

The Young People's Magazine

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Remembering

William Williams was once preaching on Daniel 12:2: “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt”. (He was known as William Williams of Wern, to distinguish him from another noted Welsh minister.) He explained that the first part of the verse means “the many that are sleeping” – referring to all those that sleep in death. He went on: “They sleep there: many of them have slept for centuries, some of them for thousands of years; some are only just gone, and some are falling down and being put to sleep daily. But they are not to sleep for ever in the dust of the earth; they shall awake . . . they shall awake all at the same time, and shall come out of the dust.” He was pointing to the resurrection, when some will arise “to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt”.

Williams went on to speak at length about the eternal world. He told the congregation that it will be a world without any mixture of people – unlike here, where Judas was among the disciples, for instance, and the foolish virgins were with the wise; where the good and the bad live in the same street, or even eat at the same table. But at the resurrection “a separation will have taken place of the good from the bad, the sheep from the goats. There will not be anyone ungodly among the congregation of the righteous, and there will not be anyone righteous in the congregation of the wicked. A great gulf will have been fixed between them.”

He then told his congregation that eternity is “a world of rewards and punishments. It is a world to set right the wrongs of this world.” Everyone will be treated, either in heaven or in hell, according to how they lived in this world. And “heaven could never be heaven for a sinful being, full of enmity against God. Such a man would be as miserable there as in hell itself.” But, he emphasised, “a good conscience is essential to the happiness of heaven; and an evil conscience – a rebuking, reproving, condemning conscience – is the worm that dieth not in the bosoms of lost souls in hell”.

Williams' next point was about our memories of the past. He told the people: “Human memory, no doubt, will add much to the blessedness of

heaven". He was thinking of the saints in glory remembering the words of the Bible, and how sweet the promises were to them while they were making their way through time. And he was picturing how they will with pleasure think back to the sermons they once heard and to the places where they enjoyed freedom in prayer to God. He went on solemnly: "But if this will be a source of new sweetness in heaven, it will add to the misery of hell and will be one of the great elements of woe there. Alas, if the power of memory could be destroyed there, it would soften the fury of the flame!"

Then the preacher quoted two words from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus: "Son, remember". It was Abraham in heaven speaking to the rich man in hell, who was not to be allowed to forget what had happened in this world. And can you expect that it will be any different for you if you do not trust in Jesus? People do not want to believe there is such a place as hell. But it is not a question of whether we find the doctrine attractive; the question is: Is it true? And, solemnly, it is true; the Bible points clearly to a lost eternity.

Will you have to remember in a lost eternity sermons you heard in church but to which you did not pay proper attention? Will you have to recall chapters from the Bible read at family worship that you did not treat seriously? Or the prayers sent up to heaven which you did not join in? Or the kind warnings which a good friend whispered in your ear, but you told yourself that they did not matter? Will you have to think over all the various times – in church or at home or wherever – when you were reminded that you ought urgently to seek the Lord, but you promised yourself that you had many, many more years of life, when you were sure to seek and find? Will you have to experience your conscience reminding you again and again and again of how time slipped by without you ever beginning to seek the Lord, until it was too late – until death pounced on you and brought you, perhaps without warning, into a lost eternity?

Remember that a lost eternity is fearful; it is the place where "the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:4). And one painful element in that fire will be your memory stirring up a disturbed conscience – a memory that will never forget, and a conscience that will never go silent.

But why should it come to that? Why need anyone who knows what the Bible teaches ever go to hell? If you are wise, you will seek the Lord now; you will call upon Him while He is near; you will believe on Christ as the Saviour whom God has appointed. When the jailor in Philippi was very near a lost eternity – he had been on the verge of committing suicide – Paul and Silas told him: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved". That is God's message for you. Do not reject it, lest it become a painful message echoing round your mind for ever and ever.

The Book of Ruth

87. A Wife and Mother

Rev Keith M Watkins

Ruth 4:13. "So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son."

This verse records a great deal in a very few words. It tells us that Ruth the widow was married again: "So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife". It tells us that Ruth the childless woman became a mother: "The Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son". A wife and mother! Truly these were wonderful events to take place in Ruth's life. A widow from Moab, she became the wife of Boaz, Bethlehem's godly "mighty man of wealth". Barren in her former marriage, now the Lord gave her a son – a special son in the line leading to King David and eventually to King Jesus, the Saviour of the world. Ruth could never have expected such things. How could it happen?

For one thing, Ruth had met a man who kept his promises. When "Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife", he was only doing what he had already promised to do – to perform the duty of a relative to Ruth if the nearer relative would not (see 3:13). Naomi had known Boaz well when she said that he would not rest until he had performed his promise (see 3:18). If only more people were like Boaz! Perhaps you have found in your own experience that it is much easier to make a promise than to keep it. Let Boaz be an example to us all.

Before we leave the subject of promise-keeping, we should remember how the Lord Jesus from all eternity promised to redeem His people. A crisis came in the garden of Gethsemane. Would He keep His promise? The cup of wrath appeared so dreadful that the agony of His holy soul caused His body to sweat "as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44). He prayed three times for the cup to pass from Him, if possible. But it was not possible. He had promised to save His people. He had promised to drink the cup. He had promised to suffer and die upon the cross. He could not break His promise. "Nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11). And so the Saviour shed His blood and poured out His soul in death – all to keep His promise. Whatever the cost, He had made a promise. Jesus fulfilled the verse about the man who "swareth to His own hurt, and changeth not" (Psalm 15:4).

Secondly, Ruth's blessings were an answer to prayer. "The Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son." Isn't that just what the people of Bethlehem

had prayed for? They wanted the house of Boaz to be increased by “the seed which the Lord shall give . . . of this young woman” (verse 12). God answers prayer! Yes, it is only the Lord who can give children. It is in His sovereign power to give or not to give. But as with all good things, we are to pray for them, submitting to His own will. He has told us to seek in order to find, and to ask in order to receive. Even though the Lord is going to grant His blessing, He requires us to pray. “I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them” (Ezekiel 36:37).

Thirdly, Ruth's change of circumstances must be seen as a marvel of God's works of providence – “His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures, and all their actions” (Shorter Catechism, answer 11). No one except God could make things turn out like this. When Ruth chose to go with Naomi to Bethlehem-Judah, her mother-in-law was right to warn her that her prospects for marriage and childbearing would be extremely remote.

Humanly speaking, Naomi's fears were well-founded, and Orpah acted on those fears and returned to Moab in search of a husband and children. But not Ruth. She put her trust in the God of Israel, who controls all things. Then, when everything looked hopeless, the God of providence acted. It was the Lord who ensured that the women arrived in Bethlehem at the time of barley harvest, so that Ruth would go out to glean. It was the Lord who directed Ruth to the field of Boaz without her realising it. It was the Lord who turned the heart of Boaz towards Ruth from the beginning. It was the Lord who cleared away the obstacle of the nearer relative. It was the Lord who “gave her conception” and then strength to have a son. How wonderful! God is in control, so His people can trust Him to work all things together for their good, even when the future looks bleak.

Fourthly, Ruth becoming a wife and mother showed that God remembered the sacrifice she made when she left her homeland. Unlike Orpah, Ruth had been determined to go to Judah, the land where Naomi's God was worshipped and known. Ruth had been prepared to do that, whatever it cost her. She had been willing to sacrifice her hopes of marriage and childbearing, for the sake of the true religion.

It has been said that God is no man's debtor. It is true. Whatever a believer does or suffers for the Lord, He will never let it go unnoticed. The Hebrews were assured of this: “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love” (Hebrews 6:10).

The Redeemer especially remembers sacrifices made for Him. Recall His words: “There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My sake, and the gospel's, but

he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life” (Mark 10:29). People who are prepared to lose much for the sake of the gospel – people like Ruth – will not really lose in the end. Of course, they will enjoy eternal life in heaven, and “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed” (Romans 8:18). But even while they are still in this world, the Lord can more than make up for their losses by new and better blessings. So He did for Ruth.

The gospel turns people’s approach to life upside down. Unconverted people try to cling on to all the things of the world, even if they lose their souls in the process. But the Lord’s people have their priorities set on higher things – the things of the Spirit. They seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (see Matthew 6:33). Does this mean that they always end up with none of the things of this world? No. Their heavenly Father knows their need of food, clothing and so on. All these things will be added to them as He sees good for them.

Meran Mhor

Rev Angus Smith

Meran Mhor was her Gaelic name; in English she was known as Marion Macleod. She lived in Elphin, a little village in Sutherland, in the far north of Scotland. Under God’s hand she owed a great deal to a catechist named Donald Mackenzie (a catechist’s main duty was to teach the people the Shorter Catechism). The two names are linked together, so perhaps we should first of all say a little about Donald.

Donald Mackenzie was born in 1768 at Clashmore, Stoer, also in Sutherland. He was barely in his teens when his mother used to notice him praying alone. His uncle, Eachann Mor, a man of great piety, seemed to have had a great influence upon him. Donald joined the army before he was 20. At one time he was stationed in Leith, then just outside Edinburgh. He often went to hear John Colquhoun, one of the best ministers of the time. And he often spoke of how Colquhoun wounded him in the heart, and then healed him, through his preaching. He was later stationed in Northern Ireland and benefited from hearing a number of other preachers.

After returning home, he was appointed catechist in Assynt in 1801, and for 60 years the people appreciated his teaching. It was said that he had a vessel of oil for healing, rather than a quiver of arrows to wound. Some would

say that he had not experienced much of the terrors of the law, but Donald would reply that he got both the law and the gospel at Calvary. He added that he died in Christ at Calvary, and that he rose to newness of life with Him. In spite of what was said of him, he could at times pierce the hearts of sinners with the sword of God's Word in an awesome manner. One of the most noted instances of this was in Marion Macleod's conversion.

The catechist usually preached in one of the homes in Elphin on Sabbaths. It was said of him that he often shed tears as he preached to sinners. The man he stayed with believed that Donald rose up very early on Sabbaths and he once stayed up all night to check if that was so. It was winter, and when the man looked out through the window very early in the morning, he saw Donald coming from the barn, where he must have gone to pray. And he was seen entering the barn several times that morning.

During the service that day, Donald took as his text the words of Jeremiah 22:29, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord". One of his hearers was Marion Macleod, a young girl wearing a new frock, which she wanted all at the service to see, so she was late in going in. The arrows of the gospel pierced her young heart, and the beautiful frock was forgotten. So great was the effect on her that she had to be carried out from the place of worship. Ever afterwards she regarded Donald Mackenzie as her spiritual father.

Not long after returning from the army, the catechist married Christina Munroe from Achmelvich, near Lochinver. She was a godly woman, but he did not have her long as his wife. From the time of her death, Donald began to write spiritual poetry, and his first spiritual poem was in her memory. It told about God's dealings with his wife and himself. He wrote 12 more poems, and they were eventually published as a booklet.

When he visited Marion Macleod at Elphin shortly before he died, he said it would be the last time he would visit the village. "What will become of us then?" she exclaimed. He answered, "The Lord is preparing another man for the office", as catechist. This was so; another godly man, James Mackenzie, soon took his place. Donald Mackenzie's last words were a blessing on the food he was to eat; he quoted from Psalm 16:5: "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup". He died at Clashmore, aged 93.

Meran progressed in the faith and became well known for her gracious spirit. When she was old, Margaret Matheson, a girl of about 16 in Ullapool, was brought to the feet of the Saviour. But she soon became greatly troubled because of the spiritual warfare taking place in her soul. She concluded that this was because she was not spiritually mature and that it was something she must grow out of. She wondered if she could ever reach the spiritual maturity that Meran Mhor had come to. So she asked her parents for

permission to visit Meran, whom they knew quite well, as they used to go to each other's communions. When Margaret went to bed she made up her mind to listen to Meran praying, to see if that would help her in her spiritual dilemma. When Meran rose to pray, Margaret listened carefully and was shocked to hear Meran say, "Lord, save me from the hell within my heart". The scales then fell from Margaret's eyes, and she realised that all of God's children experience spiritual warfare.

Many years later a young minister, whose roots were in Elphin, went to preach to Inverness. During the sermon he mentioned the incident about young Margaret Matheson. When he was coming out of the church, the minister's wife went up to him and said, "You have told the story exactly as it happened". "How do you know?" he asked. "Because," she said, "I was that young girl."

How Did it all Begin?

7. Fossils

Fossils are fascinating things. I remember, when I was little, my sister found a fossil on the beach at Cromarty in Ross-shire. It was a heavy round stone. I needed my two hands to lift it and it fitted comfortably into them. It had markings in the shape of what looked like a large, round, curly shell. On return visits to the beach at Cromarty I used to scour the rocks looking for fossils but I was never to find another, not even a small one. We will later see that this is a common problem for palaeontologists.

But what is a palaeontologist? Someone who studies fossils. And the study of fossils is called palaeontology. Many palaeontologists spend a lifetime looking for and analysing fossils, as they try to piece together the history of our planet.

A fossil is formed when a plant or animal is buried quickly in mud or sediment. The harder parts of the organism become encased in the hardening mud, and over time there is a chemical reaction between the remains of the organism and the sediment around it. This eventually causes the organism remains to become like rock – mineralised and fossilised. People who believe in evolution think that this fossilisation process occurs over long periods of time, but there is plenty of evidence which demonstrates that fossils can be made very quickly.

When I was on holiday in New Zealand last year I visited a place called The Buried Village of Te Wairoa, near Rotorua. The village had been buried by a huge volcanic eruption in 1886, and 153 lives were lost. A most

interesting open-air museum has been made of the partially excavated village. Among the relics were many fossilised items, buried by the hot molten lava, mud and ash from the volcano. Some unusual fossils were a bowler hat, a piece of ham and a bag of flour. It clearly did not take thousands or millions of years for these items to become fossilised. They were excavated 60 years after the eruption but probably they had been petrified (turned into stone) some time before that.

The main problem with fossils for the evolutionists is that there are just not enough of them. Also there are not enough of the sort of fossils they are looking for. This would normally lead someone who thinks straight to conclude that maybe they are looking for what does not exist!

Let me explain. Evolutionists believe that there is a progression from simple organisms to more complex organisms in the plant and animal world. This progression of simple to more complex must have in-between stages of organisms – what are called “transitional forms” – when a species is changing into a more complex one. Evolutionists believe, for instance, that whales evolved from four-legged land mammals. So they would expect, according to their theory, to find evidence of intermediate forms in this progression from four legs to fins – change in body shape and lung shape and size, etc. A few fossil findings have led to claims of “missing links” but when these claims were investigated, they turned out to be based on just a few fragments of bone. An active imagination with an evolutionary bias has then “reconstructed” these fragments into the required “missing link”.

Another “transitional form” commonly referred to is the archaeopteryx, which is supposed to represent the link between reptiles and birds. However, when the fossil remains of this creature have been properly examined they were shown to belong to the bird category. It would have been an unusual bird, but there are some unusual species around – such as the duck-billed platypus – which have baffled people in the past. A leading expert on birds from the University of North Carolina – an evolutionist – has stated: “Palaeontologists have tried to turn Archaeopteryx into an earth-bound feathered dinosaur. But it's not. It is a bird, a perching bird. And no amount of ‘palaeobabble’ is going to change that.”

It is a curious feature of evolutionists' thinking that much excitement is often caused by the finding of a fossil of an *extinct* organism – as if extinction is a proof of evolution. But for an animal or plant to become extinct is no proof of evolution. Some species – such as tigers and giant pandas – which are in danger of extinction today, are given special protection to help them survive. If that protection fails to save these species, will people living in the future really conclude that their extinction is evidence of evolution? Of

course not; they will recognise that extinction was caused by destruction of these animals' habitat, or by excessive hunting.

Another difficulty evolutionists have when it comes to considering the fossil evidence is that many of the fossils which they suppose to be very old are similar to organisms today. They are called "living fossils". This is a problem because, according to the theory of evolution, these organisms should have changed; they would have become more complex as time passed. But they have not changed significantly, and any changes can easily be explained by natural selection. This shows that evolution is *not* happening. An example of a "living fossil" is a type of fish called the coelacanth (see-lah-kanth). Evolutionists believed it was extinct for the past 70 million years and fossils of it were dated back 360 million years. Then one was caught off the coast of Madagascar in 1938 and it was obvious that it had not evolved in any way.

Polystrate fossils are another interesting feature. These fossils are found through several layers of rocks which are supposed to have been formed in different geological periods separated by millions of years. Fossilised trees, for instance, have been found whose top is in rock several layers higher than the bottom of it. The tree trunk must have been buried quickly. Had it been buried slowly, its top would have decayed while the bottom was still being fossilised. This shows that these layers of different rocks did not take millions of years to form – they formed in less time than it would take for a dead tree to start decaying. Creationists believe that most polystrate fossils were formed during the Genesis flood and others were probably formed during other catastrophes throughout the history of the world. Evolutionists do accept that there are circumstances in which an organism can be buried quickly, through several rock layers, but they don't seem to be able to apply this fact when they analyse other rock strata.

Fossil graveyards are probably another result of the Genesis flood. One discovered recently in Wyoming, USA, was found to be full of dinosaur bones, and there are many other sites with large numbers of fossils, indicating that some catastrophe overcame these animals suddenly.

Yet again, the evidence to support evolution is weak. But that same evidence, when interpreted within a biblical framework, does not conflict with a literal interpretation of Genesis chapters 1-8. If evolutionists would accept the flood during Noah's time as fact, it would help them make sense of the existing evidence. "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened" (Genesis 7:11).

S M Campbell

Marriage: What the Bible Teaches

2. The Foundation for Marriage

Rev G G Hutton

The first article in this series considered marriage as a blessing from God.

It goes without saying that a sound marriage is built on a sound foundation. And when little attention is given to the foundation, we should not be surprised to see so many marriages floundering. The real foundation is God's Word, and what it teaches about marriage. We must recognise that it was God who established marriage; so there are divine requirements. Some marriages are no doubt intended to bring social status; they are nothing more than a loveless social arrangement – a marriage of convenience. God is not brought into the matter at all.

On the human level, however, a proper foundation for a prosperous and happy marriage is trust. Those who enter into marriage must first be confident that they can trust one another. There can be no happiness or peace if either partner is suspicious of the other. Such trust is built on undivided love for each other. True love trusts! Any sign of instability or unfaithfulness should be treated as a warning for the future.

Love must have an object, and both partners thinking of marriage should be confident that they are definitely the object of the other's exclusive affections. The question of course arises: What is love? It is probably impossible to define love with perfect accuracy; it is much easier to illustrate it. God "is love", but He has demonstrated His love outside of Himself, and in such a way that His creatures may be conscious of it. This should be true of love within marriage. And love must reveal itself and prove itself before marriage if it is to blossom within marriage. Each partner in the marriage should be aware of being specially and particularly loved by the other.

The husband is required to love his wife "as Christ loved the Church". This tells us where we are to find out about the love to be shown in marriage. Let unconverted people define love as they will, Christians will want to learn how to love someone else truly as they learn by experience of the love of God. When a husband loves God as he ought, he will love his wife and also his children as he should. This is illustrated for us in the experience of Joshua, when we read of him announcing: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord". It is a blessing for any family when its head has such a purpose. Joshua desired to serve God, but not in isolation from his family. He was going to serve God within his family and with his family. He would acknowledge God and worship Him in his family.

A home without God is a sad spectacle, and a family without the worship of God is a poor family indeed. Any young person intending to marry should resolve to put God first in everything, to observe His worship carefully and to treat the counsel of the Bible as the most important in all decision-making. It is from the Bible we learn what God requires of husbands, of wives and of children. It is from the Bible we learn how to live in harmony, how to conduct our domestic affairs, how to raise children and how to love each other. No better foundation for a successful marriage can be discovered than this: genuine love inflamed and maintained by the knowledge and experience of God's covenant love revealed in His Word. A husband who loves his Bible will love his wife. A wife who loves God's Word will also love her husband. If they both love God, they will delight in each other, while confidently trusting each other.

For Junior Readers

An Obituary

Do you know what an obituary is? It is published after someone has died and gives a short account of their life. There are obituaries in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* from time to time – after a godly minister or elder has died, for instance. You also see them in daily newspapers. These are usually about well-known people, who have done something important during their lives. Sadly, they are mostly worldly people, who have no religion.

But one appeared recently about a Christian man called Henry Morris. He was from Dallas, Texas, and wrote more than 60 books dealing with religion and science. Perhaps the most famous of these was *The Genesis Flood*. It was the first attempt in the twentieth century to offer strong scientific support for the Bible's account of creation and the flood. In the 1970s he founded the Institute for Creation Research and became its president.

As a scientist he ably defended creation against those who believe in evolution. A professor of biology, who once argued against Morris in a public debate, said that he was “unfailingly polite, a real gentleman and a sincere and committed Christian”.

The obituary goes on: “Morris argued that the first 11 chapters of Genesis and the stories of Adam and Eve and Noah and the flood were factual history. He calculated the Ark's cargo capacity at roughly 522 railway carriages that could hold 35 000 animals capable of repopulating the earth. He believed, from a literal reading of the Bible, that the earth was only several thousand

years old, not billions, as most scientists believed. He claimed that creation did not have to grow or develop from simple beginnings. God formed it full-grown in every respect, including even Adam and Eve as mature individuals when they were first formed."

The same week, a local paper wrote about a man from the area who had died unexpectedly. The headline was, "He gave all his life to football". That summed up his life. He created and ran a football club; it was his whole life. There was no mention of religion or faith. How sad!

The Bible tells us, "The memory of the just is blessed; but the name of the wicked shall rot". Which are you?

For Younger Readers

Jerry and the Cake

Jerry was a little boy with two younger brothers. His mother often read the Bible to him. She read about young boys like Joseph and Moses and Samuel, and lots of other people. Jerry enjoyed listening to these stories.

When Jerry heard about Samuel, he learned how God spoke to that other little boy long ago. Jerry wanted God to speak to him too. He wanted God to say, "Jerry", just as God called, "Samuel, Samuel". Then, just like Samuel, Jerry thought he would say, "Here am I". And he thought he would do everything God told him.

"Mother," Jerry said, "if I could only hear God speak to me."

And his mother told him: "Every time you think of doing wrong, Jerry, if you listen you will hear a small voice inside you saying, 'Jerry, Jerry'."

What do you think she was talking about?

She was telling Jerry about his conscience. But, you may ask, what is our conscience?

It is what we may call a little something inside us that starts to speak when we feel we are not doing what is right.

"Shall I hear it with my ears, my own ears?" Jerry asked and held his ears with his hands.

No, his mother told him.

And then she went on to say to him, "If you are ever on the point of doing what is not right, stop a moment. Stop and listen to see if something inside you says, 'Jerry, don't do it'."

That would be God using Jerry's conscience to tell him not to do something wrong.

Some days later when Jerry came home, his mother was out. "I wish I had something to eat", he said.

Nancy told him to go and get one of the green apples in the smallest basket in the corner of a cupboard. "Your mother will let you have one of those", she told him.

Jerry ran away to the cupboard. The apples looked good and he took one of them. As he turned away, he noticed a lovely cake with plums in it and sugar all over it. "How good it looks!" Jerry thought to himself: "I should like a bit."

Then a voice seemed to say to him: "Take a piece; your mother need not know. Take it; nobody sees you."

But that was not his conscience. I think Jerry really wanted the cake. But he did not have permission from his mother. Perhaps she was keeping it for some special visitors.

Then another little voice said, "Jerry, Jerry". He knew what this other voice was; it was his conscience. He knew it would be wrong to take a piece of cake. His mother would allow him to take an apple, but she had not told him that he could have a piece of the lovely cake.

Jerry listened to his conscience. He quickly shut the cupboard and went away. He knew he must not touch the cake unless his mother allowed him to do so. But he had his apple, and he went out into the garden to enjoy it.

Will you listen to your conscience, like Jerry, when it tells you that you are doing wrong? Remember that God always sees what you are doing.

Looking Around Us

Discovering True Christianity

Cuba has a strong Roman Catholic background though it has been ruled for over 40 years by Communist dictator Fidel Castro. Now Roman Catholic organisations are enthusiastic about attracting crowds of people to "rediscover Christianity". Up to 90 000, it is said, are now going to mass every day.

How have they succeeded? By giving out little fluorescent plastic images,

just 9 centimetres high, of Jesus as a child. It is claimed that about 350 000 of these statues were distributed across Cuba in just one month recently.

But how can these images help anyone to rediscover Christianity? They cannot attract anyone to *true* Christianity, for the Second Commandment forbids making images of Jesus – as a child or as an adult – because He is a divine Person. What people need, in Cuba and elsewhere, is to discover the Christianity of the Bible, where Jesus is revealed as the Son of God, who became man, so that He could rescue people from their sins.

No one knows what Jesus looked like. No image can give us any reliable information about Him. Yet the Bible does. And we can be sure that everything it says about Jesus is perfectly true. We can rely on it absolutely.

But the Bible says nothing about the mass. Yes, it tells believers to remember their Saviour's death in the Lord's Supper. But that is not a constantly-repeated sacrifice, as the mass claims to be. No priest has the right to claim he can offer up Jesus Christ as a sacrifice to God for sin. Christ did that once, and He did so perfectly. The sacrifice cannot be repeated.

It is Christ's sacrifice at Calvary that is at the centre of true Christianity. We, as sinners, are to look to Him for salvation – we are to believe in Him. And in doing so, we will discover true Christianity.

Ignoring God's Authority

Last Sabbath, the Lord's Supper was observed here in Leverburgh. Morning and evening, the congregation's attention was drawn to Christ as the Saviour of sinners. And at the first service God's children took the bread and wine as symbols of Christ broken body and shed blood – pointing to His death. We trust they obtained spiritual profit, and it would be a wonderful mercy if others were brought to see their need, as sinners, of Christ as their Saviour.

Yet that same day saw the first-ever timetabled Sabbath ferry services run between here on Harris and the next island of North Uist. Ferry company Caledonian MacBrayne made their decision to go ahead with Sabbath sailings just 10 days before. They did so without waiting for the probable objections of the local Council and they ignored a petition signed by over 700 people. These included a substantial majority of people in south Harris.

More serious than human objections is the fact that the Most High has spoken. All through history He has directed people to keep the Sabbath day holy. This is recorded in the Fourth Commandment, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy", preserved in the Bible for all time. Those who ignore that Commandment do so at their peril.

Very few travelled on the ferry last Sabbath but, more and more, people are ignoring God's authority in all kinds of ways. Let *us* value the benefits of a Sabbath kept to God's glory, and its opportunity to listen to the gospel!

Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2005-06

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 Isaiah 41 to Jeremiah 46, 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. The Lord sent Jeremiah to Judah and Jerusalem to warn them of His judgements.
 - (a) Why was Jeremiah at first reluctant to obey God's call? (2)
 - (b) How did the Lord encourage him? (2)
 - (c) Quote a verse from chapter 2 which summarises the sins of the people. (2)
 - (d) How does the Lord through Jeremiah encourage them to repent? (chapter 3) (3)
 - (e) Explain how the people are compared unfavourably to birds. (chapter 8) (1)
 - (f) In what things are we told the Lord delights? (chapter 9) (1)
 - (g) Why are two former leaders referred to? (chapter 15) (1)
2. Read Jeremiah 17.
 - (a) How is the folly of trusting in man shown? (3)
 - (b) Of what Psalm are we reminded when reading here of one trusting in the Lord? (1)
 - (c) How is the natural heart described? (2)
 - (d) Quote the words of a prayer which is appropriate for us. (2)
3. Read Jeremiah 38 and 39.
 - (a) How are the words of Matthew 5:10-12 true of Jeremiah? (3)
 - (b) How are the words of Matthew 10:41,42 true of Ebedmelech? (2)

New Testament

1. Read Acts 22.
 - (a) How did Paul show his zeal for the law before his conversion? (2)
 - (b) How did he learn that he was persecuting the Saviour in His people? (2)
 - (c) Quote Ananias' words about Paul's future usefulness. (1)
 - (d) What was Paul's first witnessing on Jesus' side? (see Acts 9) (1)
 - (e) Give the number of the verse which indicates particularly to whom he would preach. (1)
2. Read Romans chapter 10.
 - (a) How is the law kept for believers? (2)
 - (b) How near has the gospel come to us? (2)
 - (c) Why is it so important to be always at public worship? (2)
 - (d) Why should we value the sent preachers? (2)
 - (e) Give the verse about the preachers which Paul quotes from Isaiah's prophecy. (2)
3. Read 1 Corinthians 1.
 - (a) Read again verses 4 and 5 and then give the numbers of two other verses which express the truth in them in language which is equally beautiful. (1)
 - (b) Name the class of hearers to whom the preaching is "foolishness" and another to whom it is "the power of God". (4)

Memory Exercise

- Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to question 96 in the Shorter Catechism:
What is the Lord's Supper? (3)

Intermediate Section (13 and 14 years old)UK answers to *Mrs E Couper, 17 Duncan Street, Thurso, Caithness, KW14 7HU.***Old Testament**

1. See Jeremiah 1.
 - (a) Why was Jeremiah at first reluctant to obey God's call? (2)
 - (b) What special promise did God give him? (2)
 - (c) Under what kings did he work? (2)
2. See Jeremiah 17.
 - (a) Which people are "cursed"? (2)
 - (b) What is true of the "blessed man"? (2)
 - (c) How is the heart described? (2)
 - (d) To which commandment are the people to give special heed? (2)
3. See Jeremiah 38.
 - (a) Tell, in your own words, how Ebedmelech helped Jeremiah out of the dungeon. (3)
 - (b) Who was King Zedekiah afraid of? (2)
 - (c) What sound advice did Jeremiah give to King Zedekiah? (2)
4. See chapter 39.
 - (a) What promise from the Lord did Jeremiah give to Ebedmelech? (2)
 - (b) Why did he receive this promise? (1)

New Testament

All the questions are from the Epistle of Paul to the Romans.

1. Why was Paul not "ashamed of the gospel of Christ"? (chapter 1) (2)
2. Give two of the great blessings which follow for those who are "justified by faith". (chapter 5) (2)
3. See chapter 10.
 - (a) What lesson can we learn from verse 12? (1)
 - (b) How is the gospel described? (2)
4. See chapter 12.
 - (a) What does Paul "beseech" believers to do with their bodies and their minds? (3)
 - (b) What are Christians warned against in verse 3 and 16? (2)
5. What do we learn about "love" in chapter 13? (2)
6. (a) Which chapters in Isaiah are referred to in chapter 10 of Romans? (3)
- (b) What does this teach us about the Old and New Testaments of the Bible? (2)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to question 34 in the Shorter Catechism:
What is adoption? (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 Isaiah chapter 55.
 - (a) Who is invited to the waters? (1)
 - (b) What is promised to those that hear? (1)
 - (c) When are we commanded to seek the Lord? (1)
 - (d) What is promised to those who return unto the Lord? (2)
 - (e) What effect do the snow and the rain have on the earth? (2)
 - (f) What similar effect will God's Word have on our hearts if we receive it? (1)
2. Complete these verses from Isaiah chapters 59-61 and give the reference.
 - (a) When the enemy shall come in like a flood
 - (b) A little one shall become a thousand
 - (c) Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save

- (d) For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people
 (e) For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth (15)

New Testament

1. Read Acts 20:17-38, where Paul addresses the elders of Ephesus before he parted from them.
 - (a) Although Paul knew that “bonds and afflictions” awaited him in every city, how did he feel about this? (1)
 - (b) What claim did he make about his preaching among them? (1)
 - (c) He warned them that, after his departure, “grievous wolves” would enter in among them (verse 29). Say in your own words what you think this means. (2)
 - (d) Paul warned them that trouble would also arise from another source. What was that source? (1)
 - (e) How did the elders of Ephesus feel as they parted from Paul? (1)
2. Read 1 Corinthians chapter 15.
 - (a) Why did Paul think he was “not meet to be called as apostle”? (1)
 - (b) What is referred to as “the last enemy that shall be destroyed”? (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)
 - (f) Some verses in this chapter tell us about the contrast between the body of a believer as it is laid in the grave at death and the same body when it is raised again at the resurrection. Fill in the missing words:

It is sown in corruption; it is raised in ____.

It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in ____.

It is sown in weakness; it is raised in ____.

It is sown a natural body; it is raised ____.

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. Read Isaiah 53, which is about Christ’s sufferings.
 - (a) From verse 3 write down two things we are told about Christ. (2)
 - (b) Why was He (1) wounded and (2) bruised? (2)
 - (c) Can you give one general word for the two answers for question (b)? (1)
 - (d) In verse 6, what are we compared to? (1)
2. Read Jeremiah 38:1-13.
 - (a) What did Jeremiah say would happen to Jerusalem? (verse 3) (2)
 - (b) Why were the princes angry at this? (verse 4) (1)
 - (c) What happened to Jeremiah? (verse 6) (3)
 - (d) Who went to the king to speak for Jeremiah? (verses 8-9) (1)
 - (e) How did he help Jeremiah? (verses 11-13) (4)

New Testament

1. Read Acts 24:1-9: Paul is accused in court.
 - (a) Who was his main accuser? (1)
 - (b) He was accused of being a ringleader of what? (2)
 - (c) What was he supposed to have done to the temple? (1)
 - (d) Who agreed with this accusation? (1)

2. Now read Acts 26:1-11: Paul is defending himself in another court.
- Who is Paul speaking to? (1)
 - Why was he happy that this person was willing to listen to him, and how does he ask them to hear him? (2)
 - Write down three things Paul did to those who believed in Jesus of Nazareth. (verses 9-11) (3)

Now read verses 28-32.

- What did King Agrippa say Paul had almost persuaded him to be? (1)
- What did King Agrippa and the others think about Paul? (3)

Memory Exercise

- Learn by heart and write down the answer to question 27 in the Shorter Catechism: Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist? (3)

Lower Primary Section (8 years old and under)

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

Old Testament

There are many verses in the Bible which contain the words "Fear not". Fill in the missing words from these verses in Isaiah:

- F___ thou n___; for I am with thee: be not d_____; for I am thy God: I will s_____ thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will u_____ thee with the right hand of my righteousness. (Isaiah 41:10)
- For I the LORD thy God will h___ thy right h___, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will h___ thee. (Isaiah 41:13)
- Fear not, thou worm J____, and ye men of I____; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy r_____, the Holy One of Israel. (Isaiah 41:14)
- But now thus saith the LORD that c_____ thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have c_____ thee by thy n___; thou art m____. (Isaiah 43:1)
- Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the e___, and g_____ thee from the w____. (Isaiah 43:5)

New Testament

- When Paul was shipwrecked, which island did he land on? (Acts 28:1)
- What fastened on Paul's hand when he put a bundle of sticks on the fire? (Acts 28:3)
- What did the island people think that Paul must be? (Acts 28:4)
- When no harm came to Paul, what did the people think he was? (Acts 28:6)
- Whose father did Paul heal? (Acts 28:8)
- Did Paul heal any other people in the island? (Acts 28:9)
- When Paul spoke to the Jews in Rome, did they all believe the things he said about Jesus? (Acts 28:24)
- What is sent to the Gentiles? (Acts 28:28)