

The Explorer

December 2015



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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
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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.

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Skipper's tales



SKIPPER AND SCARY CARVING

Skipper and I were out for a walk last week, and I am sure you can guess where we were: that's right, the woods! Well, it IS our favourite walk and at the moment it is very beautiful with all the colours of autumn, brilliant red, orange, yellow and green. It is a real pleasure to walk on the crispy leaves on the floor of the woods and Skipper loves to run among them and scatter them with his back legs. Our local wood is run by an organisation called the Woodland Trust. The wood has to be cared for and sometimes that means cutting down dead trees or thinning out the saplings. Do you know what a sapling is? Ask a grown-up to help you look it up in the dictionary.

Anyway, this year some of the trees were cut down by a man in our community who is very clever with chainsaws. I am terrified of chainsaws and Skipper would run a mile if he heard one! This man can do wonderful things with his; apart from just cutting down trees; he can carve things out of the wood and is particularly clever at carving animals and birds. He was asked by the Woodland Trust people if he would carve some of the trees into animals and birds to make the walk through the wood a little more interesting and he has done just that.

Skipper and I decided we would like to see some of them so we took off one afternoon and went on to the path where I knew there was a carving. Skipper as usual was running a good bit ahead of me when suddenly I heard him barking and barking! I hurried along in case he had met another dog, but there he was in front of the carving and he was really barking at it; he was a bit afraid!! I had to laugh; the carving was of a robin and a squirrel. They were much bigger than life size but the robin was HUGE! Skipper didn't know at first when he

saw them that they were wood carvings and he got an awful fright when he saw a robin that was about 10 inches high and very fat! I patted him and then I touched the wood and spoke gently to him telling him it was just a bit of wood. I think he understood a little because he stopped barking, but he walked away very slowly and kept looking back. I wonder if he thought the huge robin was going to fly after us? He knows about birds because we have a robin in the garden and he never chases it but of course it is a very small robin.

Skipper was afraid because he didn't know at first what he was looking at and he didn't understand it. We are all a bit like that when we come across things we don't understand or that we are afraid of. Some of us are afraid of the dark, or of being alone at night, but we all have fears that to us are very real and sometimes other people don't understand them. God has something to say about our fears. He understands that we can be frightened sometimes and he promises to take away our fears if we ask him. Psalm 91 is a lovely reminder of God's love for his people and of his power to save us from harm and fear. Ask someone to help you to learn it, particularly verse 5.



From The Editor

Dear Friends

We recently visited Fort Augustus, a village at the southern end of Loch Ness in the Scottish Highlands. While we were there we saw the famous Caledonian Canal. The canal was built about two hundred years ago and was constructed by the famous Scottish engineer Thomas Telford. The canal is about sixty miles long and runs from Inverness, in the north east, to Fort William in the south west. It was created to provide a safer passage for wooden sailing ships from the north east of Scotland to the south west avoiding the dangerous route around the north coast. The canal connects four lochs with a cleverly designed system of gates and locks. These control the water level and can raise or lower boats to a higher or lower level as required. It makes possible a journey which would otherwise be impossible.

All of this reminded me of the Gospel. Through the perfect work of the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour a way is also opened up that otherwise would have remained closed. There is a way by which sinners may have pardon of sin and peace with God. A spiritual journey which was once impossible is now available. Without the Lord Jesus Christ we could never journey towards heaven. As sinners that was impossible. Because of Christ that way is now passable and possible. Of course there are other ways of travelling between Inverness and Fort William but Jesus tells us that he alone is "the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

The canal cost £920,000; a huge amount of money in those days. What did it cost to open up the way for sinners to be saved? The apostle Peter gives us a little glimpse of that answer when he says that we are redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

If you get an opportunity the Caledonian Canal is well worth a visit. Perhaps you might even sail on it one day. I do hope that you have discovered that other way opened up by Christ through which we can be saved.

Murdo A N Macleod

WHO AM I?

Many boys dream of being King and their sisters play at being Queen, don't they? I used to dream about being King but suddenly one day it wasn't just a dream any longer: it was for real. I was only eight years old: yes that's right - eight! It was all very horrible. My father, whom I am afraid to say was a very wicked man, used to be King but one awful day he was killed by some of his servants.

I was very frightened that we would all be put to death but some of the servants were kind and told me that the people wished me to be King. It was hard but looking back I can see how the Lord helped me. I knew right from the beginning that I needed his help. I prayed to him every day and, you know, he has never let me down. Jerusalem was full of idols in those days and when I was about sixteen I began to get rid of them. Some people were not very pleased when the altars of Ba'alim were destroyed but I insisted. I knew that we would never have the Lord's blessing and protection if we kept on worshipping these false gods. My grandfather Manasseh also tried to remove these idols and I believe things would have worked out better for my father if he had done the same.

The temple was in a terrible state and as soon as I could I gave an order to begin work on it. We began the repairs and one day amongst the rubbish Hilkiah, who was High Priest, found the book of the law which the Lord had given to Moses. Shaphan read to me from it and I saw at once that we had to turn to the Lord and repent of all our sins. There was so much in God's law which we had got wrong and old Huldah, who knew about these things, told us that God's judgement was coming upon us.

It was because of that we had the great gathering. I'm sure you have heard about it. I hoped the people would attend and they did: in huge numbers but though there were so many there they were quiet that day. They listened while I spoke; you could have heard a pin drop, and they agreed to keep God's commandments.

In the book of the law we read about the passover. We didn't really know what it was because we hadn't had one of them for many years. We got it

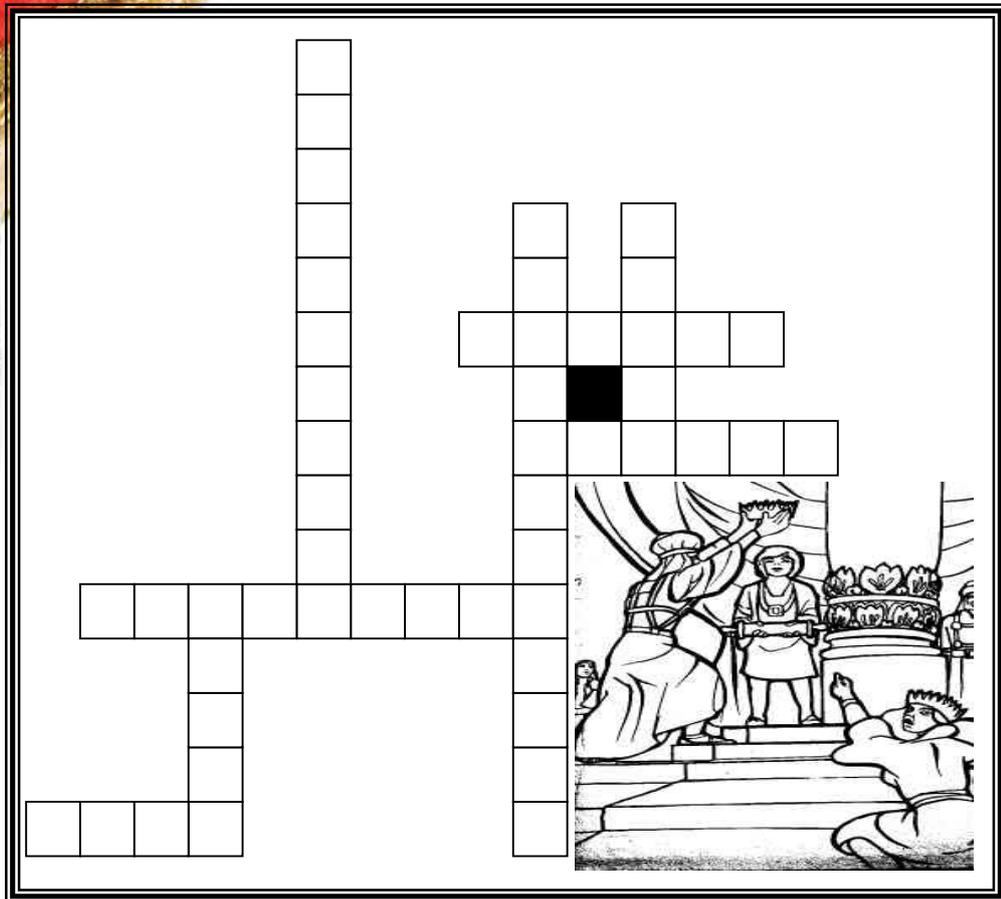
all ready for the fourteenth day of the first month and, do you know, I think that was one of the best days of my life.

There is war now. King Necho of Egypt supports the Assyrians and they are our old enemy. I am going to try and stop King Necho. But you know something really strange happened the other day. Necho sent me a message. He told me not to get involved in this war. He said God was using him to destroy the Assyrians. What does he know about God? I am going to ignore his words and right now we are going to fight the Egyptians at Megiddo. I'm sure the Bible will tell you if I win so go right now, if you can, and see what happened.



PUZZLE PAGE

1. I was _____ (5) years old when I became King in _____ (9)
2. I walked in the ways of David declining neither to the _____ (5) hand nor to the _____ (4).
3. I purge Jerusalem of all the carved _____ (6)
4. I burned the bones of the priests on the _____ (6)
5. I made a _____ (8) before the Lord to walk after the Lord and keep all his _____ (12) and his _____ (11) and his statutes with all my heart and my soul. 2 Chronicles 34 and 2 Kings 22



October entries

1st Prize:- Sarah Craig, Stornoway

Runners Up:-

Partick:- Kenny Mackinnon, Mairi Mackinnon

Snizort:- Angus Nicolson

Stornoway:- Lily Craig, Thomas Craig

Name _____

Age _____

Congregation _____

Address _____

Listen to this ...

I have a big brother. He never does what I tell him. He tells me that because he is bigger than me, he knows more than me, and so does not have to listen to me. And he expects me to listen to him, and do everything that he says. I don't think that is fair, or good, and there is no way that I will do everything that he says because sometimes he is plain daft. He makes up all sorts of rules when we are playing a game – and even sometimes changes the rules during the game to make sure that he wins. He can be very bossy and thinks he knows everything. There are times when he makes me mad. I am not his servant or his slave and I am certainly not stupid. I don't think any girl is.

But although he doesn't like it, there are times when he has to do what I say. Sometimes Mum will



call us children to come in for dinner, or to get ready for going out, or something like that. And if my brother doesn't hear her, because he is reading a book, or climbing a tree, or crawling through the garden thinking that he is some sort of brave soldier, or just running about making too much noise, then Mum will tell me to tell him what it is that she has said. Then he has to listen to me, and obey me, because if he doesn't then Mum will sort him out. It doesn't matter that I am his wee sister then, because Mum is bigger and older and knows much more than him. Then he has to do exactly whatever it is that I say, immediately and without any dilly-dallying, because it is not just me that's telling him – but it is me and Mum. And that is final, and there is no debate! Mum makes the rules and I just have to tell him what they are.

Dad said that we have to listen to the minister when he preaches because he has been sent by God to tell us God's message. Dad said that we can't just ignore what the minister says just because we think he is very young, or for any other reason, when he is telling us what God has said. I don't think there are any ministers that are young – they all look very old, and I can't imagine that any of them were ever young – but I suppose that compared to Dad, or Granny then some might be a bit young, and I think I understand what he means. The minister's message comes with God's authority – because it is really God's word. God sends these men to tell us his message because we are not normally very good listeners or paying attention. When I asked him how I am meant to know if what the minister is saying is true or not, Dad said that is why I have to take my own Bible to church, and to read it when I get home – so I can see for myself that this really is God's Word.

II Corinthians 5:20 Now then we [Paul and other gospel preachers] are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

ARBROATH 2015



The October Youth Weekend Away in Arbroath took place from the 16th - 19th October. Speaking at the weekend was Rev William Macleod, Knightswood, who had previously spoken here in February 2009. The talks over the weekend were entitled Repentance and Mercy in a World of Sin and Suffering.

Refreshed and recuperated from our travels after a good dinner, the first talk began. Speaking on the Problem of Pain, Mr Macleod stated that though God was all-powerful and loving, yet sin existed because of man's disobedience. And now, sin reigned in all its ugly colours, of disease, pain, depression and eventually eternal death. Hence the absolute necessity of repentance unto life, which was explained in the second talk on Saturday morning.

As usual, we had a group discussion time after the second talk, and for perhaps the first time ever, the groups managed to get through every question. That evening, the wonderful cross of Christ was preached as the only way of God showing mercy and giving peace to sinners who deserved his just wrath. On the Sabbath, the two services continued the theme, with the morning service dealing with Ongoing Repentance, that being the repentance which everyone must continue in after coming to faith. As Paul clearly says in Romans 7, the Lord's people will be conscious of still committing sin, and will be grieved by it. God chastises his children and will not allow them to continue in sin. Repentance is sadly a daily task, because sin is a daily occurrence.

We had a delightful lunch, or rather a feast for dinner in the early afternoon. In the evening a most solemn sermon was preached on the parable of the ten virgins from Matthew 25: 12-13, entitled Too late for repentance.

Question time was one of the most interesting points of the weekend, where several intriguing questions were put to Mr Macleod, and answered in a very clear and Biblical way. We give thanks to the Lord for his goodness and kindness during the weekend, and keeping us safe as we travelled. We thank all who came, and particularly Mr Macleod for being such a great speaker; Isobel Ann and Jennifer from Snizort who were our fantastic cooks again, and of course Nathan Roberts, who was as ever a most capable organiser. We also thank everyone who prayed for the weekend, and those who supplied baking.

Psalm Tunes 2015 - 2016

Many readers of the Explorer sit the annual Psalmody Test. The 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

Warrington L.M. No. 19
Psalm 145 (ii):20

| s : s : f | m : s : d¹ | d¹ : r¹ : t | d¹ : - : m¹ | r¹ : - : r¹ | m¹ : - : r¹ d¹ | t : - : | s₁ : - : -
The Lord pre-serves all, more and less, that bear to Him a lov-ing heart:

| d¹ : d¹ : s | l : t : d¹ | f¹ : - : m¹ : r¹ d¹ | d¹ : t : l | s : - : f | m : s : d¹ | d¹ : r¹ : t | d¹ : - : - |
But work-ers all of wick-ed-ness de-stroy will he, and clean sub-vert.

Warrington Divinity College was a place of theological study for those who dissented from the Church of England. Ralph Harrison (1748-1810) studied there and composed this fine tune. What does dissent mean?

Hamilton No. 71 C.M. (R)
Psalm 84:4

s | s : f . m : l s | s : m : d | f : - : m , f | m : r : r | m : s : d¹ |
Bless'd are they in thy house that dwell, they e-ver

s : - : l : fe | s : - : s . m | r : - : m : f | m : s : s . m | r : - : m : f | f : m :
give thee praise. Bless'd is the man whose strength thou art

s | l , s : l : t | d¹ . s : f : m | r . f : m : r | d : - : |
In whose heart are thy ways: In whose heart are thy ways:

Robert Archibald Smith (1780-1829) was the son of a Paisley weaver. He was a well-known precentor in Paisley Abbey Church, then in Edinburgh. The last line of each verse is sung twice in this tune. These Common Metre tunes were composed by him: Morven, and St. Lawrence; also the short metre, Selma, and the C.M repeating tune, St. George's Edinburgh.



For the last few years now Syria has often featured in our news bulletins. A civil war broke out which was quickly hijacked by Islamic Jihad groups and out of this the Islamic State (ISIS) was established in Western Syria and North Eastern Iraq. I am sure you have heard about it and seen or heard about some of the brutal acts that are carried out by this wicked group in the name of Islam.

All this fighting has had terrible consequences for the peoples of these lands. Many have been killed and millions have been displaced from their homes to live in refugee camps in Jordan and Lebanon; others have not been able to move and remain in perilous conditions in their cities, towns and villages. Among these are Christians and multitudes of Muslims, sickened by ISIS, that the Church is seeking to reach out to with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

METF Helps Churches in Syria

There are still significant numbers of believers remaining in Syria, and METF gives help to these Churches. In the capital city of Damascus a team of volunteers from the Churches have come together to meet the physical and spiritual needs of many who are suffering or displaced from their homes. They run Bible studies for women and children and distribute METF's Gospel literature in the Arabic language. Needy families are given help with food and the ability to heat their homes in the winter. There has been great joy among the workers as they have seen people come to trust in Christ through their ministry. The testimony of one woman is 'I came to benefit from the aid given out, but my husband and I found what is much more precious; Jesus, our Saviour, drew us to himself.'

Similar work is going on in the embattled city of Aleppo. The Pastor of a Church connected with METF writes: 'The situation is very tough but we still trust the Lord our God and pray for peace.' Around 200 people continue to meet in this congregation and are reaching out to the community with literature and medicines. They have also brought 50 children and elderly people under the care of the Church to help meet their needs. The Christians in Syria greatly appreciate the help and support received from METF and write: 'We thank the Lord for the METF supporters all round the world for their prayers and support.'

METF Helps Refugees in Lebanon

Many of the displaced Syrian refugees have found shelter in neighbouring Lebanon. There are many Christians in Lebanon and through METF's partner 'The Lebanese Reformed Fellowship,' under the leadership of Dr. Samuel Kharrat, they reach out to the people in the refugee camps. There is a lot of hopelessness and despair in these camps and often the Christians who witness feel helpless in the face of it, but they share the Gospel and pray with the people. Through this witness many Muslim people have been converted to faith in Christ. Some Lebanese Churches have been overflowing with people coming to worship services on the Lord's Day and others have had to put on extra services to accommodate the people. God is working through this tragedy and bringing people out of their own countries, through much distress, but into his everlasting kingdom.

METF broadcasts Christian Radio into Syria & Iraq

Another wonderful opportunity to share the Gospel in these troubled lands is through the radio programmes METF broadcasts in these regions. These are a great source of comfort to struggling Christians and at the same time many Muslims are tuning in and hearing about Jesus. One Muslim man recently wrote: 'The ongoing terrorist incidents in my country made me convinced that the true God would not ask his people to kill themselves and others for him to be pleased. Only a false god would ask people to do so. It is through your broadcasts that I am learning more about the true God and I am finding love and peace. I have also got a copy of the Old and New Testaments and I would like to read books about Jesus.'

Points for Prayer

- **Pray for the Churches in Syria that God would bless their outreach in that war torn land.**
- **Pray for the Churches in Lebanon who reach out to the refugees.**
- **Pray for the Radio Broadcasts that they would bear much fruit in bringing people to Christ.**
- **Pray for peace in these regions. One Christian in Syria asks: 'Please pray and fast for the situation in Syria and for the war to end.'**