

The Explorer

February 2008



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 at a cost of £1.50 per issue or £22.50, postage paid, per year. Congregations ordering the Witness are encouraged to make bulk orders at the reduced rate of £20 per subscription per year. The Explorer, being free, may be ordered separately for Sabbath Schools.

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Puzzles

Young folk are encouraged to complete the various puzzles in the magazine and send them in to:

Mrs Kirsteen Murray
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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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Printed by:

MMS Almac Ltd.
6 Tyock Ind. Est
Elgin
Moray
IV30 1XY

Design and layout: H. Woods



Springtime

In the Song of Solomon chapter 2 verses 11 to 12 it says "For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;".

God has given us the promise that there will be seedtime and harvest and summer and winter while the world remains.

Springtime on the farm was a very busy time of year as lambs were being born and the fields had to be prepared for the sowing of seed.

First of all the fields had to be ploughed and then all the stones had to be gathered. We didn't like gathering stones but we were told it was necessary to allow the seed to grow better and it made it easier to harvest. The ground was then cultivated to make the surface smooth and then the seed was sown.

We are told in the parable of the sower about different types of soil and what happened to the seed when it fell on the different types of ground. The seed represents the Word of God and the different kinds of ground represent the heart.

Some seeds fell by the way side where the birds ate them up. This represents people who hear the Word but it has no effect on them because they carelessly allow Satan to steal it away.

Some seeds fell on stony ground and they grew but they had no roots and when the sun shone they withered. This represents people who hear God's Word but don't want to face the trouble it brings and its effects soon disappear.

Other seed fell among thorns and the thorns grew and choked the seed. This represents people who hear the Word of God but are more concerned with worldly pleasures than the Word.

Some seed fell on good ground where it grew well and produced fruit. This represents people who hear the Word of God and obey it and bring glory to God in their lives by believing in the Lord Jesus.

We should pray that God would prepare our hearts to receive his Word and that our lives would be pleasing to him.

What kind of ground does your heart provide for God's Word?

A Letter to You

Below is an open letter by Charles Spurgeon to the children in the church. You will see that it just begins, 'Dear . . . ' this is so that you can put your own name in it and read it as a letter addressed to you. He says some very important things in the letter and it is the prayer of all connected with the Explorer that you will think seriously about them.



Dear

You are highly privileged in having parents who pray for you. Your name is known in the courts of heaven. Your case has been laid before the throne of God — do you not pray for yourself? If other people value your soul, can it be right for you to neglect it? All the pleadings and wrestlings of your father and pastor will not save you, if you never seek the Lord for yourself. You know this. You do not intend to cause grief to mother and father, but you do. So long as you are not saved they can never rest. However obedient and sweet and kind you may be they'll never feel happy about you until you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and find everlasting salvation. Think of this. Remember how much you've already sinned and none can wash you but Jesus. When you grow up you may become very sinful and none can change your heart and make you holy but the Lord Jesus through his Spirit. You need what father and mother seek for you and you need it now. Why not seek it at once? I heard a father pray, "Lord save our children and save them young". It's never too soon to be safe, never too soon to be happy, never too soon to be holy. Jesus loves to receive very young ones. You cannot save yourself, but the great Lord Jesus can save you. Ask him to do it; he that asketh receiveth, then trust in Jesus to save you. He can do it, for he died and rose again that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. Come and tell Jesus you've sinned. Seek forgiveness. Trust him for it and be sure you are saved. Then imitate our Lord; be at your home what Jesus was at the home in Nazareth. Yours will be a happy home and your dear father and mother will feel that the dearest wish of their hearts has been granted them. I pray you to think of Heaven and Hell for in one of those places you will live forever. Meet me in Heaven, meet me at the Mercy Seat, run up stairs and pray to the great Father through Jesus Christ,

*Yours very truly
C. H. Spurgeon*



I AM FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE PSALM 139:14

Lots of people say that there is no God but the Bible says that they are fools. This is partly because God has made it so clear that he exists that it is impossible to deny the fact without lying to yourselves. The apostle Paul says in Romans chapter 1 that people in their sinful rebellion against God deliberately ignore the evidence that God has given of his existence. In Romans Paul is speaking about the wonderful creation all around us, but the Psalmist in Psalm 139 thinks about something closer to him than even the world outside. He speaks about his own body — how it was made and the care God took over it even before he was born. It is good for you to stop and think about your own body. Now there may be things about our bodies that you don't like too much — you may feel that your nose is a bit big or your ears stick out too much — but when you stop and think about just how wonderful your nose is and how amazing are your ears then you will begin to understand like the Psalmist that you really are amazingly and wonderfully made.

Here are some incredible facts about your body.

Your Eyes: Your eyes are the most complex organs you possess except for your brain. They are composed of more than two million working parts and can process 36,000 bits of information every hour. Under the right conditions they can discern the light of a candle at a distance of 14 miles. In a normal life-span they will bring you almost 24 million images of the world around you. The external muscles that move the eyes are the strongest muscles in the human body for the job that they have to do. The adult eyeball measures about 2.5 cm in diameter and of its total surface area only the front portion, about one-sixth, is exposed. The eye is the only part of the human body that can function at

100% ability at any moment, day or night, without rest. Your eyelids need rest, the external muscles of your eyes need rest, the lubrication of your eyes requires replenishment, but your eyes themselves never need rest. While we are thinking about the eyes have you ever wondered what eyebrows are for? Your eyebrows are designed to stop sweat from running into your eyes. God has a reason for everything he has made.



Stomach: Your stomach has to produce a new layer of mucus every two weeks otherwise it will digest itself.

Heart: Put your hand on your heart. Did you place your hand on the left side of your chest? Many people do, but the heart is actually located almost in the centre of the chest, between the lungs. It's tipped slightly so that a part of it sticks out and taps against the left side of the chest, which is what makes it seem as though it is located there. God has designed your left lung to be smaller than your right to make room for your heart. Your heart beats about 100,000 times in one day and about 35 million times in a year. During an average lifetime, the human heart will beat more than 2.5 billion times. The aorta, the largest artery in the body, is almost the diameter of a garden hose. Capillaries, on the other hand, are so small that it takes ten

of them to equal the thickness of a human hair. Your body has about 5.6 litres of blood. This 5.6 litres of blood circulates through the body three times every minute. In one day, the blood travels a total of 19,000 km — that's four times the distance across the USA from coast to coast. The heart pumps about one million barrels of blood during an average lifetime — that's enough to fill more than three super tankers.

Bones: You are born with about three hundred bones, but by the time you become an adult, you will only have about two hundred and six. A quarter of your bones are in your feet! You have fifty four bones in your hands including the wrists and fourteen bones in your face. Your thigh bones are stronger than concrete. The smallest bone in your body is the Stirrup in your ear and the biggest is the Femur in your leg. You grow a whole new Skeleton about every three months!

Breathing: You breathe over five million times a year. It seems very easy, doesn't it? Yet for each breath you take, twenty four ribs, twelve vertebrae and three parts of the breastbone move.

Nose: God has designed your nose as your own personal air-conditioning system — it warms cold air and cools hot air. A sneeze zooms out your nose at over 100mph. The nostrils are lined with stiff hairs that keep dust, dirt, microorganisms, and even small insects from being breathed into your lungs. The larger inner nasal cavity is very deep, and connects to your airway, and to your inner ear. There are mucous membranes within the nose, which secrete a thick mucus that also helps trap dirt. At the top of the inner cavity is the olfactory bulb, which contains the receptors that collect molecules and help you smell. The sinuses are cavities in your head. The sinuses are lined with a mucous membrane — soft, moist



tissue covered with a layer of mucus. The tissue is also covered with microscopic hairs called cilia. The cilia wave back and forth, moving the mucus into the nasal cavity where it can capture dust, dirt, microorganisms, and pollen. The dirt-laden mucus is then flushed out to the stomach via the back of the throat. This is the way your body prevents bacteria from entering the body when breathing through the nose.

Liver: If you have two-thirds of your liver removed in surgery, it will grow back to its original size in just four weeks' time.

Blood: Your blood takes a very long trip round your body. If you could stretch out all of your blood vessels, they would go around the world twice. One drop of blood contains about one hundred million red blood cells. More than two million of these are destroyed and replaced every second.

Kidneys: Your kidneys' job is to get rid of all the waste in your blood and clean your body. So your kidneys filter over four hundred gallons of blood each day.

Brain: When you touch something, you send a message to your brain at 124 mph. Your brain is made of about 80% water and has about 100,000,000,000 (100 billion) neurons.

Skin: Your skin is your very own coat of armour to protect your body. There are approximately nineteen million cells on each square inch of your skin. Your skin has different thicknesses, the thinnest being on your eyelids and the thickest on the sole of your feet



Your Face: All faces have the same basic features — eyes, nose and mouth — and they are always in the same places. But even though there are about six billion people in the world each one is different and you usually only need to look at someone's face to tell who they are. You use an average of forty three muscles when you frown but only seventeen when you smile. When you think of how wonderful and amazing God has made you you have every cause to smile. Indeed you are fearfully and wonderfully made.



PUZZLE PAGE

Acrostic Competition Winner

Many of you entered the competition and I am told the standard was very high. However there can only be one winner and the judges chose the one below. Well done to all of you and especially Sacha. No doubt Mr Roberts will be in touch with the prize!

So God will take thy sins on to Him and ye shall be blessed.
A sinner ye shall sin unless ye trust Him.
Come forth ye that want to be baptised.
Have faith in Him. Have faith in the Lord
And ye shall be blessed in Him.

Lie and ye are a sinner and sin.
Is Christ there? people ask.
Trust in the Lord and ye shall be blessed.
Tell everyone about the Lord.
Listen to the preacher, listen to the people that tell how
to believe & speak thy name
Every day, year, month, hour, second God is with us.



Sacha Little, aged 8, Snizort

Longest and Shortest

- How many books are there in the Old Testament?
- How many books are there in the New Testament?
- How many books are there in the whole Bible?
- What is the longest book of the Bible?
- What is the shortest book of the Bible?
- What is the longest chapter in the Bible?
- What is the shortest chapter in the Bible?
- What is the longest verse in the Bible?
- What is the shortest verse in the Bible?
- Find a verse that tells what the Bible is all about?

Fill in this form if you are sending the puzzles in.
Name:
Address:
.....
.....
Congregation:



THE LAST TEST

Opposite is an old painting showing the cup being found in the sack. Notice how the painter has shown the brothers wearing the kind of clothes they wore in his own day.

Last month we saw the brothers on their way back home. They had food, they had Simeon and they still had Benjamin. All things considered it had been a very successful trip. Maybe some of them were wondering what they had been so worried about. Maybe others in the company had a lingering feeling that things were going almost too smoothly. We do not know. We do know, however, that at some point they notice that they are being followed and soon an Egyptian, with the news of the missing cup, overtakes them. There is nothing for it but to go back to Egypt and face Joseph who is testing his brothers for one last time, before he feels confident enough to reveal his true identity. Having read chapter 44 you will have noticed that the remainder of the chapter is divided into two sections, in which Joseph and Judah speak in turn.

JOSEPH ACCUSING

They fall down before Joseph shocked and frightened and can only listen as he accuses Benjamin of theft and tells them that Benjamin must remain behind while the rest return home to their father. Every time that I read this part of the chapter my mind goes to the day of judgement when we will all appear before the judgement seat of Christ.

They trembled before this stern governor who seemed able to discover secrets. Terrible as that must have been it is as nothing compared to the day when sinners will stand before the Judgement seat of one who knows every secret. We are told in the Bible that on that day people will cry to the hills and the rocks to cover them but there will be no hiding place. Whatever they might say there was no avoiding the fact that the cup, however it had got there, was in Benjamin's sack. In the same way on the last day there will be no avoiding the fact of our sin. We can cover it up and disguise it here in this world but there will be no covering or disguising of anything on that day.

Joseph could speak of the disgrace of repaying his kindness with apparent theft and the Lord can point to our repaying of his goodness to us with a lifetime of sin and disobedience. Years before they had scoffed at the idea of falling down before Joseph but here they are bowing in his presence. How many folk will scoff and blaspheme when we speak of the day of judgement but it will be a different thing when that day comes. Never be tempted to join in with such mocking, never be tempted to think in that way, it is not something to joke about or treat lightly.

We also know that it was one thing to deal with the official who overtook them on the journey but it was quite different to meet with Joseph himself. In the same way we might feel uncomfortable when our conscience troubles us about sin or when the minister preaches about these things but that is nothing compared to the day of Judgement. They all had to

appear before the judgement seat of Joseph, and we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ. What a mercy it was that their Judge turned out to be a friend and a helper. What a mercy it will be for the Christian, and only for the Christian, when they stand on the day of Judgement before one who is also their Friend and their Saviour.

JUDAH PLEADING

Benjamin is in danger of being condemned to an Egyptian prison but into the situation steps Judah who speaks up for him. We admire Judah's determination for he persists in his pleading even after Joseph gives him an opportunity to go home. Joseph tests them by suggesting they go home and after all their father need never know that they deserted him, just make up a story like they did before. Judah will not hear of it and says he would rather go to prison himself than abandon Benjamin. He speaks of the promise that he gave his father and of his concern that to return home without Benjamin would break his father's heart. The rest seem to concur with what he says. How they had changed since that day they sold Joseph and returned home with his coat soaked in the blood of a goat. Now there is concern for their brother and love for their father. Now there is a desire to do what is right even at great personal cost. They sold Joseph because he was the favourite but now they cannot abandon Benjamin because he is the favourite. Joseph must have been very glad to see how differently they dealt with Benjamin to the way they had once dealt with him and now he knows that the time has come to tell them who he really is. Who are we most like in our dealings with other people, the brothers when they selfishly sold Joseph or when they selflessly did what was right by Benjamin?

Maybe you are thinking to yourself that this has no relevance to you. It is just an Old Testament story. Well I would suggest that Judah should remind us of someone else, a descendant of Judah as a matter of fact. You know whom I mean – the Lord Jesus Christ. He speaks on behalf of, or intercedes on behalf of guilty sinners (Hebrews 7 v 25).

In order that sinners might go free he was offered as a sacrifice in their place, a sacrifice far greater than any sacrifice Judah might have made, even supposing he had remained in Egypt for ever, in order to secure Benjamin's freedom. Christ was offered not for one sin but for the innumerable sins of an innumerable number of his elect.

And of course you are well aware of the fact that the intercession of Christ did not last for just a few minutes but is one that is ongoing. The wonderful truth about that is that we, here and now, can receive that intercession for ourselves if we seek him as our Saviour and our High Priest. Do not delay but go to the Lord before the time of opportunity is past.



The Best Book in the World

Still life with Bible
Vincent van Gogh

The house was mostly empty. Sometimes there was a light on and sometimes there was a car outside but usually it was quiet and dark. It had been like that for nearly seven years and hardly anyone knew what was inside it. In the garden was a real red telephone box, a large statue of a dog with a bird in its mouth and a working lamp post. It was an intriguing house, a mystery home.

Then one day Cathie's grandparents were invited to visit and to their surprise as soon as they walked in they saw all sorts of interesting collectable things. In the sitting room a stuffed red squirrel was fixed on the wall and opposite him perched a stuffed bird, a lovely blue jay. There was old furniture, slot machines that still worked and wall displays of old golf clubs. But right at the top of the stairs was a very unusual painting. It was huge, and filled the whole wall space. On one side stood a gentleman dressed in the eighteenth century black clothes of a clergyman and opposite him stood a young girl, barefooted holding a book in her hand. It was a 'religious' painting, the owner said, though he didn't know much about it. But Granny and Grandpa did and were able to tell this story.

"Many years ago, in the 1790s, a little girl called Mary Jones lived with her mother in a cottage deep in the Welsh countryside. Her father had died and they were very poor. Mary had to work hard around the home even though she was only nine and had never learnt to read or write. Two miles away from their little cottage was the chapel where every Sunday the young girl walked with her mother and listened to the minister as he read from a big black pulpit Bible and preached. Mary longed to be able to read the words in that Bible for herself and tried to remember as much as she could of what she had heard. Then one day, a school opened in the village and at last Mary learnt to read. She was ten years old and now all she wanted was to have a Bible of her own. But Bibles were expensive and Mary had no money so she started to do extra work to earn a few pennies until after five whole years she had saved up enough to buy her own Bible.

One day the schoolmaster told her that a man called Mr Thomas Charles had Bibles for sale. The only problem was that he lived in a town called Bala, 25 miles away from Mary's home. Mary had no money for transport but made up her mind she would walk all the way on foot because she was so determined to have a Bible to read for herself. After a long, long day's trek, she came to Bala, exhausted but excited when she found Mr Charles' house. She was taken indoors, fed and rested and then told her story. At first she was very disappointed to learn that the last Bible had been sold, but amazed and moved by her determination, Mr Charles managed to get hold of another and she set off home again the next morning, clutching her new treasure carefully."

Mary's story became well known because, as Mr Charles thought about the many poor people all over Wales and other countries who had no means of owning God's Word, he began

to plan what he could do to help them. And so it was that, with the help of other Christian men, he formed the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804. Bibles were printed in lots of different languages, including Welsh of course, and made available cheaply to people all over the world.

If Mary had lived today and really wanted a Bible of her own she would be able to get one without waiting five years, or walking twenty five miles. She might be given one in school free by the Gideon organisation; she might be given a gospel by someone distributing tracts on the street, or she could buy a basic edition cheaply in a bookshop after saving up her pocket money.

But that would only happen if she lived in a Western country where it is possible to buy Bibles. Some non-Christian countries will not allow Bibles to be brought in or to be sold and a believer caught reading God's Word may suffer imprisonment or worse. Other countries, while not forbidding believers to read the Word of God, drastically restrict the import of Bibles. So for the thousands of Chinese folk who are becoming Christians it is almost as impossible as it was for Welsh Mary to get their own Bible. The Chinese government allows one printing Press, called Amity press, to print Bibles yet although they produce as many thousands as they can, they still cannot keep up with the demand in that huge country. As well as the acute shortage of God's Word, many Chinese have the same difficulty that Mary had to get hold of a book. The majority of Chinese Christians do not live in large cities where there are Bibles, and they are very poor. The expense of travelling to the nearest city and the cost of buying a Bible are far beyond the ability of a Chinese peasant. So there is still a very real need for Bible societies who will produce Bibles cheaply and give them to those in need wherever it is permitted.

Soon you will see a lot of publicity about the 2008 Summer Olympics, due to be held in China. China wants to give a good image to the world at these games, but even so the government is banning a list of items which can be taken to the games. Amazingly, one of these is the Christian Bible. So Christian athletes will not have access to Bibles as they stay in their Olympic village houses. Many governments, mainly Communist, Atheist, Hindu or Muslim, fear the growth of Christianity in their countries and so try to limit the availability of God's Word to their populations. The reason is just because the Bible is the Word of God. It is 'powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit'...(Hebrews 4 v 12) and is used by God in the conversion of sinners.

So when you read your Bible, treat it with respect, thank God that you have learnt to read and have a Bible of your own, and think of young Mary Jones, and the many thousands of young people all over the world, who are denied education and worse still, denied access to the *best book in the world*.