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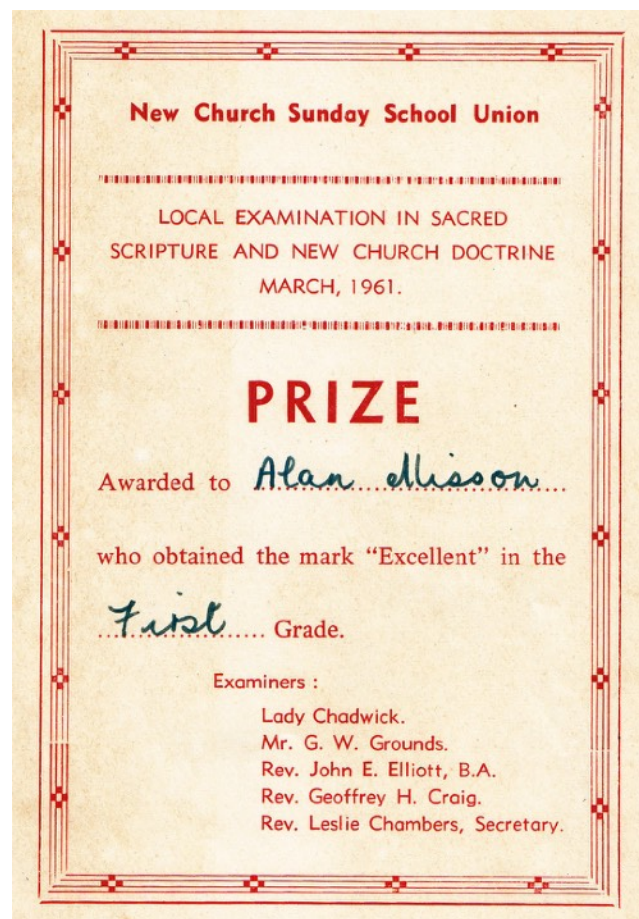
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Re: Sunday School Article by Alan Misson



I am writing to thank Rita Russell for her lovely article on the Moseley New Church Sunday school and to respond to her question - Does anyone out there still have a book with a label stuck inside saying "Awarded to ..."?

It just so happens that last Sunday (May 9th) I led worship at West Wickham on the subject of 'Boasting' in which I reflected on Jeremiah 9:23,24 and the connected reading of 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. During the second of my reflections I used these words:

Many years ago we used to have Sunday School Examinations and a Sunday School Anniversary when prizes were handed out for those with the best results. I keep on one of my bookshelves a number of treasured books including a copy of 'The Boy Electrician' presented to me as a prize for achieving the mark 'Excellent' in the First Grade of the Local Examination in Sacred Scripture and New Church Doctrine, March 1961.

I then showed a picture of the label stuck on the inside cover of The Boy Electrician which hopefully you can see adjacent to this brief article.

So the simple answer to Rita is - **Yes I have!**

Are You Lonely? *by Geoffrey Bentley*

My neighbour asked me this 2 months ago in the middle of the Corona 19 lockdown. I hadn't seen her for weeks.

I answered 'No' and looked skywards. What she understood by this I don't know.

She is a remarkable lady, being a senior nurse and paramedic. During the epidemic she was travelling 40 miles 3 times a week to do 12 hour shifts in an intensive care unit, returning home to her husband and 2 children age 5 and 2. She has endured a very tough Winter. Husband & wife are committed Christians. They know that I am a Christian as well of a different sort!

My wife died 18 months ago having spent the previous 14 months in a residential care home with dementia which had been taking her from me for the 4 years before that.

Hence my neighbour's question, 'Are you lonely?'

This is a big house and with cleaning, washing, shopping and cooking, there isn't much time to be lonely! Despite this, there are moments when Elvis Presley's 'Are you lonely

tonight?' might seem appropriate. This is absolutely, completely not the case. Why not?

Our Lord has assured us that He is always with us. Most of the time we are not aware of it. Indeed, it only looking backwards through our lives that we can see His influence.

After working in the Manchester hospitals and getting married, I wanted to work in General Practice in my home city of Chester. The nearest we got was to Mold in North Wales where we found we couldn't have children. We were referred to a man who was a world authority on infertility. We both had surgery and 18 months later our daughter was born. This referral could not have been made if I had been working in a main centre like Chester. Providence smiled on us but still seemed some distance away.

Now I live alone, I can feel that my Lord is very near to me and will never desert me whatever happens to me. This presence is not with me all the time. It is never intrusive nor does it order my thinking. It is loving and gentle.

I realise that some people reading this may think that I'm crackers! I know that other people living on their own have similar feelings - as do many not living alone.

So the answer to my neighbour's question is a resounding 'NO!'