his soul to another time. He told Paul: "When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee". But, sadly, we never read that a more suitable time came. Felix's opportunity was gone. By procrastinating over his salvation, it appears that he lost his soul.

These examples teach us how dangerous it is to delay seeking the salvation of our souls? There is an old saying, "Procrastination is the thief of time" – it steals away our time, perhaps without us even realising it. How quickly the weeks and months pass! As you get older you will realise how quickly the years pass too. This was why the wise man in the book of Ecclesiastes warned young people: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them". If you procrastinate, and do not seek God now, when you are young and have the opportunity, time will pass away. And, like Festus, you will have no pleasure in these things.

To impress this point on young people, an old writer wrote about the words, "I hope to be a Christian". He was warning against procrastinating; he wrote like this: "You hope to be a Christian! When? Not now. You are too busy, or have something in view which must be done first, or are so unwilling to give yourself to this work that you do not feel this to be the 'convenient season'. After a while, when you have made a fortune, or passed the time when you can enjoy the world's pleasures – or, at the latest, on your deathbed – you hope to be a Christian. But God's commands and promises are for the present. He gives no encouragement to wait for a future time. You cannot be sure that there shall be any time beyond the present. Before the expected time comes you may be in eternity."

So do not procrastinate. Do not delay. Do not postpone or defer seeking the Lord. “Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

J van Kralingen

Looking Around Us

The Biggest Funeral Ever?

There were four kings, five queens and at least 70 presidents and prime ministers among the 2500 or so people of importance who gathered in Rome for a funeral on April 8. In all there were two million extra people in the city, where traffic was banned for 16 hours.

It was, of course, no ordinary funeral. It was Pope John Paul II who had passed into eternity, as every human being must. Great praise was heaped on him by the high and mighty everywhere, and by very ordinary people. And it may seem to strike a rather jarring note if we say something different.

People may wonder why the Free Presbyterian Church so often speaks out strongly against the Roman Catholic Church – more often and more strongly than against any other body. There is good reason for this: this system is described in very strong language in the Bible. Paul speaks of “that man of sin [who was to] be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:3,4). This does not refer to someone who exalts himself outside the Christian Church; he is “in the temple of God”. And the Pope shows “himself that he is God” when he claims to proclaim a new doctrine infallibly – without any error – as when Pope Pius XII declared, with no authority from the Bible, that Mary the mother of Jesus did not die, but went, body and soul, straight to heaven when she left this world. Popes may not proclaim a new doctrine very often, but they most certainly claim to have this power. Yet it is only God that can give an infallible revelation.

It is significant that Pope John Paul II’s coffin had on it an M (for Mary). He claimed that she had protected him from death when he was shot by a gunman in 1981. What is more serious is that she is given a part to play in the salvation of sinners. This pope taught, for instance, that “Mary is the path that leads to Christ”. But no, the Bible teaches us that we are to come to Christ directly; He Himself calls: “Come unto Me”. But to put anyone, even a holy woman, as Mary indeed was, between ourselves and Christ is extremely dangerous. That is one of the reasons why we must warn strongly about the popes and their teachings, and the Church of which they are the head.

Jairus' Daughter

Professor Stewart Hillis is a leading doctor who specialises in heart diseases. But he has perhaps stepped out of his sphere when he speculates about the case of Jairus' daughter. He thinks she was probably not dead when Jesus came to her, but in a coma caused by there being too little sugar in her blood. He refers to how Jesus instructed Jairus "to feed the girl", which would raise her blood sugar level.

But we are told in Luke's account of the miracle that "her spirit came again, and she arose," *before* she got anything to eat. A more careful reading of the Scriptures might help to keep people from going wrong when they try to explain what happened. Although Professor Hillis denies that he is "rubbishing the miracle", he is clearly not prepared to take the Scripture account at its face value.

We must remember that the Bible is inspired; all the writers – Luke among them – were guided by the Holy Spirit. So what they wrote is absolutely without mistakes; it is perfectly accurate. And that includes what was written about each of Jesus' miracles, including His raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead.

So the miracles we read about in the Bible were completely different from all the other wonderful tales of long ago. And the miracles of Jesus were meant to show His marvellous power as the Son of God in human nature. It was no ordinary man who came to Jairus' home and said to his dead daughter: "Maid, arise". Because of the power that went out with these words, she came to life at once.

Though Christ has gone to heaven, He still works wonders in the world; He blesses the truths of the Bible to sinners so that they believe and turn from their sins. As we read about Christ' miracles in the Bible and see conversions today, we should ask ourselves: What is our response to Him?

We are to receive Him as God. We are to believe on Him as the Saviour who came into the world to deliver unworthy sinners from a lost eternity. We are to obey Him in everything He tells us. And we are to worship Him.

Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2003-04

Exercise 3

All answers from *overseas* should be sent to *Mrs NM 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 2 Chronicles 19 to Job 26, and Matthew 12 to Mark 16.

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 2 Chronicles 34.
 - (a) How old was Josiah (1) when he came to the throne; (3)
 (2) when he began to seek the Lord; (2)
 (3) when he began to purge the land of idolatry? (2)
 - (b) What discovery taught him about true worship? (2)
 - (c) What effect did this have on him? (1)
 - (d) How was he comforted by the prophethood? (2)
 - (e) How did he influence his subjects for good? (3)
 - (f) Give the numbers of the verse in chapter 35:
 - (1) which sums up the memorable passover; (1)
 - (2) which describes the mourning for the young king's death. (1)
2. Read Nehemiah 1 and 2.
 - (a) On receiving news from Jerusalem, what did Nehemiah do besides mourning and weeping? (1)
 - (b) How had he ready access to the king? (1)
 - (c) Quote the words which tell us that:
 - (1) he continued in silent prayer when before the king, (6)
 - (2) the king granted him his request. (2)
 - (3) he acknowledged that his success was from the Lord. (6)
 - (d) Who were (1) Asaph; (2) Hanani? (2)
 - (e) In your own words say briefly what encouraged the people to say to Nehemiah "Let us rise and build". (2)
 - (f) To whom were these words spoken, "But ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem"? (3)

New Testament

1. Read Matthew 14,16,17. Say briefly why Peter spoke these words to the Saviour:
 - (a) "Lord, save me".
 - (b) "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God".
 - (c) "If Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles". (15)
2. Comment on the importance of these words for the disciples and for us:
 - (1) "Hear ye Him"; (2) "they saw no man save Jesus only"? (5)

Memory Exercise

- Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to question 100 in the Shorter Catechism: What doth the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us? (3)

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

1. Read Job chapters 1 and 2.
 - (a) How is Job's character described? (3)
 - (b) In what ways was he "the greatest of all men in the east"? (4)
 - (c) Which of Satan's statements tell us of his great activity? (2)
 - (d) On hearing of his great losses what did Job do? (3)
 - (e) What did he say? (2)
2. Read Nehemiah chapters 1,2 and 4.
 - (a) What made Nehemiah sit down and weep? (2)
 - (b) What did he do when he heard the sad news? (3)
 - (c) Where did he ask the king to send him, and why? (3)
 - (d) Name certain people who "conspired . . . against Jerusalem"? (3)

- (e) How did the Jews react to this opposition? (3)
 (f) In what practical ways did Nehemiah arrange the workers to defend the city? (3)

New Testament

1. Read Matthew chapter 14 and Mark chapter 6.
 (a) Why did Jesus and His disciples go "into a desert place"? (2)
 (b) How did Jesus react when the crowds followed Him? (3)
 (c) How did the disciples react to the crowds? (3)
 (d) What proved there was plenty of food for them all? (2)
 (e) In what way did the disciples show their lack of faith after that? (2)
 (f) With what words did Jesus comfort them? (2)
2. From your reading of the Gospel of Matthew:
 (a) How many times did Jesus say a brother was to be forgiven? (chapter 18) (2)
 (b) What lesson can we learn from the parable of the ten virgins? (chapter 25) (2)
 (c) What last great command did Jesus give to His disciples? (chapter 28) (4)
 (d) What last great promise did Jesus give to His disciples? (chapter 28) (2)

Memory Exercise

- Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to question 42 in the Shorter Catechism:
 What is the sum of the Ten Commandments? (3)

Junior Section (11 and 12 years old)

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

Old Testament

1. Read 2 Chronicles chapters 22-24.
 (a) Where did Joash spend the first six years of his life? (1)
 (b) Why was it necessary for him to live there? (1)
 (c) What was the name of the priest? (1)
 (d) In what way was the priest connected to Joash? (1)
 (e) How did Joash behave while the priest was alive? (1)
 (f) How did he behave after the priest died? (1)
 (g) How did Joash die? (1)
2. From your reading of the book of Esther say who spoke these words, and to whom they were said:
 (a) "Let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those that have the charge of the business" (chapter 3)
 (b) "For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place" (chapter 4)
 (c) "All this availeth me nothing so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate" (chapter 5)
 (d) "What shall be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" (chapter 6)
 (e) "How can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?" (chapter 8) (10)

New Testament

1. Read the parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew chapter 13 verses 24-30.
 (a) When did the enemy sow the tares? (1)
 (b) Why were the servants not permitted to gather up the tares? (1)
 (c) When would the wheat be separated from the tares? (1)
- Later in the same chapter, we read the explanation of the parable given by Jesus to His disciples.
 (d) Who was the enemy? (1)
 (e) Who were the tares? (1)
 (f) Who were the wheat (or good seed)? (1)
 (g) What was the field? (1)
 (h) What was the harvest? (1)
 (i) Who were the reapers? (1)

2. In Mark chapters 1,2,3 and 5 we read about Jesus performing miracles of healing on these people: the man with the unclean spirit; the man called Legion; the man with the withered hand; Simon's wife's mother; the man who was sick of the palsy.

Which of these did Jesus heal

- (a) by the power of His word only?
- (b) by the power of His touch only?
- (c) by the power of both His word and His touch? (5)

Memory Exercise

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

Upper Primary Section (9 and 10 years old)

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

Old Testament

1. Answer the following questions after reading the verses from the book of Esther:
 - (a) Esther 1:1-4: Which countries did Ahasuerus reign over? (2)
 - (b) Esther 1:10-12: Why was the king angry with Queen Vashti? (1)
 - (c) Esther 2:5-7: Who brought up Esther when she was a child? (1)
 - (d) Esther 2:17: Who was made queen instead of Vashti? (1)
 - (e) Esther 3:1-6: Why did Haman want to destroy Mordecai and the Jewish people? (1)
 - (f) Esther 7:10: What eventually happened to Haman? (2)
 - (g) Esther 9:1-2: In which month did the Jews fight against their enemies? (1)
2. Read Job 1:1-5
 - (a) Write down two things which tell us that Job was a good man. (2)
 - (b) How many (1) sons and (2) daughters did Job have? (2)
 - (c) Write down two things which tell us that Job was rich. (2)

New Testament

1 Read Matthew 14:15-21 and Matthew 15:32-38. Copy and complete the table below showing the differences between the two miracles which Jesus performed. (5)

	Matthew 14:15-21	Matthew 15:32-38
How many men were fed?		4000
How many loaves?		
How many fish?		A few little fish
How many baskets of remaining food	12	

2. Read Matthew 26:14-16.
 - (a) Who went with the chief priests? (1)
 - (b) Why did he go to the priests? (1)
 - (c) What did the priests promise to do? (1)
- Read Matthew 26:47-50.
 - (d) Who came with Judas to get Jesus and what did they have? (2)
 - (e) How did Judas greet Jesus? (1)
 - (f) Why did he greet Jesus like this? (1)
- Read Matthew 27:3-8.
 - (g) What did Judas do with the money the chief priests gave him? (1)
 - (h) What did Judas then go and do? (1)
 - (i) What did the priests buy with the money, and what were they going to use it for? (2)

Memory Exercise

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

Lower Primary Section (8 years old and under)

UK answers to *Mrs R J Dickie, 11 Churchill Drive, Stornoway, Lewis, HS1 2NP*.
Young children can answer most questions with one word. (Older ones can write in sentences if they wish.)

Old Testament

Because of their sins, many of the Jews were killed and many more were taken captive to Babylon.

1. The Chaldeans broke down the walls of Jerusalem. What did they do to the palaces and the house of God? (2 Chronicles 36:19)
2. Who prophesied that the land of Judah would stay ruined for 70 years? (2 Chronicles 36:21)
3. Which king of Persia ordered the Jews to rebuild the house of God? (Ezra 1:2,3)
4. When the people had laid the foundation of the temple, they praised God and shouted. But what did the old men do who remembered the first temple? (Ezra 3:12)

After the temple and the city wall were built up, the Levites read the book of the law to the people and prayed to God. Fill in the missing words.

5. But thou art a God r____ to p____, gracious and m____, slow to anger, and of great k____. (Nehemiah 9:17)
6. Howbeit thou art j____ in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done r____, but we have done w____. (Nehemiah 9:33)

New Testament

1. Who betrayed Jesus? (Mark 14:10)
2. Who denied Jesus three times? (Mark 14:72)
3. Who were crucified with Jesus? (Mark 15:27)
4. What was over the land from the sixth to the ninth hour? (Mark 15:33)
5. What did the Centurion say when he saw Jesus cry with a loud voice and give up the ghost? Complete the words: T____ this man was the S__ of G___. (Mark 15:39)
6. Which rich man from Arimathaea took Jesus' body down from the cross? (Mark 15:43-46)
7. On which day of the week did Jesus rise from the dead? (Mark 16:9)
8. What did Jesus command His disciples to do after He had risen from the dead? Complete the words: Go ye into all the w____ and preach the g____ to e____ creature. (Mark 16:15)