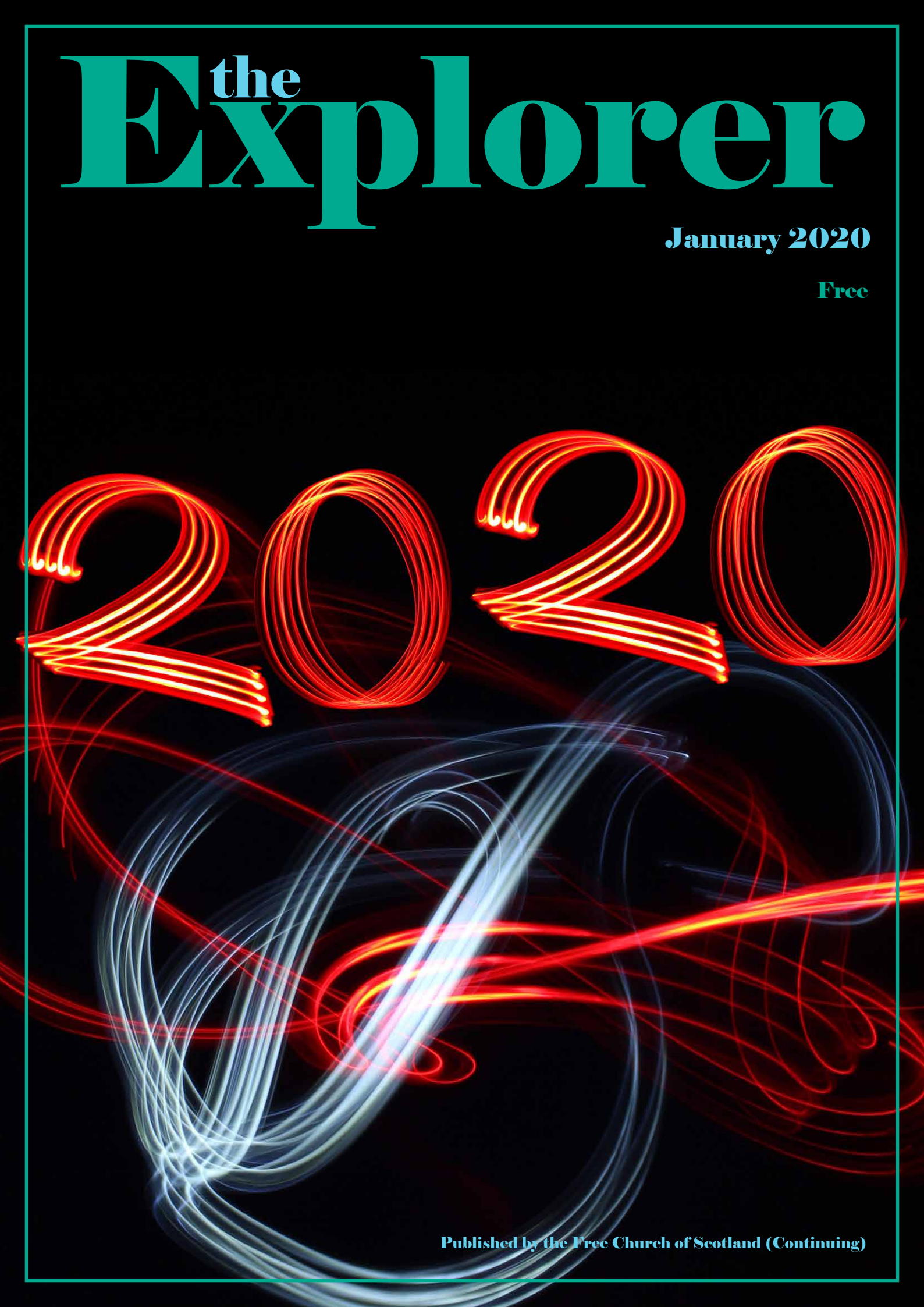
the Explorer

January 2020

Free



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Inverness-shire IV2 6XF
Tel: 01808 521474
Email: **subscriptions@fccontinuing.org**

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Puzzles

Young folk are encouraged to complete the various puzzles in the magazine and send them in to:
Miss Anne Macaulay
30 Mackenzie Place,
Maryburgh IV7 8DY
Email: **macaulayanne@hotmail.co.uk**

Younger readers who find the questions too hard may like to do a drawing based on one of the articles and send it to the same address.

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(Unattributed articles ought not to be considered the work of the Editor)

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We are grateful to Rev. William Macleod, minister at Knightswood, Glasgow and Moderator of the 2019 General Assembly for giving us a New Year Message.

Moderator's New Year Message

DON'T!

Sometimes it seems everyone is saying "Don't". They are shouting, "Don't run, don't touch, don't fight!" When it comes to the Bible, it seems to be saying, "Don't lie, don't steal, don't swear". But is this what Christianity is all about? Is it a matter of keeping lots of commandments? Is the Bible saying that you have to be good and then you will get to heaven? Who actually goes to heaven? This is a very important question and many people get it wrong.

Do good people go to heaven?
If you went out onto the streets and asked ordinary people who goes to heaven, they would say good people. What do you think? Is it a matter of being very good and then on the Judgment Day God will say "Well done! You have made it. Come into heaven"? Muslims believe that. They are taught that on the Judgment Day God will put all your bad works into the balances and all your good works and hopefully your good works will balance out your bad works and you will be saved. Sadly, many false churches also teach this. Be good and you will get to heaven! But the Bible's teaching is very different. Bad people get to heaven and good people go to hell.

Surely this can't be right?
All your life you have been taught that you have to be good. You have been taught the commandments and know you're supposed to keep them. When you do wrong

your conscience tells you that it was wrong and you feel guilty. Are you saying that the worse I am, the more likely I am to be saved? Can I just commit all the sins I like and still get to heaven?

Jesus' teaching

Jesus said something amazing, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32). He warned the church leaders of his day, "Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you" (Matthew 21:31). Publicans and harlots, who lived very immoral lives, were regarded as the worst of sinners. People looked down on them. It must have been shocking to hear Jesus saying to the good-living people who went to the temple every day that terrible sinners would be saved and they would be lost.

How can this be?

The problem is that the very best of people are sinners. No matter how hard we try we are unable to keep God's law perfectly. Actually, every one of us breaks the commandments every day in thought, word and deed. If we could be really, really, really good, we would get to heaven, but none of us can. We all deserve to go to hell. Even one little sin is enough for us to be condemned to eternal misery. But this is where Jesus steps in.

The Good News

The one thing that makes the true Christian religion different from every other religion is the Saviour we have. God loved the world and sent his Son to save it. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, lived a perfect life, kept all the commandments in thought, word and deed, and then died on the cross. He took his peoples sins upon him, stood in their place guilty before God, suffered hell in their place and then rose, having saved them. So we have a gospel to proclaim to dying men and women, boys and girls. There is a Saviour. He can save us. We get to heaven only because of him.

Is anything required of us?

There is nothing we can do to earn salvation or even to prepare for salvation. Jesus did it all. And yet there is something that we must do. We must believe in Christ. We must trust him to save us. The Philippian jailor asked the question, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul gave a clear answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). We must "receive and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel".

What place do the commandments have?

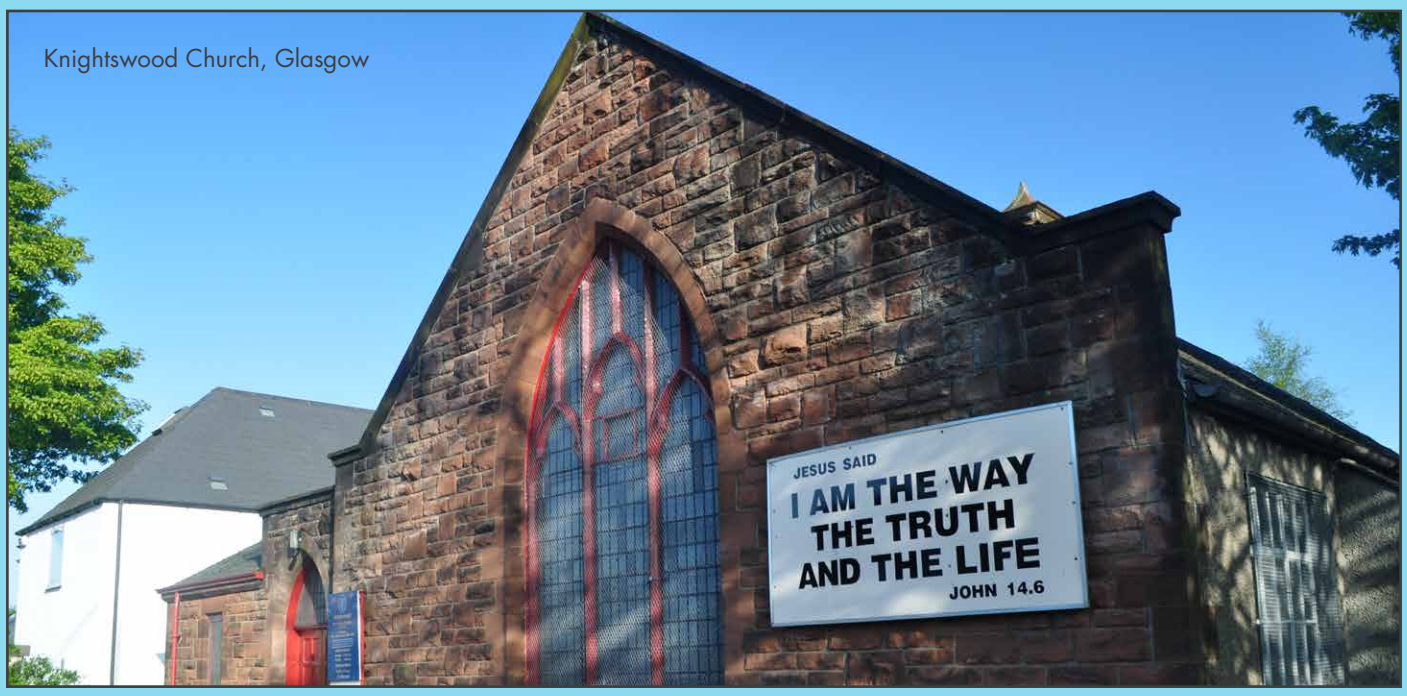
They are commandments from God and must be kept. But we cannot keep them. Therefore we need the Saviour. Having been saved through faith in Christ we show that we love God and are thankful to Christ for saving us by trying to keep the commandments as best we can. To do this we need to pray for help and look to the Holy Spirit to enable us. It is only as saved sinners that we can start to keep the commandments.

The Preface

Lots of people when they are learning the commandments start with, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). This is a serious mistake. We should start where God started. He said, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (v.2). God saved Israel from Egypt and therefore they should keep his law. We also must be saved through Jesus and then we will keep his commandments out of love to Him. As we begin another New Year the best thing we can do is to trust in Jesus and live for Him!

Wishing all the readers of the Explorer the Lord's richest blessing in 2020.

Yours in Christ Jesus,
Rev. William Macleod



Knightswood Church, Glasgow

Studying God's Word

The Book of Job

2. JOB'S ENEMY

Last month we began a new series of articles in which we will be looking at the Old Testament Book of Job. We looked at Job's family and we saw his concern for their souls. He did his best to teach them what was right and sought God's help in it all. Many young people can resent those parents and others who try and guide them spiritually but it is a great blessing to have parents and other friends like Job who pray for you and try to guide you towards what is good and away from what is bad.

There is an invisible world that we cannot see: the world of angels. Job had an enemy 'working behind the scenes'. Satan hates God and he hated Job because Job loved the Lord and tried to live in obedience to God. Job's godliness provoked Satan to act against him and he suggested that Job only obeyed God for selfish reasons. He mocked Job and said that if the Lord were to take away the blessings and good things in Job's life then Job would turn away from the Lord. Now, it is true that some people use religion for selfish reasons; perhaps a way of promoting themselves or getting money, but God knew that Job was different. The Lord knew that Job was genuine. As the Lord looks on your heart and life is that what he sees? Does he see a heart that genuinely wants to follow him? Knowing that Job was a true follower God permitted Satan to test Job's faith. God knew that Job would emerge from this experience a better man; the battle that lay ahead for Job would be hard but it would be beneficial.

We are told that Job was a "perfect and upright" man. (Job 1:1) That verse sometimes confuses people. Does it mean that he had no sin? Well, we know from our Bibles that it cannot mean that for, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God". (Romans 3:23) What it does mean is that Job wanted to serve God faithfully. He was not sinless and as a result of his conflict with Satan he would come to see that his character had flaws and blemishes. (Job 42:6) It is when Satan tempts us and opposes us that we see our weakness, and that we are actually worse than we think we are. God teaches us that we are not to trust in ourselves for wisdom or righteousness but in Christ. (1 Corinthians 1:30-31) Only in this way can we hope to live to glorify God. Satan does not realise that even his own works shall be over-ruled by God for the good of his people.

Job's enemy is still our enemy who wants to destroy us with sin and godlessness. He is still crafty and powerful and we must not co-operate with him in any way. We need to flee from him to Christ. The Book of Job teaches us not to underestimate his power or his plans. It also teaches us that the Lord is able to turn Satan's plans around and bring good out of evil. Next month we shall move on to the next stage in our study by looking at Job's wife.

A WONDERFUL ANSWER TO PRAYER (2)

Readers will remember that last month we began a story about a poor family in a quiet part of Scotland, more than 100 years ago. The farmer and his wife Ann were struggling through life. One night they were in real difficulty: they had no food left and the poor children had been sent to bed hungry. As Ann was praying about this late that night a verse from the Bible kept coming into her mind: "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." (Psalm 50:10) She could not understand why this particular verse, which seemed to have little to do with her situation kept coming to her mind. Eventually with a very sad heart she went to bed. The next morning that same verse from Psalm 50 was still there on her mind. Just as the sun was rising, Ann was surprised to hear a very loud "knock, knock, knock" at the door.

"Who's there?" said Ann.

"A cattle drover, can you come and help me"?

Cattle drovers were men who would take large herds of cows from the Highlands of Scotland down to the markets in the South where people looking for cows would go to buy them. The drovers would walk with the cows for many days and sometimes for many weeks. When Ann opened the door she saw a huge number of cows coming along the road. Standing by the door was the man who had knocked. Ann asked how she could help him.

"One of my cows has fallen into a hole by the road and broken its leg. I can't take it to market and I don't want to lose any time trying to find someone who can deal with the problem".

By now Ann's husband had come to the door to see what all the noise was about. The drover told him the same story and explained that if he waited any longer the rest of the cows would run away. The drover was also worried that he was going to be late to the market. He said that all he could do was leave the cow with them! Without waiting for thanks, the drover whistled for his dog and set off with his herd of cows as quickly as he could.

Ann and her husband could hardly believe what had happened. The cow which had come to them as a gift would feed the hungry family for many months. They had been saved from a famine. Gathering the children together the farmer gave thanks to God for his great kindness towards them. Ann told them about the verse from Psalm 50 which had left her so puzzled. She could not understand what the text which said, "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills" had to do with her need. Now she finally understood. It was true; every beast belongs to the Lord and the cattle on a thousand hills are his. He could bring one of these cattle right to their door!

They now had meat but they still had no flour to make bread, but they were not going to complain when the Lord had been so good to them. However, they were about to discover that the Lord is able to help us in many ways, using all sorts of different people. Do you remember that in our first article we mentioned a kind Christian lady called Lady Kilmarnock? She had helped the family before but Ann had not liked to go to her for help this time. Imagine Ann's surprise when later in the day another knock came to the door.

Outside stood a man who explained that he worked for Lady Kilmarnock. He told Ann that Lady Kilmarnock had sent for him the previous day and asked him "if Ann and her family were well". He had replied that as far as he knew they were all well. "Well," she replied, "I am afraid they are in need. Ann has been in my thoughts constantly for the last few days and I believe it is the Lord who has given me this concern for them. Take a sack of flour to them and better make it a large one. Take it yourself as soon as you can and bring me back word of how they are."

Once more Ann's heart was filled with wonder at God's goodness. He had brought, not one, but two messengers to the door with food. He had used a busy cattle drover and Lady Kilmarnock. He had sent meat and flour to make bread. Many times after this Ann would think back to that time in their lives and when they faced difficulties she was encouraged by the wonderful way in which God had met their needs. She had many special verses in the Bible which she particularly liked but I think you can probably guess which verse became very precious to her after that experience? Yes, that's right. It was Psalm 50 verse ten, "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills."

(Adapted from the Mother's Treasury - Vol V1 1869)

WHY PSALMS ONLY?

One of the things which distinguishes us from many other churches is the fact that when we sing in worship we use only the Book of Psalms. Perhaps you have taken a friend to church and they asked you why? Did you feel a little bit embarrassed and old-fashioned? Should we change our way of worship in order to be more like others?

The Regulative Principle

When we read our Old Testament one of the things which strikes us is the way in which every single part of their worship was under the rule and direction of God. They only worshipped as God instructed: adding nothing to that and taking nothing away. We no longer live in Old Testament times but that same rule, or principle, still applies. This is known as the "regulative principle" and it is very important. We find this principle in the very last words of our Lord to the church at the very end of his ministry in this world. As he was leaving instructions with the Apostles before he ascended up to heaven he told them, amongst other things, to teach men and women "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). We dare not ignore that rule or try and make it weaker than it is. We need God's authority for how we worship and what we use in worship.

The Book of Psalms

Many of the Psalms tell us to sing in worship and they leave us in no doubt what we are to sing. "O come let us sing unto the LORD...Let us ....make a joyful noise unto him with psalms" (Psalm 95:1,2). God did not leave us to write our own songs for worship. We would never be able to do that. When we think of all the mistakes about God and sin and many other matters we find in hymns we realise that we need the Lord himself to give us a book from which we can sing. We can sing the psalms with confidence knowing that they were written by the Holy Spirit.

Some will say that we don't find the name Jesus in the psalms. The psalms are full of Jesus. If we look closely we will find him in every psalm. Indeed many of the psalms not only tell us about Jesus but give us the thoughts and even the words of Jesus. Look at Psalm 22 or Psalm 69 where the Lord Jesus pours out his heart in grief and looks forward with joy to the success of his saving work. In some of the psalms we even hear different persons of the Trinity (God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit) speaking to one another (Psalm 2). What hymn writer would ever dare invent such conversations!

There is no record of the Lord and his Apostles ever singing anything other than psalms. Indeed knowing their Old Testament as they did they would have been horrified at the thought. The use of other man-made hymns only appeared later in the church at a time when the church was at a low point spiritually and moving further and further away from the Word of God.

Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs?

In Ephesians chapter five we find a verse which is often used to try and prove that we can sing more than just psalms in worship. Paul writes that the church is to be "filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (Ephesians 5: 18-19) Surely the use of the words "hymns and spiritual songs" proves that we are not limited to psalms only?

Not at all. The three words used in that verse are all descriptions we find in the Book of Psalms. Each of the Psalms from 120-134 is titled a Song of Degrees. The word hymn is used in Matthew 26:30 to describe the special psalms sung at the time of Passover. When we sing the psalms we are singing "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" as the Lord commanded. The word "spiritual" in that verse in Ephesians 5:19 doesn't just mean something which sounds good and spiritual as opposed to something that is obviously worldly. It means something that is "Spirit-given", that is, directly from the Lord himself. He has commanded us to sing his praise and he has given us 150 psalms to do so. So let's not be embarrassed or feel that our church is old fashioned. Let's not feel that we need to change things. Let's be glad in God's command and God's provision.

PSALMODY TEST 2020

Each year the Special Committee on Psalmody arranges a Psalmody Test. They would encourage readers of the Explorer to take part in this valuable and enjoyable exercise. A CD featuring the tunes is available and an excellent resource can also be found at the Sing Psalms to God website at **www.sing-the-psalms.webs.com**

Anyone requiring further information and Psalmody Test forms should contact their own minister or the Clerk to the Psalmody Committee at **andrewallan@fccontinuing.org**

The Psalmody test uses the Psalms/tunes found in Volume 3 of the *Worthy to be Praised* CD. This year they are as follows:

Tune	Psalm
Irish	33:6
Richmond	8:3
St. Mary	137:1
St. Leonard	132:9
St. Bride	25(i):16
Haresfield	19:9
Old 22nd	22:23,24
Culross	11:1
St. Cecilia	143(ii):11
Tallis' Canon	145(ii):2
London New	36:5
St. Magnus	48:2

The final date for entries is 31 March 2020 and the completed form should be sent to: Rev. Andrew Allan, 23 Kingfisher Drive, Glasgow, G13 4QA.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

I
You have no other God but Me

II
Before an idol bend not your knee

III
Take not the Name of God in vain

IV
Nor make the Sabbath-day profane

V
Give both your parents honour due

VI
Take heed that you no murder do

VII
Avoid all words and deeds unclean

VIII
Nor steal, though you be poor and lean

IX
Make not a wilful lie, nor love it

X
What is your neighbour's, do not covet

(By Isaac Watts from "Sacred verses for children")

The editor's attention has been drawn to a new Christian website which has been developed for children. It features a range of different activities. Remember to check with your parents that they are happy for you to use it.

You can find it at:
https://djmackay75.wixsite.com/kidssundayclub/home

LAZARUS
RAISED FROM THE DEAD

LAZARUS	GRAVE	RESURRECTION	BROTHER
BETHANY	JESUS	MARY	SLEEP
MARTHA	WEEPING	MIRACLE	STONE

E	W	G	J	G	R	A	V	E	W	R	Y
R	D	B	E	M	M	W	D	F	Q	P	I
B	B	M	S	A	A	E	B	S	M	L	O
R	E	S	U	R	R	E	C	T	I	O	N
O	T	L	S	Y	T	P	M	O	R	J	P
T	H	E	E	P	H	I	N	N	A	H	T
H	A	E	G	E	A	N	S	E	C	X	Y
E	N	P	H	Y	R	G	E	C	L	P	G
R	Y	L	A	Z	A	R	U	S	E	Y	N

CAN YOU NAME 3 OTHER PEOPLE IN THE BIBLE THAT WERE RAISED FROM THE DEAD?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Latest entries

1st prize:
Callum McGregor - Rathfriland Reformed Presbyterian Church

Runners up:
Tarbat - Ellie Joy Phiri
Aberdeen - Ava Maclennan
Stornoway - John MacDonald, Peter MacDonald, Marybeth MacDonald, George Kenneth MacDonald
Ballymena Free Presbyterian - Josiah Nicol
Scalpay - Chirsty Bella Morrison, Kyle MacDonald, Kirsty Marie MacDonald
Cross - Alasdair Morrison
Knockbain Free Church - Seumas Grant
Culloden Baptist - Micah MacDonald
Dores - Hannah Keddie, Thomas Keddie, Abigail Keddie
Lochalsh - Elizabeth Anne MacInnes, Seumas MacInnes, Catherine MacInnes

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10 entries prize: Abigail Keddie - Dores

Name: .....

Age: .....

Congregation: .....

Address: .....

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