

The Explorer

November 2015



Subscription Details

The Explorer is published by the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) and is supplied free with the Witness magazine which is published monthly. The subscription rates for 2015 are:

U.K.	£27.50
Europe (Airmail)	£30.00
Overseas (Airmail)	£35.00

Congregations ordering the Witness are encouraged to make bulk orders at the reduced rate of £24 per subscription per year. The Explorer, being free, may be ordered separately for Sabbath Schools.

Subscriptions and orders should be sent to:

Mrs Isobel McQueer
The Manse
Tordarroch
Farr
Inverness-shire
IV2 6XF

Tel: 01808 521474

Email: isobel@mcqueer.com

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
Ross-shire
IV7 8DY

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.

Explorer Editor

Rev Murdo A N Macleod
Free Church Manse
Skeabost Bridge
Isle of Skye
IV51 9NP

Tel: 01470 532725

Email: murdoanmacleod@gmail.com

Printed by:

DM DESIGN & PRINT
25 Loch Lann Road
Inverness
IV2 2HB

Design and layout: M A N Macleod
Picture cover : www.photo.com
Picture page 3: www.iclipart.com
Picture page 4 -5: www.photos.com
Pictures pages 6-7: iwradio.com
Pictures page 8: Rev G Beers
[Unattributed articles ought not to be considered the work of the Editor.]

Skipper's tales



SKIPPER AND THE SEEDS

Recently Skipper and I were on one of our trips to Skipper's favourite place. I am sure by now you will all have guessed where that is. Yes, it is the woods. He just LOVES going there and is very annoyed when, just sometimes, we don't have time to take him and just go up the hill for our walk. He automatically stops at the gate to the field where the path to the wood is and will stand there for ages until we are almost out of view and then with a sigh he runs after us and just accepts there will be no wood today!

That day, however, we were going to the woods and he knew that because I took him in the car. Now, you are wondering why would I take him in the car such a short distance. Well, the other way to the wood is along a busy road and that day some workmen were working on fixing our wee back road so the way to the wood was busy with heavy equipment and I thought Skipper would be a bit scared.

He loves jumping into the back of the car and he is so excited when we park at the wood car park, he is out of the car like a shot and away up the path before I have even locked the car. He knows his way about and never goes out of earshot but he is very well camouflaged and sometimes I don't see where he is for a wee while. You remember what camouglage is from last story don't you?

Well, Skipper was off doing his own thing and I suddenly became aware of a strange thing floating in front of my eyes! I thought at first it was suspended from a spider's web but then I realised it was just floating up and down. It was about two inches long and split right down the middle, I had no idea what it was. Then it dawned on me the ground beneath me was covered in these things. They were seeds from the

fir trees. The creator, God, has very cleverly designed these seeds to float off the trees and land on the ground where some of them will take root to make more trees.

I was reminded that the Bible has no less than 43 verses about seeds, imagine that! Obviously God thinks we need to think about seeds often. Perhaps you can try to look up as many of them as you can find. This one reminded me of the verse in Genesis 8:22 where God tells us 'While the earth remaineth; seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.' Isn't that a wonderful promise?

We look around us and sometimes the summer weather is not very good and we wish it was warmer or drier. We hear all sorts of stories about 'global warming' and how man is able to destroy the planet, we look at the news and it is sometimes not very good. God is reminding us that HE is the creator and HE will look after the whole universe and everything and everyone in it until HE decides when time will end.

In the meantime we have his promise that he will keep everything in order. So next time you see a seed, remember it is a sign that God is renewing and sustaining everything we see around us.



From The Editor

Dear Friends

Today, Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the second became the longest serving monarch of the United Kingdom. She has now reigned for sixty three years and seven months, or, to put it another way: 23, 266 days and 16 hours. This means that she has now overtaken her great great grandmother Queen Victoria who, up until today, had held the record for being our longest serving monarch.

She still has some way to go to becoming the longest serving monarch anywhere in the world. Historians reckon that this title probably belongs to Subhuza the second the Chief and King of Swaziland for almost eighty three years. A little closer to home Louis the fourteenth ruled France from 1643 until his death in 1715; a total of seventy two years and ten days.

We hope and pray that the Lord will spare Her Majesty and that she will continue to know good health and his blessing for a long time. However we know that one day her reign must come to an end. Like us all she must, one day, meet her creator and give her account to him. There is only one King who reigns for ever and you will read about him in this month's puzzle page.

Her Majesty has seen many changes during her reign. Many of them were ones she could do nothing about. How different to the Lord Jesus Christ who is an almighty king. We can take comfort from the fact that he is in control of every change and that every event, great and small, is under his hand.

He is also a perfect king. I'm sure that the Queen would be first to say that not everything in these sixty three years has been perfect. Mistakes will have been made and things could have been done better. Not so with the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing he has ever done, or will ever do, could be done better.

It's good to live in a stable country with a good monarch. I wonder if you also enjoy the blessing of having Jesus as your king? Have you been born again and become a member of his kingdom? You must, if you are ever going to be with him in heaven, where his reign is the subject of endless joy and satisfaction. Are you going to share in that or are you still refusing to have him as your king?

Murdo A N Macleod

WHO AM I ?

MEANINGLESS, MEANINGLESS, UTTERLY MEANINGLESS!

My life: that's what's meaningless. I'm sitting here looking back on the years of my life. I can say nothing but that I am filled with grief and sorrow at how it has all turned out. All I am seeing is how vain and empty the days of my life have been. My conclusion can only be that the ways of this world are all futile and empty. And believe me I speak as one who should know. For I have tried everything this world had to offer, I really had it all; absolutely everything you could wish for.

My wealth and riches have been legendary and in wisdom none have been no one wiser than I. You might think that I am just boasting foolishly but no, I tell you, in all honesty, there never was and never will be anyone wiser than I and yet I have been so utterly foolish when it came to the things that are truly important: my walk with the living God.

The beginning of my reign was so promising too. I was just a teenager when I come to know and love the Lord my God. I loved him with all my heart and soul, I sought to follow all his laws and commands just as my father had done before me. For my father was a man who constantly sought after the heart of his God. He truly loved the Lord his God and I saw how merciful and faithful God was to him.

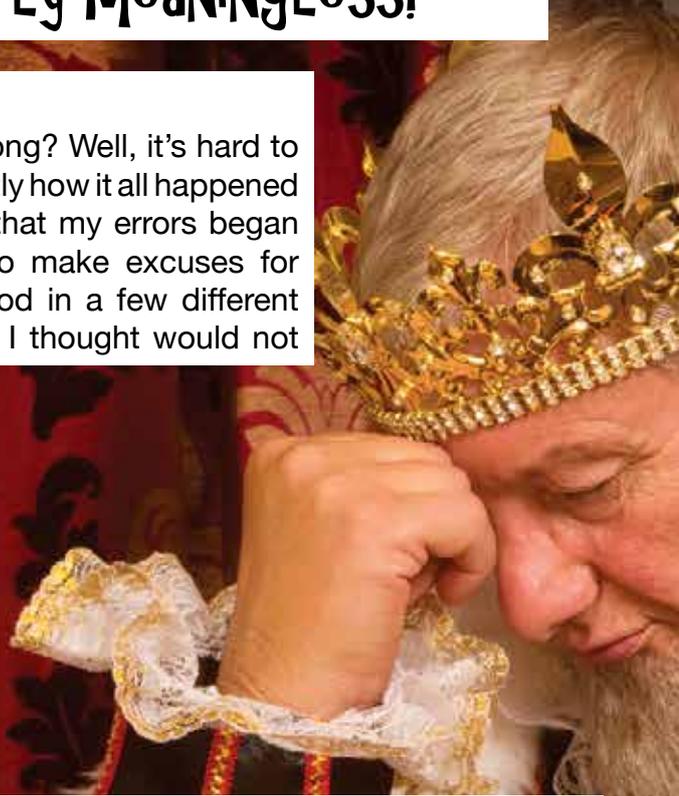
I had, you know, a most unusual experience after the death of my father – I was so overwhelmed with the responsibility of leading God's chosen people so afraid of doing it wrong that God himself actually met with me. He said "ask and I will give it thee". I could only ask for one thing – help in leading this people which was such a burden to me. God responded by promising me the greatest of wisdom and not only that but great riches and

a long life.

What went wrong? Well, it's hard to pin-point exactly how it all happened but I believe that my errors began when I tried to make excuses for disobeying God in a few different areas. Things I thought would not

really matter. You see I began trading horses from Egypt. Now this was forbidden by God but I told myself that I was just trading not keeping. How foolish, it was truly my original intention but all the great rulers had them so my promises did not last long. My trading led to my meeting Pharaoh's daughter and here my heart ruled my head and I did again that which was forbidden. I married a foreign wife. My wife and those others that I later married did not love the Lord they had their own gods and I told myself this was alright it was after all just their private thing but gradually this was not enough for them, they wanted temples for their gods and then before I knew it I was worshipping their gods with them.

Take my warning my friend do not play with sin. Do not even let a little sin in and do not make excuses for disobeying God. The consequences are just so desperately disastrous. You cannot know where your sins will eventually lead. To my utter shame I ended up worshipping the god Moriah who demands child sacrifices. I would never, ever have believed you if you had told me that my "little sins" would become such monsters. So my advice to any who will listen and take heed is this "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."



PUZZLE PAGE

1. I penned these words

■ = A ■ = E ■ = I ■ = O ■ = U

2. I asked God for _____ but God also gave me
_____ & _____

1 Kings 3 v 9 – 13

3. I wrote 2 books of the Bible

Colour in the words below

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge

September entries

1st Prize:- Lily Craig, Stornoway.

Runners Up:-

Knock & Point:- Alexander Macleod, Ruaraidh Macleod

Partick:- Kenny Mackinnon, Mairi Mackinnon

Stornoway: Sarah Craig, Thomas Craig

Name _____

Age _____

Congregation _____

Address _____

The Queen's Question

This month the Explorer has had a bit of a royal theme hasn't it? Our puzzle page is about a king and in the editorial we were thinking about our own Queen Elizabeth. I also mentioned her great great grandmother Queen Victoria. I am sure most of you will have heard of Queen Victoria. She reigned from June 1837 until her death in 1901.

During the Summer holidays whilst we were in the Isle of Wight we visited Osborne House. This was built between 1845 and 1851 for Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert. They would go there every summer and after Albert's death in 1861 the Queen spent a great deal of time there. Osborne House is now open to the public and it was very interesting to see around it.



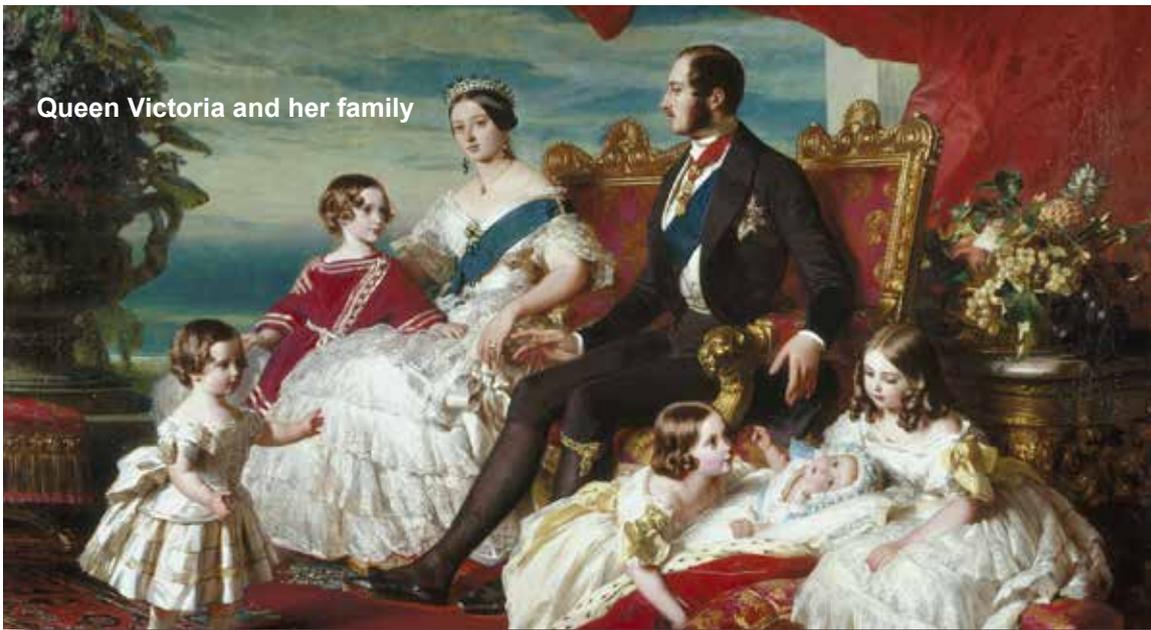
One evening Queen Victoria attended a service in St. Paul's Cathedral, a big church in London. After she came home she asked her Chaplain: one of the ministers who would help her with spiritual questions, "Can one be absolutely sure in this life of eternal safety?" In other words, she wanted to know if you could be sure that you had been truly saved with your sins forgiven and it be absolutely certain that you would go to heaven when you die.

Sadly the Chaplain didn't seem to know the answer and he was unable to give the Queen any real help. Somehow or other news of all this leaked out and some people heard of the question she had asked. One man who heard of it became very concerned and wanted to try and help her. His name was John Townsend, an evangelist who spent his time telling others about the Lord Jesus. At first he had no idea how he could help the Queen but he could not get it out of his mind. He prayed about it and eventually decided that he would send her a letter.

He was very nervous about it all and did not know how to go about writing to the Queen. He began his letter, "To Her Gracious Majesty Our Beloved Queen Victoria, from one of her humble subjects." He then explained that he had heard about her question and wanted to try and help. "With trembling hands but heartfelt love", he wrote I want to show you from the

Word of God that we can know, in this life, that our sins have been forgiven and that we shall go to heaven when we die. He then directed her to several Bible passages which speak of Jesus dying for the sins of his people and of the assurance they can have of their safety in Christ. As the Apostle Paul says, “ Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

We will never know what blessing his letter might have been to the Queen but some time later John Townsend received a simple reply. In her letter the Queen thanked him for taking the time to write to him and told him that she was reading and prayerfully the passages that he had mentioned. The Queen’s question was a good one and the answer is still the same as it was. If we are trusting Christ we can be sure that we shall go to heaven. If we are trusting in ourselves or anything else we can be equally sure that we shall not go to heaven. As Paul said to the Philippian jailor “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house”. (Acts 16: 31) You see, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9)



Queen Victoria and her family

Psalm Tunes 2015 - 2016

Many readers of the Explorer sit the annual Psalmody Test. The third two tunes for the next session are given below. A CD featuring these tunes is also available and an excellent resource can be found at the Sing Psalms to God website at www.sing-the-psalms.webs.com

Anyone requiring further information should contact their own minister or the Clerk to the Psalmody Committee, Rev Andrew Allan, who can be contacted at andrewallan@fccontinuing.org

Eden C.M. No. 55
Psalm 115:15

d | m : r | d : t₁ | d : l₁ | s₁ : l₁ | d : t₁ | l₁ : se₁ | l₁ : - | -
O bless- ed are ye of the Lord who made the earth and heav'n

d | d : t₁ | d : r | m : f | s : d | m : r | d : t₁ | d : - | - ||
The heav'ns, even heav'ns are God's, but he earth to men's sons hath giv'n

W.H. Havergal (1793-1870), a Church of England minister, wrote or adapted the Narenza, Swabia and St. John. What has God given to us to be responsible for?

Narenza C.M. No.168
Psalm45(ii):8

d | t₁ : s₁ | l₁ : t₁ | d : - | - : m | r : t₁ | d : l₁ | s₁ : - | -
Of myrrh and spi-ces sweet, a smell thy gar-ments had,

s₁ | s₁ : s₁ | l₁ : t₁ | d : l₁ | t₁ : m | r : d | r : r | d : - | - ||
Out of the i-v'ry pa-la-ces, where-by they made thee glad.

This tune originally appeared in Cologne in 1584. It was included in a collection of Johann Leisentrit, (1527-1586), a Roman Catholic priest and has been arranged by W.H. Havergal.

MERF

In the last two articles we looked at the work of MERF in Asia in the countries of Indonesia and Pakistan. This time we move to Africa, and in particular, MERF's work in Kenya and South Sudan.



Until 2011 Sudan was all one country, and one of the biggest countries in the whole of Africa. It was dominated by Islamic rule from the North, but in the South, many of the people were Christians. These Christians suffered much persecution under the Islamic regime and endured a long period of civil war. During this time MERF was moved to help the Presbyterian Churches in South Sudan to provide training for their ministers so they could teach the people the Word of God. Many of these ministers have very little education and no formal Bible College training, yet they minister to congregations of up to 5000 or even 7000 people!

To meet this need MERF set up a Bible College in Lokichogio in the north west of Kenya. This is a remote area of Kenya but it is close to the border with South Sudan and provided a safe place to locate the college when there was war and persecution in Sudan. The pastors and church workers could be brought safely across the border to be trained in 3-6 month long courses in the MERF compound where they have dormitories and all their food is provided.

Since the college opened, more than 700 students have been taught in class groups of about 20 people. The students have come not only from Sudan but from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia. The lecturers in the college are mainly Ministers from the UK & the Netherlands who volunteer to go out to teach a section of the course for two to three weeks at a time.



In September 2014 Rev. James Gracie from our Edinburgh congregation went out to teach in Lokichogio and in August this year I had the opportunity to go (I took my son Isaac who had to do the course with the students for the two weeks we were there). There were 17 students in the class and I taught them an overview of the whole Bible, looking at the Old Testament books in the morning and New Testament books in the afternoon lectures. Although the students had a very basic understanding of the Bible it was encouraging to see how enthusiastic they were to learn the Word of God. Some of them would study through their notes after class late into the evening trying to learn as much as they could. We also introduced them to singing the Psalms and they learned to sing Psalm 100 and Psalm 23.



Earlier I said the college was set up when Sudan was still one country under Islamic control but in 2011 South Sudan gained their independence. When this happened MERF thought that it would open doors for greater service in South Sudan but sadly the people in South Sudan began to fight with each other and there has been another civil war for the last few years. 2 million people have had to leave their homes and it has become very hard to contact pastors who are able to take the time away from their families to study in the college in Lokichogio. Recently a peace deal has been signed that it is hoped will make it easier for pastors to come for training in the college.

Points for Prayer

- Pray for Peace in South Sudan so that Pastors are able to attend the Bible College
- Pray for all the students who have passed through the college and who will come.
- Pray for all the lecturers who go to teach in Lokichogio and especially that the Reformed Churches in Scotland will be able to send men to help.
- Pray for the staff at the MERF college who do so much work to keep the it running.