

The Explorer



January 2011

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 2010 are:

U.K. £25.00
 Europe (Airmail) £30.00
 Overseas (Airmail) £35.00

Congregations ordering the Witness are encouraged to make bulk orders at the reduced rate of £22 per subscription per year. The Explorer, being free, may be ordered separately for Sabbath Schools.

Subscriptions and orders should be sent to:

Sandra Judge
 10 Montrose Terrace
 Whiting Bay
 Isle of Arran
 KA27 8QN
 email: sandra.judge@tesco.net

Puzzles

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

Miss Anne Macaulay,
 24 Ord Terrace
 Strathpeffer
 Ross Shire
 IV14 9DA.

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.



Explorers Editor

Rev Harry JT Woods
 Free Church Manse
 Beaulay
 Inverness-shire
 IV4 7EJ
 Tel: 01463-782-303
 Email: hjtwoods@tiscali.co.uk

Printed by:

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

Design and layout: H. Woods
 Cover Picture: The Carina Nebula
 [copyright@stsci.edu.]

[Unattributed articles ought not to be considered the work of the Editor.]



Restored by the Lord

So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. (John 21:15-17)

Simon Peter and six other disciples have been dining with Christ by the sea of Galilee. Their meal of fish and bread has been a memorable one because Jesus himself prepared it for them and served it to them. They have enjoyed their Master's company and conversation. This was the third time that the Lord had appeared to the disciples as a group after his resurrection.

After the meal was finished Jesus turned to one of the disciples and addressed him by name. It was Simon Peter. Christ had some words which were especially for him. Why did the Lord want to speak to Simon at this time? Although Simon was truly sorry for disowning the Lord in the high priest's palace something else had to happen before he could serve Christ again. Of all the disciples Peter in particular needed to be restored by the Lord.

Judas Iscariot had betrayed Jesus into the hands of his enemies. When Jesus was sentenced to death Judas was overwhelmed with guilt. Sorry for himself and fearful of his future he went and hung himself (Matt.27:5). He had never really believed that he was a sinner or trusted in Christ for salvation. There was no restoration for Judas. The other disciples had forsaken Jesus before his crucifixion, fleeing from the garden when the mob seized him. Simon Peter had gone a step further however: he had denied the Lord by his words as well as by his deeds. What did Christ have for *him*?

Do you remember how Jesus spoke to Simon Peter before his denial? "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31,32). How grateful Peter was now for the prayer of his Lord! Despite his fall he had not gone the way of Judas Iscariot; he was found in the fellowship of Jesus and the disciples. We too should be thankful for Christ's intercession if we are Christians for it will keep us in the narrow way until we enter glory.

A Searching Question

Jesus turned to Simon Peter and asked him a question: "Lovest thou me?" In fact he asked the question three times. It was a simple question yet very searching, making Simon think deeply about his recent conduct and his relationship to the Lord.

The first time Jesus asked Simon the question he pointed to the rest of the disciples and said, "Lovest thou me *more than these*?" There was a reason for this. Simon Peter had declared that he would never be offended because of Christ; he had insisted that he would never deny Christ even if he should die with him (Matt.26:33,35). A short while ago he had jumped into the sea to

come to Christ while the other disciples remained in the boat, as though he had a greater regard for him than they did. But was it just the same old Simon, full of promises which he never kept? Or had he learned his lesson? Because it was such an important matter the Lord repeated his question. He wanted Simon to speak, not because he was uncertain of his answer but so that the other disciples could hear him, for they were wondering about him.

A Revealing Answer

Simon's reply was very clear: "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." He loved the Lord truly and heartily! Had he not left family and friends to follow him? Had he not proclaimed God's kingdom and healed the sick in his name? Had he not spoken up for him and protected him? But Simon will let Jesus be the judge. And he will not say that he loves Christ more than his companions for he is now very aware of his failings.

When the question came the second time Peter was puzzled. He simply repeated his answer for what more could he say than he had said already, that he loved the Lord? When the question came the third time Peter was upset – hurt that Jesus appeared to be suspicious of him. So his answer was stronger: "Lord, *thou knowest all things*; thou knowest that I love thee." He appealed to Christ as the searcher of men's hearts: while his love was not what it ought to be it was certainly there!

A sincere love to Jesus Christ is the hallmark of a Christian. If like Simon Peter we have been saved by God's grace we have many reasons to love the Lord. Our guilt has been removed by Christ's death, never to return. We have a place in the Lord's family and Jesus is not ashamed to call us his brethren (Heb.2:11). We look forward to a heavenly home prepared for us by Christ (John 14:2). The saint and his Saviour are joined together in love, as we see in the Song of Solomon: "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine" (6:3).

A Challenging Command

Jesus is satisfied with Simon's answer, knowing that his love is genuine. It is time for Simon Peter to return to his calling. Christ gives him a command which restores him as an apostle and reminds him of his work.

First Simon hears "Feed my lambs" and then twice "Feed my sheep." God has a flock in this world made up of his people. Jesus Christ is their great Shepherd, providing for their souls through the preaching of his word by his servants. There are babes in Christ who need the milk of the gospel and mature believers who need the meat.

In this way the Lord Jesus restored Simon Peter to his apostleship and ministry. He had denied Christ three times but three times Christ had encouraged him. Though he was so unworthy Simon would serve the Lord again, and now as someone who had benefited in a remarkable way from the limitless supplies of God's saving mercy and grace. He had indeed learned his lesson.

Psalmody Test Tunes

Here are the next three tunes to help you prepare for the test.

Old 124th — Psalm 124(ii):1 — [Tracks 23 and 24]

$d : r . m \mid f : m \mid r . d : d . t_1 \mid d :-$
Now is -ra -el may say, and that tru -ly

$m : f . s \mid l : s \mid f . m : r . d \mid t_1 :-$
If that the Lord had not our cause main -tain'd

$s_1 : d . d \mid t_1 : d \mid r . f : m . r \mid m :-$
If that the Lord had not our right sus -tain'd

$s : s . f \mid m : r \mid m . s : s . fe \mid s :-$
When cru -el men a -gainst us fur -ious -ly

$m : r . d \mid t_1 . d : r . f \mid m : r \mid d :- \parallel$
Rose up in wrath to make of us their prey

This is truly a fine old tune! Our Psalter tells us that it is from the French Psalter of 1551, and there were at that time accomplished French musicians involved in writing excellent tunes for the French Psalms in metre. You can see right away that it does not fit the usual C.M., L.M., or S.M. pattern of tunes. Without referring to your Psalter can you work out the metre by counting the number of syllables in each line? Other tunes from this important Psalter are: Nos. 10, 169 and 189.

Babel's Streams — Psalm 137:1 — [Tracks 11 and 12]

$d . r \mid m : - . s \mid m . r : d . s_1 \mid l_1 : d \mid d : s \mid d' : t . l s : fe \mid s : - l - \parallel$
By Bab - el's streams we sat and wept, when Si - on we thought on

$d' \mid d' : t . l s : l . s \mid m : d \mid r : d . r \mid m : s \mid m . d : r \mid d : - l - \parallel$
in midst there-of we hang'd our harps the will -ow trees up - on

This melody has been changed from a tune called Dunlap's Creek by F. Lewis and found in *Southern Harmony, and Musical Companion*, compiled by William Walker and published in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1835. William Walker was a Baptist Song leader. In his teaching he used the 4 "shape note" method. A triangle, circle, a square and a diamond were used, to represent different notes of the scale. The names Fa, Sol, La, and Me were used. The scale was fa, sol, la, fa, sol, la, me fa. However, later he changed to use 7 names to become more like what we know as Tonic Sol-fa.

Bucer S. M. — Psalm 45(ii):6 — [Tracks 19 and 20]

$s_1 \mid d : s_1 \mid l_1 : t_1 \mid d : - l - : d \mid f : m \mid r : d \mid t_1 : - l - :$
Thy roy -al seat, O Lord for -ev -er shall re -main:

$t_1 \mid d : s_1 \mid l_1 : t_1 \mid d : - . r \mid m : s \mid f : r \mid d : t_1 \mid d : - l - \parallel$
The scep -tre of thy king -dom doth all right -eous -ness main -tain

You will expect short metre tunes to have fewer syllables to a line than either Long or Common Metre. Can you count them?

- Line 1. Thy roy-al seat, O lord (.)
- Line 2. For-ev-er shall remain (.)
- Line 3. The sceptre of thy king-dom doth (.)
- Line 4. All right-eous-ness main-tain. (.)

Perhaps the melody was named after the German reformer Martin Bucer (1491 - 1551), who took refuge in England at the invitation of Thomas Cranmer. He had some part in the revision of the 1549 Book of Common Prayer.



A COUPLE WHO LIVED UP TO THEIR NAME

LIFE ON THE FARM

On February 10th 1859 a little boy was born on a farm in Ontario, Canada. He would live to be one of the most significant missionary pioneers to China. His name was Jonathan Goforth. His mother was a Christian and from an early age she encouraged Jonathan and his ten brothers and sisters to pray and memorise verses from the Bible. His father was not a believer and appears, at this stage in his life, to have been quite a worldly man. Life on the farm was not easy and the children had to take their full share of the work. Perhaps you complain about your little chores and it is good to remember that many children, then and now, have far heavier burdens than most of us in our childhood years. The farm work interfered with their school attendance but Jonathan tried his best to keep up with his lessons, something he was very thankful for in later years. I do not know what sort of birthday present you would most like to receive but when Jonathan was fifteen his father put him in charge of a second farm which the family owned and his burden of hard work was greatly increased. To his credit the second farm got on well and it looked as if Jonathan would settle down to life as a farmer. The Lord, however, had other plans and soon his life would be dramatically changed. When he was eighteen he heard a sermon which had a great impact upon him and by the work and power of God's Spirit he fled to Christ for pardon of his sins and for a new heart. Jonathan Goforth had been saved. Can you say that about yourself?

TORONTO

From the outset of his Christian life Jonathan proved to be zealous and dedicated. He bought some tracts which he would give to those who met him and it was a great joy

to him when his father was also converted. He was also a keen reader and loved reading the sermons of Rev C H Spurgeon and the writings of John Bunyan. Have you ever read John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* or his book called *Holy War*? I would recommend them to you, and so would Jonathan Goforth. He also tells us that he was greatly helped in reading of a famous Scottish minister called Robert Murray M'Cheyne. As time passed he came to the conclusion that the Lord was calling him to leave his farm and begin to train for the ministry. Initially he had thought of serving the Lord somewhere in his native North America but that changed when he heard a missionary speaker, George L Mackay of Taiwan, make an appeal for a young man to go to the Far East with the Gospel. Some said that there was enough to be done as a preacher in Canada and he would respond by saying that it would have been wrong for the disciples, on the occasion of the miracle of the loaves and fishes, to have neglected those who sat furthest away and have given all their attention to those who sat nearest to hand. There were others who could minister in Canada but he believed that his future ministry lay in China.

By this time he had moved to Toronto and there he faced difficulties and discouragements which would have sent other men home in defeat, not least a frequent lack of money. But time and again the Lord helped him and he learned to trust himself to his care. No doubt the Lord was using these things to prepare him for the hardships of missionary life. During those years he was as anxious as ever to spread the Gospel. He prayed that the Lord would give him opportunities to tell others of his Saviour and his prayers were answered when he was allowed to visit a local jail and preach to the inmates every week. He also visited the slums helping the people as best he could

but also bringing them something far more precious and beneficial than mere money or possessions; the Gospel of grace. As those who knew him in those early days said, "he was a missionary long before he reached China."

During his time in Toronto he met and married Rosalind Bell-Smith who would prove a brave and faithful companion. In February 1888, following his ordination and induction, they sailed together for China as missionaries of the Presbyterian Church of Canada — the first missionary couple, I believe, to be sent to China by that denomination.

KEPT IN THE MIDST OF MANY DANGERS

After a period of language training the Goforths moved to the remote province of Honan. There they set up home and got to work establishing a mission station. Like so many other missionary couples who faced bereavement they had the great sadness of seeing their first two children die. Alongside that heartbreak there were the constant hardships of missionary life. Enemies constantly spread false rumours about them and these fuelled the suspicion and hostility which was a constant feature of their work. For example, it was said that the medicines they dispensed were made from the heart and eyes of kidnapped Chinese children! On one occasion, whilst attending a market, Jonathan and a colleague were attacked by an angry mob. They were only saved by a sudden wind which scattered the market stalls and distracted their attackers. Despite all the opposition which Satan could create, people were converted, congregations were set up and a Presbytery was formed. Jonathan was delighted to serve as its first Moderator.

In 1894 they moved to another, even more remote region called Changte. Shortly after they arrived a man turned up at their house looking for work. He was a poor soul and was addicted to the opium drug. Because of this he was weak and ill and it was more out of pity than anything else that they hired him. In the wonderful providence of the Lord this poor man was converted and became one of their greatest helpers.

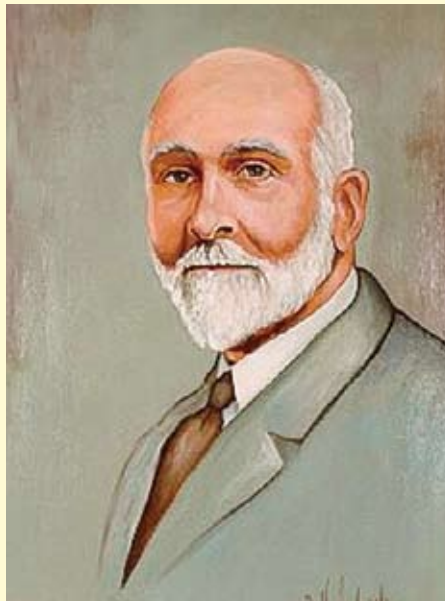
In Changte they faced further bereavement when first little Gracie and then Florence died. Within days of her death the family received news that they must flee because of an uprising against foreigners, called the Boxer Rebellion. With great difficulty they managed to reach Shanghai and found a boat which would take them back home to Canada.

It was good to see friends and family again but Jonathan was distressed to see the way in which the church in Canada had stopped holding firmly to the Bible as the Word of God and had become very worldly in its outlook.

For that reason it was, in some ways, a relief to return to China.

TRIALS AND BLESSINGS

During this second period of service they faced, if that were possible, even more arduous conditions than before. They took on the role of church planters. They would visit a new area and try and establish a mission and then move on to another pioneering work. This was very difficult with a young family and they suffered terrible hardships. Jonathan would walk miles bringing the Gospel to new areas while Rosalind would care for the family. In the dead of winter he would trek for days on end through the winter blizzards and more than once came close to dying through pneumonia. He was very disturbed to see the bad influences he had seen in Canada showing themselves in some of the young missionaries who arrived. Some of them were not as committed to the Word as he would have liked and his stand for faithful preaching made him many enemies and added to the burdens of his life. However, despite all of these things, the Lord blessed the work and the Goforths lived to see a genuine and widespread work of God's Spirit and a time of "unprecedented spiritual awakening". The evidence for the genuineness of the work was seen in the lives which were transformed by the power of God. For example, countless things which had been stolen were returned to their rightful owners. His missionary work took a huge toll on his health and gradually he found it more and more difficult



to do the work. In 1930 he lost his sight in one eye – a serious handicap, and then, in less than three years the same happened with the other eye. Eventually he was forced to retire back to Canada. Though he was now far from China he did not lose his vision for the work and, to the end, pleaded with the Lord for his adopted country and urged others to do likewise. On the 8th of October 1936 this intrepid soul passed away after a life of extraordinary usefulness in the Kingdom of Christ. Some time before his death he spoke to a friend about the loss of his sight. He quoted from Psalm 17 and verse 15 where it says, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." He was able, by faith, to see beyond the disabilities of this life to a time when such things would be in the past.

As I have said before in this series of biographical articles, none of these missionary explorers was perfect and Jonathan Goforth was no exception. He had his own failings and some of his views, particularly in relation to the Holy Spirit, were not helpful. Nevertheless he and Rosalind were a remarkable couple and to this day the church in China remembers with thankfulness the day they arrived on their shores.

PUZZLE PAGE



'How many' — In the life of Peter



1. How many books of the Bible did Peter write? _____
2. How many people believed after Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke on the day of Pentecost? (Acts 2:41) _____
3. How many times did Peter deny Jesus? (Matt 26:69-75) _____
4. How many times did Jesus ask Peter if he loved him? (John 21:15-17) _____
5. How many tabernacles did Peter want to build on the Mount of Transfiguration? (Matt 17:1-4) _____
6. How many fish did Peter and the disciples catch when Jesus told them to cast their net on the right side? (John 21:1-14) _____
7. How many times did Jesus find Peter and the disciples sleeping? (Matt 26:36-46) _____
8. How many times did Peter see the great sheet with all kinds of animals on it? (Acts 10:9-16) _____



Which answer is the odd one out? _____



Colour in all the letters but not the numbers

Peter said Jesus was

8489Christ789
 53the2Son567
 of9the5Living
 56789God235

Fill in this form if you are sending the puzzles in.

Name: Age.....

Address:

Congregation:

Please note Miss Macaulay's new address

1st Prize:- Thomas Craig

Runners up:-

Stornoway:- Lily Craig, Rachel Craig, Emma Craig and Calvin Mackenzie.

Aberdeen :- Matthew McGlynn, Verity McGlynn, Sophie McGlynn, Abigail Shanks, Benaiah Shanks, Jedidiah Shanks

Edinburgh:- Alison Gracie

Portree:- Claire Macleod

Scalpay:- Rona Morrison



Conquests and Condescension

2 Samuel chapters 8 to 10.
He did eat continually at the King's table.

Mephibosheth meeting with David
(Image from www.visualbiblealive.com/)

The king at war

Although he was King over Israel, David had continual conflicts with enemies of his crown. But final victory was not in doubt — as Christ in 1 Cor 15 “He must reign...”. While David was building his kingdom the gates of hell were opposing him, for the sole reason that he was God’s appointed king. The building and the opposition were simultaneous. We must expect this in the kingdom of Christ. However, then as now, this King cannot be defeated. He is upheld by God’s promise, power and wisdom; Divine strategy and power are at work. There are different kinds of enemy to God’s church but they are all united in one thing (as Herod and Pilate became friends) — in their opposition to God’s appointed King; Ps. 2 and Acts 4. There are pauses in between the wars but no abiding peace — expect another attack some time! The King is a warrior and we should not forget this aspect of the King’s character (It is clearly revealed in the book of Revelation, for example).

There are many battles in the Christian life and we may learn from Joab and his generals (**ch.10:9-12**). They rightly organised their forces but they depended on God alone for victory (Ps 20:1, 9). They prayed for the best but, under God, they were also ready for the worst. The cry of battle was ‘God and our country’ — and not vice versa! Those who rely on men first or only shall be put to shame. Although Joab was an ungodly man, yet he knew the correct things to believe and what not to depend upon in a crisis. God will deliver his people in his own way and in his own time. ‘God is for us’ — (Rom. 8:31).

We must help one another in need (**ch.10:11**). Few travel to heaven alone. There is preparation here for possible weakness and disappointment in their efforts; they were willing to deny themselves and help their brethren in their troubles.

The king’s servants (ch.8:15-18)

David carried out an organisation of his government. Just as David organised the administration of his kingdom, so Christ has revealed his own government for his kingdom e.g. He also has his servants (Eph.4) and has appointed their duties. The organisation of the kingdom was not left to the opinion of the majority but was laid down by royal authority. So the nature and function of the Church has been appointed by Christ the King in his Word. We have no right to deviate from the King’s commands regarding doctrine, worship and practice. One day, the end of days, the King shall say, “Well done, good and faithful servants” — will that be to us?

At the king’s table (ch.9)

Mephibosheth, Jonathan’s son, was remembered by David because of his covenant with Jonathan (vs.1), in faithful love to his dead friend. The king went looking for him. He was found in Lodebar (a word meaning ‘Obscurity, insignificance, nothing’). Mephibosheth also felt this condition in his own mind, that he was unworthy of this grace, vs.8 — we share this feeling. There was a great contrast between the King and Mephibosheth. The latter was crippled and helpless, therefore it had to be by grace alone that he could be lifted up — we also are crippled in our walk with God because we have been damaged by sin. However, when Mephibosheth sat at the King’s table his deformities were not seen; they were covered by the table. So, the deformities caused by sin are not seen by God when we are joined in fellowship to his Son, the King. ‘He has not beheld iniquity in Jacob’. This is a comfort for those who sit, conscious of their unworthiness, at the Lord’s Table. They have the joy of having been found by the King in the wilderness of Lodebar and wonder at the grace which has suddenly in Providence elevated them to sit in communion with the King. They also are there because of a covenant, the covenant of grace.



I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

One winter's afternoon, when we were living in the country, a visitor from the city arrived. When he came it was still daylight, and one could tell that he was happy to be among the fields and the hills. After the evening meal, he announced that he would like to go for a walk. So he put on his jacket and went out. In a very short while he was back inside, exclaiming, "It's so dark out there and there are no streetlights!" He just could not see where to go!

Jesus said, "He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth". But Jesus was not talking about our friend. "Walking" in the Bible means the way we live. "Walking in darkness" means going our own way and not following Jesus.

What our friend needed was a lamp or a torch! That would have shown him where to place his feet. Jesus says our eyes are like lamps. When we have sight in our eyes, then we see what to do and where to go. If people have no sight then all is dark to them. Jesus used this illustration to warn the Pharisees who thought they knew (could "see") the Scriptures. Sadly, as far as that was concerned, the Pharisees were blind. They could not "see" that Jesus was the one the Scriptures promised would come — the Messiah. Jesus gave them a serious warning, "Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness". More and more the Pharisees hated Jesus. They wanted to kill him. When they went to the garden to arrest him, Jesus said to them, "This is your

hour and the power of darkness".

The truth of the matter is that every one of us is born with darkened hearts. We are strangers to God and we sin against him. We cannot walk in the right way. We need the light of God to shine into our hearts. Then we understand that we are sinners and that the only way to be saved from sin's punishment is by trusting in the Lord Jesus. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life". When we begin to follow Jesus then we are "the children of light" and we are called to shine for him. In Matthew 5:16 we read, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven". Susan Warner (1819-85) put it like this:

Jesus bids us shine with a pure, clear light,
like a little candle burning in the night.
In this world is darkness; so let us shine,
You in your small corner and I in mine.

Jesus bids us shine, first of all for Him;
Well He sees and knows it, if our light grows dim:
He looks down from heaven to see us shine,
You in your small corner, and I in mine.

Jesus bids us shine, then for all around.
Many kinds of darkness in this world are found
Sin, and want, and sorrow; so we must shine,
You in your small corner and I in mine.