

The Explorer

September 2010



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.

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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,
Maryburgh,
Ross-shire,
IV7 8DY.

Younger readers who find the questions too hard may like to do a drawing based on one of the articles and send it to the same address.



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Printed by:

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

Design and layout: H. Woods

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



Weeping Bitterly

But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaeen. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.
(Luke 22:56-62)

The Lord Jesus Christ has been taken from the garden of Gethsemane and his disciples have fled. Jesus has gone willingly with his captors, being led by them at length to the palace of Caiaphas the high priest. Simon Peter has followed Jesus at a distance. He loved his Master and wanted to see what would happen to him. Perhaps he hoped that Jesus would escape out of the hands of his foes by his mighty power: then he would join him again.

Another disciple, possibly John, also followed Jesus. This disciple was known to Caiaphas and his household and was allowed to enter the palace with Jesus but Peter stood at the door. The disciple then told the young girl who kept the door to let Peter in.

What did Peter see when he went inside? At the far end there was the Jewish council, made up of elders, scribes and priests, sitting on a platform with Jesus before them. So eager were they to examine Jesus that they had assembled in the middle of the night: they would have to meet again when it was day to conduct a legal trial (Luke 22:66). In the centre there was a fire; Peter was grateful for this because it was cold. Nearby the servants of the high priest had taken their seats to watch the proceedings. Peter knew that they were unsympathetic to Christ yet he sat down among them.

Whatever Simon Peter was thinking at this time he was certainly not wise in what he did. By placing himself in bad company he was hiding his light and entering into temptation. The devil was on the prowl, looking for an opportunity with Simon, just as Jesus had warned

Simon before they went to the garden (Luke 22:31). Yet although he was in great danger Peter did not seem to realise it. Let us not make his mistake.

A Shameful Denial

Jesus faced hostile questions from the council who were of a mind that he must die. Eventually two false witnesses appeared, claiming that Jesus had said that he could destroy the temple in Jerusalem and build it again in three days (Matt.26:60,61). Jesus did not reply. Then Caiaphas charged him to say whether he was the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus confirmed that he was and that one day he would be exalted to God's right hand. To the council this was blasphemy and they declared Jesus worthy of death, spitting in his face, punching him and mocking him.

What happened next would remain with Simon Peter for the rest of his days. As he looked and listened Simon became aware that the eyes of some in the room were fixed upon *him*. One person in particular was studying him carefully. After a while she accused him of being with Jesus. It was the young woman who had been keeping the door (John 18:17).

Without thinking Simon blurted out that he did not know Jesus and left the hall. Just then there was the sound of a cockerel crowing outside (Mark 14:68) but Simon took no notice of it. Another young woman challenged him, that he was one of Christ's disciples. This time he swore by God that he was not (Matt.26:71,72). Finally a group of men approached him, saying that he must be a disciple of Christ, being from Galilee where Jesus had many followers. One of them, a relation of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, insisted that he had seen Peter in the garden with Jesus (John 18:26). But Peter cursed himself angrily and again swore that he did not know Jesus.

A Loving Look

Even as Simon was speaking the cock crowed again, as one would expect at daybreak. But Peter heard the sound in a way he had never heard it before. And there was something else. Jesus had turned towards him and was looking at him with piercing eyes. As the morning light appeared light of a different sort was dawning on Peter. He remembered how only a few hours ago Jesus had given him a solemn warning – that he would deny Christ three times before the cock had finished its crowing!

The Lord has a way of bringing our sin home to our consciences. He may make use of his providence:



A copy of an old painting showing Peter's denial

has there been an occasion in your life when a 'cock' has 'crowed' and it seemed to have a message all for you? The Lord will certainly use his own word in our experience: we are reading a verse in the Bible or hearing a faithful preacher and Jesus 'looks' on us, breaking our proud hearts.

It was a loving look that Jesus gave Simon, full of pity and concern. He is indeed the friend of sinners!

A Heartfelt Sorrow

Peter went out of the palace. He *had* to, for he was weeping. He had denied his Lord and he knew that he alone was to blame for his sin. He was full of shame. His tears however, though bitter, were the beginning of something sweet: repentance and restoration to God.

When we are aware of our sins and Christ giving himself on the cross for our sins there is a melting and humbling within. Like David we freely acknowledge our guilt to God and no longer try to hide from it:

“ ‘Gainst thee, thee only, have I sinn'd,
in thy sight done this ill;

That when thou speak'st thou may'st be just,
and clear in judging still.” (Ps.51:4)

Of all God's commandments the ninth is perhaps the one we break most easily, frequently and obviously: “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour” (Exod.20:16). We are to tell the truth at all times, especially concerning Christ. The great truth is that we are sinners and Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all who trust in his precious blood. May we never be ashamed of confessing that.



John Urquhart: The Missionary Who Never Was

In the course of this series of articles we have looked together at the life and work of many missionaries. Some of them have been striking and unusual but, perhaps, none have been as unusual, as far as missionary work is concerned, as our subject this month. John Urquhart deserves a place in this series of articles despite the fact that he never left this country and died at the age of eighteen. In what way then was he a missionary pioneer? I hope that by the end of this article you will know the answer to that question and agree with my sentiment that he is due a place amongst the other great men we have looked at together.

Who Was John Urquhart?

He was born in the town of Perth in central Scotland on the 7th June 1808. He was a quiet docile boy who got on well with other people and has been described as having a real gift for friendship. Those who knew him as a child observed that he was unusually inquisitive, a trait that would continue with him all his days and prove useful in his studies.

The family belonged to the Congregational Church and in John's young days their minister was a man called Rev William Orme. Orme was a good man who faithfully preached the gospel and rendered great service to the church through his interest in the great seventeenth century Puritan Rev John Owen. Mr. Orme wrote a biography of Owen and edited his collected writings.

John Urquhart did exceptionally well at school and while still only in his early teenage years he began to study at the famous University at St. Andrews. Many students at the university were there in order to train for the ministry and it is interesting that Rev William Orme wisely warned John's parents against encouraging him in that direction unless he had a clear Call from the Lord.

Uncalled ministers, said Mr. Orme, were a curse in the church and in the land.

It was during his time in St. Andrews that John professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He wrote to his old minister telling him that he had sat at the Lord's Table for the first time and telling him also that his first spiritual stirrings had come as a result of a sermon preached by Mr. Orme some years previously. As he put it himself, "my first impressions of danger as a sinner were caused by a sermon you preached.....I was very much affected, it was then, I think, that I first really prayed. I returned to my apartment (room) and with many tears confessed my guilt before God". John had delayed making public profession for fear of doing anything that might bring shame on the name of his Saviour but now having taken that solemn step he found himself much helped in his Christian life and even more closely bound to his fellow Christian students. A small group of these students used to meet together regularly for fellowship and prayer and from the very beginning John had a warm place in the affection of his friends there. Of course their lives were very different to that of the other students and being different was no easier in their days than it is in our own but they were determined to make very clear that they were Christians and the Lord honoured their faithfulness.

His Missionary Interest

As time passed the small group of friends began to discuss, more and more, how they might serve the Lord. At that time in Scotland there was a growing interest in overseas missions; for instance in 1824 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland had agreed to begin establishing Christian schools in India. This interest also extended to the young group of friends in St. Andrews and they decided that they would form a missionary

society right there in the university. The aim of this society would be prayer for those serving as missionaries and also a stirring up of more interest in mission work in general. Not surprisingly Satan did his best to prevent this venture getting off the ground. When the lads approached the university authorities for permission to meet they were refused a room. Some were ready to give up at this point but not John Urquhart; indeed no one amongst them was more enthusiastic or determined. If the authorities would not grant them a room for their meetings they would just need to meet elsewhere. Another room was found and though it was a tiny dark room in a poor part of the town it served its purpose well. Meeting together there the students shared what news they could gather of mission work in different places and always, always, they prayed for the advancing of Christ's Kingdom and the defeat of the powers of darkness.

From time to time one of the students would give an address on some mission-related topic. On one such memorable occasion John Urquhart spoke with remarkable power on the need for dedicated missionaries to go wherever the Lord would send them. His words had a profound effect on a number in the audience, challenging them as to their own commitment in the service of Christ. Some who were present that day said that they never forgot his words.

By this time John had begun to conclude that the Lord was calling himself to mission work and he would not press on others what he would not undertake himself. With characteristic zeal and dedication he applied himself even more diligently to his studies. He also took the trouble of travelling to London to visit the London Missionary Society and spoke there with a missionary home on leave from China.

Mission work is never easy and one of the difficulties which comes with it is the separation from family and friends. In those days that was far more acute than it is in our day of email and quick travel. John was well aware of this and the decision to become a missionary was not one he took lightly. Only after much prayer and study of the Word did he come to a final resolution to devote himself to "the service of God amongst the Heathen". This would inevitably mean leaving his family behind and they were not at all pleased at the prospect. At first they merely discouraged him, hoping it was no more than a passing phase. However when it became apparent that his heart was set on missionary work his parents forbade him to go. As he was still only a teenager with some years of study ahead of him he was advised by friends not to press the matter but to wait for the Lord to open the door in his own way and in his own time. In the mysterious providence of God it was an entirely different door which opened for John



St. Andrews the town where John Urquhart studied.

Urquhart. He became unwell and it gradually became apparent that he was not going to recover. To the great sorrow of friends and family he fell asleep in Jesus on Wednesday 10th January 1827.

A Pioneer?

His desire to serve the Lord overseas seemed to have come to nothing but of course the Lord had a deep purpose in it all. John Urquhart was not a pioneer missionary in the sense that he hacked his way through the jungle or sailed up lonely rivers with the Gospel. However he was undoubtedly a pioneer in stirring up missionary interest in others at a time when such interest was still low in student and university circles. It is quite remarkable to think that many others were led into the jungles and up many a lonely river as a result of the zeal, writing and testimony of a Scots lad who died at the age of eighteen.

Earlier in this series we looked at the life and work of Alexander Duff. He was one of those strongly influenced to go into mission work as a result of the life and witness of John Urquhart. So also was William Sinclair Mackay who wrote many years later of the impact that the young student at St. Andrews had made on his own life and destiny. "John Urquhart was a missionary in purpose, first and before us all. Something drew me to him from the moment when I first looked upon (him). Little did I foresee what influence he was to have on my future life. The reading of his memoirs at Exeter, thirty-three years ago, first brought the claims of the Heathen before me with painful clearness. That very night I resolved to be a missionary: and, thanks be to God, from that resolution I never swerved. It was the happy turning point of my life."

John Urquhart used his eighteen years well. Perhaps you are not that much younger than he was. Is your life, are your interests and ambitions like his? I leave you with words from his deathbed, "My mind is quite calm now...my hope is fixed on the Rock of Ages. I know that nothing shall separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord".

PUZZLE PAGE



JACOB'S DREAM

- Stone
- Vow
- Bethel
- Earth
- Heaven
- Angels
- Dream
- Jacob

J	A	C	O	B	B	E	H	O	L
D	N	I	A	D	R	E	A	M	M
W	G	I	T	H	V	O	W	Y	O
U	E	A	E	A	R	T	H	N	D
W	L	I	L	L	S	T	O	N	E
K	S	E	E	B	E	T	H	E	L
P	Y	O	H	E	A	V	E	N	U

Take all the extra letters and write them below to find in general what God promised Jacob. Genesis 28 v 10-22 tells the story.

Verse to Colour

God keeps
His promises

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

Name: Age.....

Address:

.....

Congregation:

Please note that you should send your completed puzzles to Miss Anne Macaulay, 30 Mackenzie Place, Maryburgh, Ross-shire, IV7 8DY.



Oliver and Richard Cromwell



It is some time now since we have had an article about a museum. We have many interesting and important museums in our land and they are all, or most of them, well worth a visit.

Recently I was able to visit the Cromwell Museum in Huntingdon, the town where Oliver Cromwell was born. The museum is in the Grammar School that Oliver attended as a boy. It took me less than two hours to see the various exhibits.

Oliver Cromwell is a subject of much debate, some people for, and some against. One thing is sure; regardless of his faults, he was a true Christian man. He was born in Huntingdon in 1599 and died in London in 1658. Oliver Cromwell was not king, although there were some who would have liked to see him reign as king. The land was called a Protectorate, or Commonwealth, and Oliver was Lord Protector from 1653 until his death. During his protectorate this land gained much respect from foreign powers and Cromwell did much to alleviate the suffering endured by the Waldensian Christians at the hand of the Roman (Catholic) Church. In 1655 Cromwell proclaimed a fast and wrote to Protestant princes in Europe on behalf of the Waldensian Christians. Cromwell 'only had to threaten to send [Admiral Robert Blake] to the Mediterranean and the persecution of the Waldensians relaxed' (see C.A.Eastwood, *The Story Of God's Dealings With Our Nation—Volume 2* ISBN: 978-09555775-3-6).

After Oliver's death, his son Richard became Lord Protector. He was not the same man as his father and was unsuited to rule. He abdicated in May 1659 having ruled for less than a year, and the Stuarts began to reign once again, Charles II becoming king.

Whatever Richard's shortcomings may have been he was a Christian man. In the museum is a letter from him to his daughter Elizabeth. I could not read the original handwriting but the museum has kindly given me a copy in modern type (but not modern spelling) and here is part of it:

Deare Betty

*...I have cause to blesse the L[or]d to see what I see of you & it shews that his ey hath been towards you. Cherrish the motions of that good spirit, & owne every mercy of the Lord. And know that the Lord is good to you.
...And that it shall not be in the power of death nor*

lyfe or Angels nor principalitys nor powers, thing present nor things to come nor height or depth not any other Creature that shall be able to ceperate you from the Love of God in Christ Jesus your Lord. There is a great deale in this text, and all is bound up in the last tow words our Lord not ceperate from the love of god in Christ Jesus our Lord. If we have Christ, o[u]r L[or]d, the love of G[o]d is unceperably knit to us. Therefore our businesse is for comfort to our Soules that we may not walke droopingly, is to make out our calling & election. And the best way is to act faith, to know that God is a god of love and mercy, that he delights not in the death of A Sinner, that he invites Sinners that he drawes Sinners & that w[i]th the cordes of love.

Richard would have written this with a quill pen, probably made from a goose feather. The nib would have to have been sharpened as he continued to write, and with a pen knife. It is clear from the letter that Richard loved our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In the museum you will see that so much has changed since Oliver and Richard Cromwell's day. Clothes have changed, guns are changed, writing has changed, spelling too is changed, and there were no typewriters nor computers. Medicine is so different now. You probably do not enjoy going to the dentist, but in those days there were no anaesthetics to dull the pain – even if an operation was necessary. Transport in those days was by foot or horse – no cars, aeroplanes or trains. If you went by boat it would have to sail or be rowed: and food – I doubt if you would have liked much of the food of those days – was served on wooden plates, at least for the poorer people. It was such a different sort of world.

But there is one thing that is not changed. That is man's sin, the need for salvation and the only way in which we must be saved – that is by the one sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. Oliver and Richard Cromwell lived lives so different to ours, but the Saviour they knew is the same, the way we come to Him is the same – by faith and repentance. So then I leave you with a question. Is Richard Cromwell's Saviour your Saviour?



Skye Psalmody Workshops

On the 21st November 2009, and 20th February 2010, despite wintry weather, Rev & Mrs Scott ventured west to Skye to hold Psalmody Workshops in Portree Free Church Hall.

The days began with a Precentors' class. The precentors, accompanied by an enthusiastic congregation, joined together and were taught a little about the role of the precentor.

Rev Bill Scott reminded us of the need to choose a tune that is appropriate to the words of the psalm and also the sermon. He also spoke of the need of getting the speed correct and breathing in the correct places. We all then sang some psalms.

We brought a packed lunch and some people stayed to have lunch together and a time of fellowship.

The afternoons were time for the children's class and some of the adults stayed on too. While we waited for everyone to settle, Kenneth and I each precented a psalm. Mrs Scott showed us the Modulator, and we practised the doh, ray, mi's. We then sang from Psalm 103 to Kilmarnock, Psalm 32 to St Peter and Psalm 67 to Selma. We also worked together on the worksheets that Mrs Scott had prepared for us.

We finished the day with prayer. We all had a good time and thank Rev & Mrs Scott for coming and we thank God for them.

Austin Little [Snizort]

We are delighted to report that four of the class passed the Psalmody test this year. Kenneth Nicolson (10) of Snizort and Claire MacLeod (9) of Portree both passed the elementary grade with flying colours. Mr Alisdair Nicolson (adult) of Snizort passed grade 1, and Emma MacLeod (12) of Portree excelled by passing grade 2. Well done to you all. Opposite is a picture of two of those awarded certificates.

