

The Young People's Magazine

**Issued by the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland
Reformed in Doctrine, Worship and Practice**

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” Ecclesiastes 12:1



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Three Steps to Happiness?

The advert appeared in Singapore. It was promoting a magazine whose front cover was splashed on the side of a bus. The titles of several articles appeared on the cover, but the only one which caught my eye was: "Three steps to happiness". What these were, I just do not know. But perhaps they were general ideas like: "Look on the bright side of life".

It is natural for human beings to want to be happy. That is how the first man and woman were created. But we live in a very different world to the one in which Adam and Eve began their lives. They sinned, and ever since then the world has been a sinful world, in which happiness can be very difficult to find. The Bible tells us that "man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (Job 5:7). If you throw a piece of wood on a fire, and it starts to spark, it is in the nature of these sparks to fly upwards. So it is in the nature of human life in this sinful world to experience trouble. And it is in the nature of trouble to get in the way of happiness.

So how can we hope to find happiness? Let us go to the Bible; if we are wise, we will take it as a light to our paths (Psalm 119:105). Happiness is one of those things which we should not seek directly. Most people think that they will be happy if they get enough money and use that money to buy whatever they want. It may be fashionable clothes or a fast car – or a night out at some form of worldly entertainment. But the clothes will pass out of fashion, and the car may soon seem not powerful enough, and the night's entertainment will soon be over. None of these things can give anyone permanent happiness.

That too is what the Bible leads us to expect. "As the crackling of thorns under a pot," Solomon tells us, "so is the laughter of the fool" (Ecclesiastes 7:6). The fool is the person who does not treat God seriously, who can easily forget Him almost all the time. He may laugh heartily in his forgetfulness of God, but it is soon over – just like trying to use thorns to make a fire to heat water in a pot, perhaps. The sparks make a great noise, but the fire does not last, and the water does not boil. So when God is forgotten, happiness does not last. Indeed it cannot last, because this is a world of trouble and sorrow.

One might think that the massive increase in the wealth of most people in many countries during the last 50 years would make them much happier. But it seems that it has not done so; in fact the opposite may be case. Professor Daniel Kahneman of the University of Princeton in the USA has commented that “the standard of living has increased dramatically, and happiness has increased not at all, and in some cases has diminished slightly”. Money and possessions just cannot bring us happiness.

And when this life is over, there can be no happiness whatever, unless we have been rescued from sin – for human sin is the cause of all our trouble and sorrow, even in this life. But it is in the next life that God really rewards the righteous and punishes those who have gone on in their sin and rebellion against God, wilfully rejecting Him. And God must punish sin; otherwise He would act completely against His nature, and He just cannot do that. But because He must punish sin in a lost eternity, there can be absolutely no happiness there and no hope of ever finding it. It is in this life we must find true happiness.

So we come back to the question: How can we hope to find happiness? Clearly we must have our sin forgiven in this life, so that there will be no sin left to call down punishment from God when we die. We must look to Jesus Christ, who came into this world to save sinners. He took on Himself the responsibility of suffering for the sins of human beings, and everyone who will believe on Him will be delivered from the guilt of sin. For them there will be no unhappiness beyond death, nothing but endless blessedness. Yes, all who believe on Christ will go to heaven, where they will experience pure endless happiness in continual fellowship with God.

But will God's children enjoy continuous happiness in this life? No, their King, Jesus, warned them that in this world they would experience trouble, or “tribulation” (John 16:33). But, just as the happiness of the fool does not last, so the unhappiness of believers will be brought to a very definite end. When death comes, they will all be swept away from the troubles and sorrows of this life, into the eternal happiness that Christ has provided for them in heaven.

So whatever were the three steps to happiness which the magazine was promoting, you can be quite sure they are not effective – just as thorns under a pot will not heat a pot of water effectively, no matter how much noise they make. Basically there is just one step to happiness: to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. If you believe, then whatever difficulties you may experience in this life – and they are all calls to trust more firmly on the Saviour – endless happiness in heaven will certainly be yours. Remember, we cannot seek happiness directly, but if we seek Christ, we will be eternally happy.

The Deadly Hook

Rev Alexander McPherson

This article is reprinted from the August 1973 issue of this Magazine, when Mr McPherson was Editor.

Did you ever hear the saying, “using a sprat to catch a mackerel”? It came from the practice of the old-time fisherman who was prepared to lose one small good fish – used as bait – in order to catch a much larger and even better fish. The saying came into use to describe the action of a person giving away as a lure something of small value in order to obtain something of greater value.

Recently I watched some anglers fishing from a pier. They were on holiday from Glasgow and obviously enjoying the sun and soft sea breezes together with the thrill of landing fairly big fish. One little family group were all excitedly casting their baits far out into the deeper water and then reeling them in again in short bursts. Every other minute one of them would shout, “Got one”, and with rod bending and reel creaking would work the struggling fish closer until finally it lay flapping on the planks of the pier. Their only disappointment lay in the fact that every fish captured was a mackerel. Clearly they did not prize their catch as much as the old-time fishermen who knew this fish to be one of the most nutritious there is.

What specially interested me was the lure each was using. It was a bright metal strip shaped so that, when drawn through the water, it revolved. Attached to this was a deadly hook. The poor mackerel, taking the metal strip to be a small fish such as a sprat, rushed to seize it, but instead found its mouth gripped by the hook and was thus caught and drawn ashore. By this method nothing at all was given away to catch the mackerel, not even a sprat. The lure was so durable that it could be used again and again so that the fish was being caught at no cost at all, you might say.

This set me thinking. What other case did I know of, when someone appeared to be giving away something attractive in order to obtain at no cost something valuable for a prey? Why, is not this the very thing that Satan is doing all the time in order to keep sinners in his grip? He uses many lures, fully as attractive to us as the glittering spoon bait is to the mackerel. He will say to a boy or girl: “See how attractive this forbidden pleasure is. It will be quite safe to go to the cinema, or to smoke, or to join the gang for an hour of vandalism, or to read crime stories without your parents knowing. Think of the enjoyment you will have!” Satan has some lure or other for young people of all ages. He knows exactly what appeals to each, what desires are strongest, which are the points of least resistance to temptation in each one.

It costs Satan nothing to make these offers of enjoyment. Do you remember how he showed Jesus from a high mountain all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them? Then he said, "All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me". How bold and impudent he was to offer the Saviour what belonged to God! But the prince of this world, as the devil is sometimes called, speaks as if these things were his to give, and promises them in all their glittering variety to any soul that will listen to him. He offers them in return for serving him. And how can we do that? Why, just by sinning; by transgressing God's law, by coveting some earthly good or desiring some sinful pleasure, by neglecting our souls and despising Christ as Saviour, God's unspeakable gift.

And what happens when someone yields to temptations to do these things rather than obey God's call to repent and believe the gospel? This happens: the conscience is wounded and the wrongdoer goes farther away from God. Also the sins committed tend to become habitual; further temptations are more easily yielded to; and Satan has, as it were, that person on a hook, more firmly his servant than ever.

Now if this state of affairs goes on until the end of life, the soul that so often darted after the attractive lures presented by Satan will find to its dismay that these things had no value in comparison with the loss of the soul. "What shall it profit a man," says Christ, "if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Beware then of sin, however pleasant a form it may take – be it the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, or the pride of life. Satan, like the fisherman, is enticing you with something that has little or no value in order that he may bring you to suffer with himself in the place of unending punishment.

Satan has no good features at all. He is all evil and intends only evil. Reject his lures and flee to Christ, who will save you, soul and body, and bring you to that holy place where He dwells and where there are pleasures for evermore. Cry to Christ for help in this duty and He will not disregard your prayer.

No Longer Afraid

One day two men were travelling together on horseback. One of them was godly; the other was an atheist, who said again and again to his companion: "There is nothing in religion". But before the day was over, he was to see how completely wrong he was.

As darkness fell, the two men were still miles away from any town. They

did not know where they could spend the night; they could not see even one house anywhere around them. At last they noticed a small light in the distance. They rode on quickly, planning to ask for shelter for the night – provided the light turned out to be actually coming from a house.

Before long, they discovered that the light did indeed come from a house. But in such a lonely area they did not really know what to expect. The door was answered by an old man who had a rather fierce appearance; it seemed that their worst fears had been proved true. Was it safe to go in? they must have asked themselves. But they were hungry and tired; so they seemed to have no option but to tell the man that they needed somewhere to stay for the night. He took them in and showed them to a room.

As soon as the man had left them, they looked at each other and talked about their fears. Indeed, they asked, dare they stay there?

After some discussion they decided to take the risk. But the atheist said that they must make plans to barricade the door, as he was afraid that the old man might kill them during the night. The godly man agreed with him; he shared the same fears.

Soon the man gave them a good meal, but even then the travellers were none too confident. They were afraid that their host might be trying, with his kindness, to put them off their guard. And their fears were increased by the appearance of the man's son; he looked just as fierce as his father.

As soon as the meal was over, the visitors wanted to go to their room, as they were tired. But the man said, "No, not yet. There is something first."

The men trembled. But there was no need to be afraid, and that was soon obvious when the man brought out a large family Bible and read from it. Then in humble, childlike words he poured out his heart to God in prayer. He confessed his sins; he thanked God for His mercies; and he asked God's special blessing on the two strangers who, in God's mysterious providence, had come to stay in his house.

The men were amazed; they were no longer afraid. They went to their room and settled down peacefully for the night.

The godly traveller broke the silence with the words: "I notice you have forgotten all about barricading the door".

The atheist was silent at first, but at last he muttered: "No need to, after that prayer!"

And his companion could not resist replying: "But I always understood 'there is nothing in religion'!" The atheist had now seen that a man's sincere religion gives one confidence in how he will behave; it gave him a sense of safety. But he still did not want to admit it. What a pity that he was not willing to seek true religion himself!

Separation from the World

6. More About True Separation

J C Ryle

This is another section, slightly edited, of a chapter from the book, *Practical Religion*. Last month's article began to explain what true separation really is. It includes refusing to be guided by the world's standard of right and wrong.

(e) He that desires to come out from the world and be separate must be moderate in the use of lawful and innocent recreations. No sensible Christian will ever think of condemning all recreations. In a world of wear and tear like this, occasional unbending and relaxation are good for all. Body and mind alike require times of lighter occupation, and opportunities for letting off high spirits, especially when they are young. Exercise itself is a positive necessity for preserving mental and bodily health. We are all fearfully and wonderfully made. No wonder the poet says: "Strange that a harp of thousand strings should keep in tune so long!"

Anything which strengthens brain and lungs and muscles and makes us more fit for Christ's work, so long as it is not in itself sinful, is a blessing and ought to be thankfully used. Anything which will occasionally divert our thoughts from their usual grinding channel, in a healthy manner, is a good and not an evil.

But it is the excess of these innocent things which a true Christian must watch against, if he wants to be separate from the world. He must not devote his whole heart and soul and mind and strength and time to them, as many do, if he wishes to serve Christ. There are hundreds of lawful things which are good in moderation, but bad when taken in excess; what is healthful medicine in small quantities is downright poison when swallowed down in huge doses. In nothing is this so true as it is in the matter of recreations. The use of them is one thing, and the abuse of them is another.

The Christian who uses them must know when to stop and how to say "Hold: enough!" Do they interfere with his private religion? Do they take up too much of his thoughts and attention? Have they a secularising effect on his soul? Have they a tendency to pull him down to earth? Then let him hold hard and take care. All this will require courage, self-denial and firmness. It is a line of conduct which will often bring on us the ridicule and contempt of those who know not what moderation is, and who spend their lives in making trifles into serious things and serious things into trifles. But if we mean to come out from the world we must not mind this. We must be "temperate" even in lawful things, whatever others may think of us. This is genuine scriptural separation.

(f) Last, but not least, he that desires to come out from the world and be separate must be careful what he allows himself in friendships and close relationships with worldly people. We cannot help meeting many unconverted people as long as we live. We cannot avoid speaking to them and doing business with them, unless we “go out of the world” (1 Corinthians 5:10). To treat them with the utmost courtesy, kindness and charity, whenever we meet them, is a positive duty. But acquaintance is one thing, and intimate friendship is quite another. To seek their society without cause, to choose their company, to cultivate closeness with them, is very dangerous to the soul. Human nature is such that we cannot be much with other people without them having an effect on our own character. The old proverb will never fail to prove true: “Tell me who a man chooses to live with, and I will tell you what he is”. The Scripture says clearly: “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed” (Proverbs 13:20).

If then a Christian, who desires to live consistently, chooses for his friends those who either do not care for their souls or the Bible or God or Christ or holiness, or who regard them as of secondary importance, it seems impossible for him to prosper in his religion. He will soon find that their ways are not his ways, nor their thoughts his thoughts, nor their tastes his tastes; and that, unless they change, he must give up close friendship with them. In short, there must be separation. Of course such separation will be painful. But if we have to choose between the loss of a friend and the injury of our souls, there ought to be no doubt in our minds. If friends will not walk in the narrow way with us, we must not walk in the broad way to please them. But let us distinctly understand that the attempt to keep up close friendship between a converted and an unconverted person, if both are consistent with their natures, is an impossibility.

All unmarried Christians ought carefully to remember the principle laid down here when they choose a husband or wife. I fear it is too often entirely forgotten. Too many seem to think of everything except religion in choosing a partner for life, or they suppose that everything will somehow come right as a matter of course. Yet when a praying, Bible-reading, God-fearing, Christ-loving, Sabbath-keeping Christian marries someone who takes no interest whatever in serious religion, what can the result be but injury to the Christian, or immense unhappiness? Health is not infectious, but disease is. As a general rule, in such cases, the good go down to the level of the bad, but the bad do not come up to the level of the good.

The subject is a delicate one, and I do not care to dwell upon it. But I say this confidently to every unmarried Christian man or woman: If you love your soul, if you do not want to fall away and backslide, if you do not want

to destroy your own peace and comfort for life, resolve never to marry any person who is not a thorough Christian, whatever the resolution may cost you. You had better die than marry an unbeliever. Stand to this resolution, and let no one ever persuade you out of it. Depart from this resolution, and you will find it almost impossible to come out and be separate. You will find you have tied a millstone round your own neck in running the race towards heaven; and, if saved at last, it will be "so as by fire" (1 Corinthians 3:15).

I offer these six general hints to all who wish to follow Paul's advice, and to come out from the world and be separate. In giving them, I lay no claim to infallibility; but I believe they deserve consideration and attention. I do not forget that the subject is full of difficulties, and that scores of doubtful cases are continually arising in a Christian's life, in which it is very hard to say what is the path of duty and how to behave. Perhaps the following bits of advice may be found useful.

In all doubtful cases we should first pray for wisdom and sound judgement. If prayer is worth anything, it must be specially valuable when we desire to do right but do not see our way. In all doubtful cases let us often try ourselves by recollecting the eye of God. Would I go to such and such a place or do such and such a thing if I really thought God was looking at me? In all doubtful cases let us never forget the second coming of Christ and the day of judgement. Would I like to be found in such and such company, or employed in such and such ways? Finally, in all doubtful cases let us find out what the conduct of the holiest and best Christians has been under similar circumstances. If we do not clearly see our own way, we need not be ashamed to follow good examples. I throw out these suggestions for the use of all who are in difficulties about difficult points in the matter of separation from the world. I cannot help thinking that they may help to untie many knots and solve many problems.

Looking Around Us

The Judge's Lies

The case fascinated the whole of Australia for several weeks. It was the story of a judge who had reached the top of his profession; he even won the United Nations Peace Award in 2002. But he has ruined his reputation by trying to avoid a speeding fine – of just about £36 – by telling a lie. At the age of 70, he has been sentenced to jail for at least two years.

The judge, Marcus Einfeld, retired a few years ago but he has often been brought back to judge important cases about refugees because, it seems, the

Australian legal system still needed his vast experience – but no longer!

The problem began in 2006, when a speed camera in Sydney caught his car doing 6 miles per hour over the limit. He could easily have paid the fine, but he was concerned that the penalty points that would be imposed would bring him painfully close to losing his driving licence. So he decided to say that an American friend was driving his car that day. The magistrate trying the case believed him and he walked free. Then a newspaper looked into the affair and discovered who his friend was. It turned out that in 2006 she had already been dead for three years.

Judge Einfeld even claimed that he had actually been using his mother's car that day. So, he wanted people to believe, it was impossible for him to have been using his own vehicle. Yes, she was still alive, aged 94, but there was security camera footage to prove that her car had not been taken out of the garage of her apartment block that day during the hours of daylight. It was clear that he had lied to the court, a serious crime, and hence the two-year sentence – which will effectively stop him driving during that time. What a downfall!

It all demonstrates the truth of the warning recorded in the Bible: “Be sure your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23). Even in this world, when people try to cover over what they have done by telling lies, they are often found out. But what should be absolutely clear to us from many passages in the Bible is that God sees all our sins now and He will make them all obvious on the last day. “For God”, as one such verse reminds us, “shall bring every work into judgement, *with every secret thing*, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

From Genesis to Revelation

5. The Later Old Testament

This series is intended to provide an overview of the Bible. In the last section we saw how unsatisfactory Saul was as Israel's first king. Then God gave them David to take his place. A *type* is like a picture designed by God to give teaching about what would later be made clearer – for instance, an animal sacrifice was a type of Christ's offering Himself up instead of sinners.

We will not follow through in detail the rest of the history of Israel and Judah. From Jeroboam onwards, no King of Israel feared God; they were all idolaters – and some, like Ahab under the influence of his foreign wife Jezebel, sinned even more seriously by setting up the abominable worship of the false god Baal. In Judah too there were many ungodly kings,

but there were also good kings from time to time. These included Asa, Hezekiah and young Josiah.

Yet one of the worst of these kings – Manasseh, who made the streets of Jerusalem run red with the blood of godly people – was converted as a captive in Babylon, where he had been sent in God's judgement because of his sins. In the end, God in anger sent the whole nation of Israel into captivity; punishment against their idolatry could not be postponed any longer. And, about a hundred years later, Judah was attacked by armies from Babylon, the temple was destroyed by fire, and many of the people were sent into captivity. The history of Israel and Judah appears in the two Books of the Kings, and the two Books of Chronicles focus on the history of Judah.

Three books of history remain: Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. The first two give some account of the return of the Jews from captivity, particularly under these godly leaders, and the difficulties that they faced from various enemies. Esther tells about God delivering the Jews, in His providence, through a remarkable series of events. God's name is never mentioned in this Book, but it is clear that He is controlling everything for their good and for His glory.

The Book of Job would probably be the first or second in the Bible if the books were arranged in historical order. It shows how God can sustain one of His children during a most difficult series of disasters, and even when He allowed the devil to go very far indeed against this godly man. What made Job's experience all the more difficult was that he did not understand what was happening, and he had to defend himself against the unfair charges of his three friends. They, wrongly, tried to convince him that he must have committed some particularly serious sin, but Job's conscience was clear. Yet in the end he saw more deeply than ever into his heart. And, when faced with the spotless holiness and majesty of God, he had to confess the seriousness of his sin – not sin that others could see, but what God could see. Soon afterwards, Job was delivered from all his troubles. By his faithfulness Job proved that he did not serve God merely for the benefits he could get from Him, but because it was right to do so.

The last part of the Old Testament is made up of the Prophecies. Men like Isaiah and Micah prophesied around the time of King Hezekiah. Jeremiah later had the sad duty of bringing messages – in which mercy was mixed with judgement – from God to his people, when Judah and its capital city Jerusalem were becoming more and more sinful. The Jews refused to listen, until at last the invading armies from Babylon captured Jerusalem and many of the people were swept into captivity. The Book of Lamentations gives us Jeremiah's sad thoughts as he mourned over the desolate state of his country

and of the temple where God's people used to worship. Ezekiel, on the other hand prophesied among the captives in Babylon.

The prophets Haggai and Zechariah were sent to encourage the Jews after their return from Babylon. Malachi was later still. These are the last of the 12 Minor Prophets—so called, not because their Prophecies are less important, but just because they are shorter! Daniel was not, strictly speaking, a prophet; he did not hold that office. The first part of his Book shows how, when he was raised to a high position in Babylon's Government, he and his three friends remained faithful although they were under great pressure to turn against their religion and their God. The second half of the book is mostly taken up with a series of prophecies about the future; their main theme is the kingdom of God in the New Testament age.

Yet we should remember that the Prophecies are mostly *not* taken up with foretelling the future. A prophet was someone who came to speak to people on behalf of God. His message *might* be about the future; more often it was about the present. Yet the most important theme of the Prophets, as they foretold the future, was the coming of Christ, and His sufferings and death. Among the clearest of such passages is Isaiah 53, and we must not forget those Psalms which, the New Testament confirms, spoke of Christ.

There were other prophets who have left us nothing in written form. These were men such as Elijah and Elisha, who warned the people about their sins and told them clearly that God had a right to their obedience.

We have noticed already how the priests and kings were types of Christ—there was a similarity between them and Him in what they did. The same is true of the prophets; in bringing messages from God to His people, they were picturing what Christ was yet to do as the Word of God (see John 1:1). He, the greatest Teacher of all, reveals “to us, by His Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation”. So, when we come across what we cannot understand in the Bible, we should ask that Christ, as the great Prophet appointed by God for every generation, would teach us. He can do so, by sending the Holy Spirit to open our understandings so that we get a better grasp of the meaning of the Word of God, and of particular parts of it.

For Younger Readers

The Highway Man's Coat

Long ago there was a good minister called George Whitefield. One day he heard about a woman whose husband was dead. She

had several children and she was very poor. She had no money to pay the rent for her house, and the man who owned the house took away her furniture. Whitefield was a very kind man and he gave the woman a lot of money so that she could get her furniture back.

On that day he was riding along with a friend. His friend suggested that he gave too much money to the woman. Whitefield did not agree. He believed he did what God wanted him to do – to be kind to someone who was very poor.

As they rode along together, they met another man on the road. He was a highway man; a highway man would stop people on the road and tell them to give him all their money. What would happen if they refused? He would probably take out his gun and shoot them. Highway men were very bad people.

When the highway man demanded their money, Whitefield and his friend felt they had no choice. So they gave the highway man their money. What do you think Whitefield then said to his friend? He suggested that it was much better for the poor woman to have his money than the highway man.

But the highway man was very greedy. He soon came back again and ordered Whitefield to give him his coat. Again Whitefield had no choice. So he gave the highway man his coat. But the highway man gave Whitefield his own ragged coat in its place. This coat was not very nice, but at least it would keep the minister a little warm.

Soon they saw the highway man coming back again. He was riding very fast to where they were. They were frightened that this time he would kill them. So they made their own horses ride on really fast. They reached some houses before the highway man could catch up with them. And they were quickly safe inside.

As Whitefield took off the highway man's coat, he put his hand in one of the pockets. He felt something and pulled it out. What was it? It was a little packet with a lot of money in it, far more than Whitefield gave the poor woman.

The wicked highway man stole a lot of money from all the people he robbed. But God did not allow him to keep it.

What did Whitefield do with the money that the highway man

gave him with the coat? I do not know, but he probably gave it away to some other poor people.

For Junior Readers – Lessons from the Life of John G Paton

32. The First Aniwan Book

The printing of the first book in the Aniwan language was a great event for Paton. It was a collection of passages from the Bible. He had worked hard on it, and one thing was particularly pleasing to him: old Chief Namakei, who had preached about the well, was eagerly waiting for this book to be ready.

He had helped Paton to translate parts of the Bible into Aniwan and he was desperate to “hear the book speak” – as he put it. Every morning he would come to Paton and ask: “Missi, is it done? Can it speak?”

At last Paton was able to answer, “Yes!”

“Does it speak my words?” Namakei eagerly asked. And when told that it did, he said, “Make it speak to me, Missi! Let me hear it speak.”

So Paton read him a bit out of the book, and he shouted with joy: “It does speak! It speaks my own language too! O give it to me!”

He took the open book from Paton and carefully turned it about in his hands and pressed it to his heart. Then, with a look of great disappointment, he closed it and handed it back to Paton saying: “Missi, I cannot make it speak! It will never speak to me.” Paton explained to him that, when he learned to read, the book would speak to him.

Paton saw that the old chief was screwing up his eyes when he looked at the book and suspected that he needed glasses. An old pair of glasses was found from a selection Paton had brought with him and he told the chief to put them on. But Namakei was too frightened to put them on. He thought they would cast a spell on him. At last, with much patient persuasion from Paton, he put them on and saw the letters and everything so clearly that he exclaimed with joy: “I see it all now! This is what you told us about Jesus: He opened the eyes of a blind man. The word of Jesus has just come to Aniwa. He has sent me these glass eyes. I have got back again the sight that I had when a boy. O Missi, make the book speak to me now!”

So, kitted out with his new glasses, he started to learn to read as Paton drew the letters in the sand. He very quickly memorised the whole alphabet and was soon spelling out the smaller words.

The old chief used every opportunity to share the contents of the book

with the other islanders. Anyone who stopped by would have to sit and listen to him as he read bits out of the book. One day Paton heard him read from the book very well, with no hesitations or mistakes. Paton went up to him afterwards and asked how he had managed to read so fluently. As the chief tried to explain, Paton realised that the old chief had actually memorised the whole book and could repeat it from memory! He became one of Paton's main helpers in the work of spreading the gospel in Aniwa.

Old Chief Namakei was very eager that his wife should learn to read. She had only recently started coming to the mission compound as she enjoyed hearing Mrs Paton sing. But the chief's wife also needed glasses. Paton searched through his bundle of old glasses and at last found a pair he thought would suit her. She was in a state of terror as Paton tried to put them on her face but, once they were on, she cried with delight: "O my new eyes! My new eyes! I have the sight of a little girl. I will learn hard now. I will make up for lost time."

She did not make as much progress as her husband. But she was still a good influence on the women and girls around her, encouraging them to come to the services and meetings.

Chief Namakei is a wonderful example to us all. He really wanted to learn more about God and hear God "speak to him". How thrilled he was when Paton had finally managed to finish the book! Namakei's excitement when he first held the book was a joy for Paton to behold. He wanted to learn to read so that he could read God's Word. The effort he made in trying to read puts us all to shame. In his effort to learn he ended up memorising the book!

How important this is for us all! When you are young, and your brain is working at its best, you have your best opportunity to memorise many things. You can, and probably do, spend time learning facts about lots of different subjects, and that is good. But it is even better to spend time trying to memorise parts of God's Word. It is also very useful to memorise from other books which contain teachings from the Bible, such as the *Shorter Catechism*.

When you have Scripture memory-work, maybe for Sabbath school, I wonder how much time you spend trying to learn it. Do you just learn it in the last minutes? Then, although you can repeat it a few moments later, you have forgotten it by the next day. Remember Chief Namakei, and try to be as diligent as he was!

In Psalm 119 the Psalmist speaks many times, and in many different ways, about remembering or thinking about God's Word. In verse 11 he says:

"Thy word I in my heart have hid, that I offend not Thee".

This is what we should be doing – hiding God's Word in our hearts so that, with His blessing, we will be less likely to sin against Him. *S M Campbell*

Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2008-09

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 by June 30. 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 19.
 - (a) What were the two "good things" which were found in Jehoshaphat? (2)
 - (b) What good advice did Jehoshaphat give to the judges? (2)
2. Read 2 Chronicles 20.
 - (a) Why did Jehoshaphat proclaim a fast? (1)
 - (b) What did the people of all the cities of Judah wisely do? (1)
 - (c) How did they take encouragement from the Lord's dealings with them in the past? (2)
 - (d) To whom did they make special reference and how do they describe him? (2)
 - (e) From Jahaziel's advice choose the words which say:
 - (1) You do not fight your own cause but God's.
 - (2) You will not need to take up arms in this battle. (4)
 - (f) From what psalm were the appointed singers to sing? (2)
3. Read 2 Chronicles 22.
 - (a) Why did they assemble in the valley Berachah after the victory? (1)
 - (b) What were the victors doing as they arrived at Jerusalem? (1)
 - (c) Quote the words showing that Jehoshaphat did what was right during his reign. (1)
 - (d) In what did he come short? (1)
 - (e) Write briefly about the result of his union with the wicked at the end of the chapter. (3)

New Testament

Read Mark chapter 5.

1. (a) Briefly describe the Gadarene before he was healed. (4)
- (b) What did Jesus say to the unclean spirit? (1)
- (c) Quote the words which describe the Gadarene after he was healed. (1)
- (d) What did he desire to do, but what was the Saviour's advice to him? (3)
2. Write about the miracles which Jesus performed for the ones who said:
 - (a) "If I may touch but his clothes I shall be made whole." (4)
 - (b) "My little daughter lieth at the point of death." (4)
3. Read Mark chapter 6.
 - (a) Of what sin were those of Jesus' "own country" guilty? (1)
 - (b) Say in your own words how they reasoned that He was not the Son of God. (2)
 - (c) Describe briefly what led to the death of John the Baptist. (3)
 - (d) Why did the king allow this although he was "exceeding sorry"? (1)

Memory Exercise

Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to question 107 in the Shorter Catechism: What doth the conclusion of the Lord's prayer teach us? (3)

Intermediate Section (13 and 14 years old)

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

Old Testament

1. From your reading of Nehemiah

- (a) What made Nehemiah sit down and weep? (chapter 1) (2)
 (b) What did he do when he heard the sad news? (chapter 1) (3)
 (c) What request did he make to the King? (chapter 2) (2)
 (d) Name certain people who "conspired . . . against Jerusalem". (chapter 4) (3)
 (e) How did they try to hinder the work? (chapter 4) (2)
 (f) How did the Jews react to this opposition? (chapter 4) (2)
 (g) In what practical ways did Nehemiah arrange the workers to defend the city? (chapter 4) (3)
 (h) When was the wall finished and how long was needed to build it? (chapter 6) (2)
 (i) How often does Nehemiah refer to God as:
 (1) My God (chapter 2) (2) the God of heaven (chapter 2) (3) our God (chapter 4)? (3)
 (j) What do each of these expressions teach us about God? (3)

New Testament

1. Read Matthew chapter 18.
 (a) What caused Jesus to set a child in the midst of His disciples? (2)
 (b) What should we learn from this? (2)
 (c) Who are described as "little ones"? (1)
 (d) What great encouragement is given for those few who gather in His name? (1)
 (e) How many times should we forgive a brother? (2)
2. From your reading of Matthew, what lessons can we learn from:
 (a) the parable of the wicked husbandmen (chapter 21) (2)
 (b) the parable of the vineyard (chapter 20) (2)
 (c) the parable of the marriage feast (chapter 22) (2)
 (d) the parable of the ten virgins (chapter 25) (2)
 (e) the parable of the talents (chapter 25). (2)

Memory Exercise

- Learn by heart and write out from memory the answer to question 98 in the Shorter Catechism: What is prayer? (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 chapter 26.
 (a) How old was Uzziah when he became king? (1)
 (b) What was his father's name? (1)
 (c) What was his mother's name? (1)
 (d) For how many years did he reign? (1)
 (e) Verse 16 tells us that he went into the temple to burn incense. Why was it wrong for him to do this? (1)
 (f) How was he punished? (1)
 (g) Who became king after him? (1)
2. Read Nehemiah chapter 1 and verses 1 and 2 of chapter 2.
 (a) What was Nehemiah's occupation? (1)
 (b) What sad news did Hanani and the men of Judah give Nehemiah about the city of Jerusalem and about the Jews who were still left there? (3)
 (c) How did Nehemiah react to this sad news? (3)
 (d) How did king Artaxerxes know that Nehemiah was upset? (1)

New Testament

1. Read the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13. How many virgins
 (a) had lamps
 (b) had vessels of oil
 (c) went to meet the bridegroom
 (d) fell asleep as they waited for the bridegroom

- (e) arose and trimmed their lamps at midnight
- (f) went in to the marriage with the bridegroom? (6)
- 2. Say briefly what the teaching of this parable is. (3)
- 3. Read Matthew 25:31-46.
 - (a) What future event do these verses refer to? (1)
 - (b) Who will accompany the Son of Man when He comes in His glory? (1)
 - (c) Who will be gathered before the Son of Man? (1)
 - (d) Who are referred to as “sheep” and who as “goats”? (2)
 - (e) Copy out the words in verse 41 beginning “Depart from me . . .” (3)
 - (f) Who will these solemn words be said to? (1)

Memory Exercise

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

Upper Primary Section (9 and 10 years old)

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

Old Testament

- 1. Answer the following questions after reading the verses given from the book of Esther.
 - (a) Esther 1:1-4: How many provinces did King Ahasuerus reign over? (1)
 - (b) Esther 1:10-12: Why was the king angry with Queen Vashti? (2)
 - (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? (2)
 - (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? (2)

New Testament

1 Read Matthew 14:15-21 and Matthew 15:32-38.
Copy and complete the table below showing the differences between 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 food left over?	12	

- 2. Read Matthew 26:14-16
 - (a) Who went to 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? (3)
 - (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.*

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)

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