

# The Explorer

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

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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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# IN THE GARDEN

*And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. (Mark 14:37,38)*

Jesus and the disciples have now left the upper room. They have made their way to a familiar location, the mount of Olives. It lay on the east side of Jerusalem and got its name from the trees growing on its slopes. At the foot of this hill was the garden of Gethsemane, a place where Jesus often went with the twelve.

It is likely that in or near the garden there was a press for squeezing the olives that were gathered from the trees, to make them produce their useful oil. How appropriate it was that the Lord should go to the garden at this time! He was soon to be crushed and broken on the cross at Calvary, to provide salvation for sinners by the grace of His Spirit.

In the garden Christ experienced the bruising of his soul, as Mark tells us. He had left the disciples and gone a short distance to pray, taking with him the three who often accompanied him on important occasions – Peter, James and John. They noticed how the Lord was very anxious, such as they had not seen him before.

Jesus explained that he was troubled because of the burden he was bearing. It was so heavy and painful to him that his soul was flooded with sorrow and he was ready to die. Then he went forward and fell upon his face to pray. He cried out to his Father to spare him from this suffering if it could be done – yet he bowed submissively before God's perfect will. Such was Christ's toil and agony that blood came out of his pores along with the sweat (Luke 22:44).

### Simon Sleeping

When the Lord returned to his three companions he found them all asleep! Christ spoke to Peter in particular, gently scolding him for his slumbering. It was Simon Peter who had made so many promises of loyalty. It was Simon Peter who had boasted of his readiness to suffer and die with Christ. Yet sadly he could not even stay awake during the short time in which Jesus poured out his heart to God!

Did the Lord's sorrow mean so little to Simon Peter? Christ, the Son of God, was being "made a curse" for His people that he might redeem them (Gal.3:13). The Father was presenting to him a bitter cup full of wrath which he was now tasting. Satan, seeing his opportunity, was tempting Christ with the horror of what was ahead of him. As Jesus was enduring the pains of hell and encountering the prince of darkness all Simon could do was sleep!

Why did Simon fall asleep? From what we know of him it was not because he had no concern for Jesus. It had been a remarkable few hours for the disciples. There had been the joy of the passover celebration and then the sadness of the betrayal; there had been the encouragement of Christ's high priestly prayer and then the perplexity of his distress. All these different events and emotions. The disciples were simply drained by it all. Three times the Lord would leave his praying and come to them and each time he would find them

sleeping.

### Watch and Pray

Jesus told his companions to *watch and pray*. This was their great need if they were going to withstand the devil, for he would easily tempt them if they did not remain alert and in communion with the Lord. Rather than let themselves be overcome by weariness they were to stir themselves up and call upon God continually, just as David resolved to do:

“I’ll call on God: God will me save.  
I’ll pray, and make a noise.

At ev’ning, morning, and at noon;  
and he shall hear my voice.” (Ps.55:16,17)

Do you seek God’s help in prayer, looking upward with the eye of faith? Do you remind the Lord of his promises in Scripture and make your requests with humility? This is how we receive his grace and this is how we are kept. If Jesus who was pure and holy prayed so earnestly to his Father when confronted by the devil then how much more should we, who are full of sin, cry to our heavenly Father for his help when the evil one is near! “Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust” (Psa.16:1).

This was what Peter needed to be taught. Soon he would be tempted to deny Christ but he would not be able to say that he had not been told how to deal with the devil, and neither can we. Like Christ we must place ourselves under the authority of God and offer ourselves willingly in his service, as soldiers to the general who is over them. “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (Jam.4:7).

### Flesh and Spirit

Christ now tells his companions why they are in danger if they do not watch and pray. He acknowledges that their love to him is sincere, for by the working of God’s mighty grace they have been made willing to follow him in the paths of righteousness. Yet despite this their *flesh* is weak. The disciples were no different from any other men; they shared the infirmities that are common to our race, in body and soul.

Because of the fall our *bodies* are weakened, being subject to ageing, sickness and death. Of ourselves we are no match for an enemy such as Satan, who never lacks for strength as he works without ceasing to accomplish his evil ends. How often we find that tiredness claims us when we should come to “the throne of grace” (Heb.4:16)!

Our *souls* are in a corrupt state too. When Paul writes of “the flesh” he has in mind our sinful nature, which is opposite to God and his law. Believers have “the fruit of the Spirit” (Gal.5:22) evident in their lives but “the works of the flesh” (Gal.5:19) are also present. There is a conflict between the two, which is why Christians cannot always do the good things they want to do (Gal.5:17). It will be the same until we get to glory.

In following Christ we ought to remember what frail creatures we are. Simon Peter often forgot this, trusting in his own natural strength. You and I should be different for we have his example to warn us. May we learn from another great servant of the Lord, the apostle Paul, who said: “I can do all things through *Christ* which strengtheneth me” (Phil.4:13).

## SIX SHORT RULES FOR CHRISTIANS



Brownlow North

1. Never neglect daily private prayer; and when you pray, remember that God is present, and that he hears your prayers. (Hebrews 11:6)
2. Never neglect daily private Bible-reading and, when you read, remember that God is speaking to you and that you are to believe and act upon what he says. I believe all backsliding begins with the neglect of these two rules. (John 5:39)
3. Never let a day pass without trying to do something for Jesus. Every night reflect on what Jesus has done for you, and then ask yourself, “What am I doing for him?” (Matthew 5:13-16)
4. If you are in doubt as to a thing being right or wrong, go to your room and kneel down and ask God’s blessing upon it. (Colossians 3:17) If you cannot do this, it is wrong. (Romans 14:23)
5. Never take your Christianity from Christians, or argue that because such and such people do so and so, that therefore you may. (2 Corinthians 10:12) You are to ask yourself, “How would Christ act in my place?” and strive to follow him. (John 10:27)
6. Never believe what you feel, if it contradicts God’s Word. Ask yourself, “Can what I feel be true if God’s Word is true?” If both cannot be true, believe God, and make your own heart the liar. (Romans 3:4; 1 John 5:10-11)

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# JOSEPH WOLFF

## MISSIONARY TO JEWS AND MUSLIMS

Picture of Wolff preaching

**V**ery probably you have never heard of Joseph Wolff. I must confess that until very recently I had never come across the man and knew nothing of his fascinating and, at times, almost incredible missionary work and adventures. Jock Purves who wrote about many different missionaries has said that Joseph Wolff's record of missionary witness "makes as heroic a record as is to be found in missionary annals".

### WHO WAS JOSEPH WOLFF?

Joseph Wolff was born in 1795 in a place called Weilersbach in Germany. He did not have the privilege of being born into a Christian home, in fact his parents were Jews and it was in the Jewish faith that young Joseph was brought up. Eventually the family left Germany and it would appear to have been after coming to England that Joseph heard the gospel and came to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour. He longed to serve the Lord and he loved to tell others about the Saviour so it was no surprise when he began training for the work of the ministry. He was ordained in the Church of England and served in that denomination in Wakefield. Naturally he longed to see his fellow Jews come to Christ and he longed to reach them with the Gospel. Perhaps surprisingly he also had a great love for Muslims and over the years many of them would hear the Gospel through the work and preaching of this remarkable man.

### HIS MISSIONARY WORK

Unlike most of the other missionaries we have looked at in this series of articles Joseph Wolff is not readily identified with any particular place. From the very beginning of his missionary work he moved across large areas of Asia. To be able to do this he had to have an

ability in several languages and he seems to have been able, besides speaking English and German, to also use Italian, Hebrew, Arabic and Persian. With this ability he was able to make his way across India, including what is now Pakistan. On his journey he lectured and preached and when the opportunity came he also debated with the people he met, some of them Jewish rabbis and others Muslim leaders. Such were his abilities in speaking and debating that he could even be found, from time to time, in the courts of rulers. Afghanistan is very much in the news at the moment and he also visited there and reached up into some of the neighbouring countries which would eventually become part of the Soviet Union. His preaching attracted great opposition and on several occasions he was almost put to death. He was also threatened, on at least one occasion, with being turned into a slave who would never be released. Naturally his greatest concern was for his fellow Jews and on his travels he met many and he laboured to show them from the Old Testament that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah or Saviour. He eventually reached Palestine and was the only Christian missionary there at that time. His enthusiasm reached the ears of the church back at home and on one occasion he visited Oxford University and pressed upon the students there the great privilege it was to be involved in spreading the Gospel.

### THE TRIP TO BOKHARA

Perhaps his most famous journey was the visit he made to Bokhara, or Bukhara as it is now known, in an attempt to secure the release of two British army officers who had been captured there. The two men were also brave Christians who were seriously mistreated by their captors and subjected to terrible abuse because of their love for



Modern-day Bukhara

the Lord. He knew both men and one of them Captain Conolly was his friend who had helped him at different times in his mission work in India.

Most people would have concluded that however much they loved and admired the two men there was nothing they could do to help. After all Bukhara was far away, a small country in Asia which is now a part of Uzbekistan. Furthermore it was fanatically Muslim and its ruler, the Amir, was no friend of the Christian faith. Notwithstanding all the obstacles Joseph Wolff set sail in October 1843 at the beginning of a journey that would be full of danger and excitement. Of course it was also a missionary journey as he preached everywhere he went seizing any opportunity which came his way. Indeed his preaching began on the boat itself where he was allowed to take regular services and give lectures on the Bible. He stopped in Athens and through his contact with the British Ambassador was able to meet the King and Queen of Greece. Along with another English minister who was a missionary in Greece at that time he visited the famous Acropolis and on the site of the Areopagus (or Mars Hill) where Paul preached he read and expounded Acts chapter 17. When you have finished reading this article it would be a good exercise to turn to that passage and read it for yourself.

Passing on from Greece he travelled through Turkey and was given opportunities there also to preach from the Word of God. He met many people in that land including

some of the advisers of the Sultan. One writer has said that "with them all he was faithful to his Master. No one could mistake whom he loved and served."

Journeying on he passed through many different places arriving at last in Bokhara on April 27<sup>th</sup> 1844. To his great disappointment he learned that in the mysterious providence of God he was too late; both his friends had been executed. There had been an attempt to force them to disown their Christian faith and embrace Islam. That had failed and they had then been beheaded. Their martyrdom appeared to have made a very deep impression on some of the people there and Wolff was able to gather a little information about their last days. Colonel Stoddart had said as he faced death that he wished the Amir to know that he died a "disbeliever in Mohammed, but a believer in Jesus . . . I am a Christian and as a Christian I die." Captain Connolly's last words were to his friend, "Stoddart we shall see each other in paradise".

Events took a rather ugly turn and for a time it looked as if Wolff would face the same fate as his friends. There was an attempt to force him to become a Muslim. His answer was, "Tell the king, Never! Never! Never!" At one point an executioner was sent to his room in an attempt to scare him into changing his mind. He sat down and wrote what he thought would be his last letter home, doubtful that it would ever reach England. That very day a letter arrived from the Ruler of Persia whom he had met at an earlier point on his travels. This intervention probably saved his life and in August 1844 he left Bokhara and arrived in Southampton about eight months later. As far as helping Stoddart and Connolly was concerned his mission was a failure; he was not even able to take their bodies back with him; but on that epic journey he had preached the Gospel to many souls and opened up a path of missionary endeavour which many other missionaries would walk on.

There is an interesting incident relating to the two men who died. Captain Connolly had a sister who sent money to Bokhara to help open a mission hospital with the hope and prayer that Muslim patients might be helped there and that some of them, perhaps even some of those who had tortured and killed her brother, might, in the hospital ward, hear the Gospel and be saved.

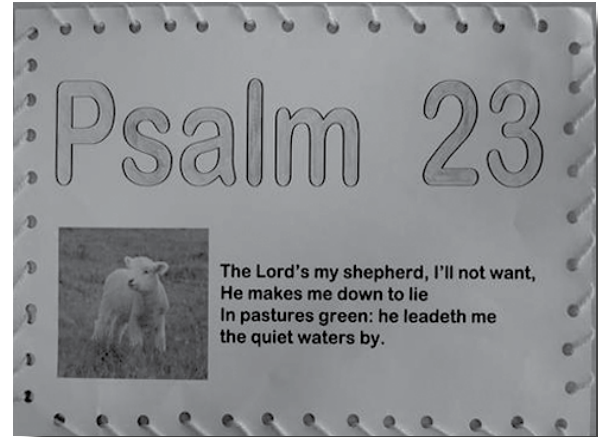
Joseph Wolff died in 1862. He was an unusual man and we would not agree with all of his views or practices but he proved to be a pioneer missionary to both Jews and Gentiles reaching into parts of the world which few other Christian missionaries had access to. We can give the last word to Jock Purves who wrote of him as a man of "strong faith in God and his Word, dauntless courage, fearless testimony and steadfast endurance in most exhausting journeys and trying circumstances".

# THE SPRING CONFERENCE

There was a wide range of children's activities suitable for all age groups which really put our Bible knowledge to the test.



We made lions out of paper plates and used wool to sew cards with Psalm 23 on them. This was more difficult but it was enjoyed by all.



Some activities, like the HUGE picture of favourite stories from the Bible, were done by all of us working together.

Others involved us separating into different teams. Each team was given cards with the books of the Bible written on them. The teams had to arrange these in the correct order. Why not try the puzzle below. Use the contents page at the front of your Bible to help you put a number beside each book of the Bible (it has been started for you).

Book of the Bible	Number
1 & 2 Chronicles	13 & 14
1 & 2 Kings	
1 & 2 Samuel	
Amos	
Daniel	
Deuteronomy	
Ecclesiastes	
Esther	
Exodus	
Ezekiel	
Ezra	
Genesis	

Book of the Bible	Number
Habakkuk	
Haggai	
Hosea	
Isaiah	
Jeremiah	24
Job	
Joel	
Jonah	
Joshua	
Judges	
Lamentations	
Leviticus	

Book of the Bible	Number
Micah	
Nahum	
Nehemiah	
Numbers	
Obadiah	
Proverbs	20
Psalms	
Ruth	
Song of Solomon	
Zechariah	
Zephaniah	
Malachi	



An old painting showing the prodigal's return

# HALF A BIBLE

**M**any years ago a man who was selling Bibles came to a country cottage in France. He greeted the lady and offered a New Testament for sale.

The lady, named Jeanne, looked at the New Testament longingly. But what would the priest say? "Do not be afraid, madam," said the Bible seller, "The priest would be sinning against God if he stopped you reading about the love of Christ." At last she bought the New Testament saying that she hoped she would be forgiven if she had sinned.

Soon her husband, Jacques, a forest worker, arrived home. After tea, Jeanne timidly brought out the book she had bought. Jacques was very angry that she had spent his money in this way. "But it's not all your money, Jacques," pleaded the wife, "It's mine as well as yours."

"Give me that book," shouted Jacques in great anger. He snatched it from her hands. If the money is half yours and half mine, then the book will be the same." He opened the book roughly and tore it into two pieces. He put one half in his pocket and threw the other half to his wife.

Several days later Jacques was working in the forest. He had just finished his mid-day meal and had nothing to read. Suddenly he remembered the torn book. He decided to have a look at it. His rough fingers had torn the New Testament in two at the 15th chapter of Luke's Gospel. The words he began to read were, "and will say unto him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.'" He was amazed at these words and read to the end of the story.

Then many questions came to him about this lost son. What had he done? Why had he gone away? Where had he been? What moved him to return home?

"I wish I knew the beginning of this story," he thought, but he was too proud to ask Jeanne for her part of the book. Jeanne too had many questions. She had read her part of the New Testament and had come to love it. But her part ended with the words, "I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, . . ." There the story stopped. She wondered, "Did he really return home? Did his father receive him?" She longed to know the answers, but she was too frightened to ask Jacques.

The days passed. One day, however, it poured with rain and Jacques came home early, feeling very weary. He ate his tea quietly. Then he said, "Jeanne, you remember that book I tore in two?" "Oh, yes," she replied with apprehension.

"My part had a wonderful story in it, but only the end of it. I cannot rest until I know the beginning of it. Bring me your part." Jeanne replied, "How amazing! The same story is ever in my mind, only I lack the ending. Did the father receive that wayward son?" "He did. But what was the sin that separated them?" asked Jacques.

She brought her part of the New Testament, and for the first time they read together the lovely parable of the prodigal son. The Holy Spirit had been working in both their hearts and caused them to see that it is a picture of how we have gone away from God, and how he welcomes those who sincerely and humbly return to him. Both Jacques and Jeanne became true Christians and read and loved the Bible for the rest of their lives.

Luke 15 has the full story of the prodigal son: How he left home, was in great trouble, determined to return home, and how wonderfully his father received him again. Be sure to read this lovely parable for yourself.

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# David the Fugitive

1 Samuel chapters 21 and 22.  
“And David arose and fled...”

## The Life of David Part 4

Above is an image showing the kind of place where David hid from Saul. Photo: B. Pohl

**B**efore fleeing David entered into a covenant with Jonathan, promising to protect Jonathan's children after his death. This would be an important promise for Jonathan's son Mephibosheth later. The friend of your father will be your friend also, for his sake. David was now on the run, a fugitive from injustice.

### David's losses

He had so recently gained so much and looked forward to a happy future but his faithfulness to the Lord in killing Goliath began many of his troubles. Obeying the Lord will bring troubles, as the Acts of the Apostles confirms. David lost his position at court, his captaincy in the army, his wife was given to another, his friend Samuel died (Ps. 12:1) and soon he would be separated from contact with Jonathan. You do not know what troubles lie immediately ahead of you when you follow the Lord. Are you prepared to 'suffer the loss of all things' like Paul for your Master? The way of faith has trials and tribulation (2 Cor. 4:8-11) whereas the path of unbelief is easy.

### David's faith fainting

David was doubtless in a state of painful mental bewilderment at these happenings and lost stability in his faith. He was in the 'furnace of affliction' and all external supports were suddenly taken away from this young man. In his suffering he looked in the wrong place for help. He looked to the world (no friends of God) for help. He fled to Gath and in his fear he took refuge with the Philistines! (21:10) He soon regretted this course of action. Living in Gath required lies and hypocrisy! You are not going to be spiritually minded when you are spending most of your time with the world. After his escape from Gath David wrote down Psalm 56. He had learned his lesson; unbelief and distrust dishonour God. He had lost sight of God in the storm and his lack of hope (and prayer) led to rash actions. Sufferings bring

their own temptations. Be careful what you do when you feel panic-stricken; do not rush into anything. You need patience. Seldom are wise decisions made in a hurry.

### David in the Cave

David fled from the Philistines to the cave of Adullam. David now felt very low, as we see from Psalm 142 written at this time. Sometimes the Christian finds himself in a deep, dark cave. David felt cut off from everyone, except God. But God often brings a person very low before he lifts him up. Psalm 57 also seems to have been written at this time and in it, despite his feelings of guilt (that it was his own fault that he had come to this) he looks to God. This cave was to be the turning point in David's life; an unlikely place, not one we would have chosen ourselves – such is the wisdom of God! It was a place of recovery; a place for hiding and healing, for restoring and encouragement. David certainly left that cave a different man than when he entered.

Moreover, he was joined by others who fled from the tyranny and injustice of Saul to God's appointed king. They came distressed, with debts they couldn't pay and discontented at having suffered wrongfully. They were looked upon as 'down and outs' and they needed a refuge. Lives were changed when they came to that cave – they became 'David's mighty men'. This reflects why *spiritual* 'down and outs' come to Christ – they have a great enemy of their souls, they need a refuge because of their misery and Christ the King calls them to himself (Matt. 11:28 and Ps. 31:1).

A rejected king was on the throne, those who chose to obey God were persecuted, they sometimes were brought very low indeed. Things have not changed, but neither have God's promises – “persecuted but not forsaken” by their King. Follow, suffer, endure . . . it will all be worth it in the end. “Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty” (Is. 33:17).