

The Explorer

July/August 2010



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Puzzles

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



Taking up the Sword

Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? (John 18:10,11)

Jesus is still in the garden of Gethsemane with his disciples. As he has been praying they have been sleeping. Recent events had left them confused and Christ's great anguish had made them sad. They were very weary. But now the Lord tells them to get up, for the traitor is coming!

Suddenly the stillness of the night is broken. They hear the trampling of many feet and the murmur of many voices: a crowd is approaching. As they shake off their sleep and peer into the gloom the darkness is lit up by an array of burning lights and the disciples see a large band of men drawing near, bearing swords and sticks. And that is not all. In front of this armed band there is another figure, illuminated by the torches and lanterns. They can pick out his face quite clearly: it is Judas Iscariot!

Quickly Judas steps forward and embraces the Lord in the usual way, saying "Hail, master" and kissing him on both cheeks. It looked just as if he was greeting someone he respected and loved, wishing him peace and prosperity. Jesus calls him "friend" (Matt.26:50). Yet in reality it was like Joab taking Amasa by the beard to kiss him but smiting him under the fifth rib instead (2Sam.20:9,10), for this was the sinister sign that Judas had given to those who had come with him from the chief priests and the elders (Matt.26:48). Now they knew exactly who to arrest.

Judas then retreated and stood with the men but before they could do anything Jesus stepped forward to challenge them. Twice he asked "Whom seek ye?" and twice they said "Jesus of Nazareth" and twice he replied "I am he." The first time something extraordinary happened: the crowd went backwards and every one of them fell down to the ground! Perhaps they were struck by the Lord's strong, calm spirit. In any case it was proof of his divine power and evidence that nothing could happen to him without his agreement.

Defending the Lord

The disciples sensed what was about to happen. The mob had clearly come to take Jesus but he seemed more concerned for the disciples' welfare than for his own. As the men tried to lay hands on the Lord the disciples sought to protect him. They asked their Master whether they should use their swords but before Christ could answer Simon Peter, who was very determined, pulled out his own weapon and struck at the first aggressor. He missed his mark and cut off the man's ear.

It was good that Simon was so keen to defend the Lord for of course he had done nothing to deserve such treatment. If we know the difference between right and wrong as taught in the Bible then we can never approve of any injustice, especially if it results in the punishment of an innocent person. Yet it was *not* good that Simon took up the sword here. It was a rash action

and likely to inflame the situation. Thankfully the Lord was in control of everything, as he always is!

Our True Weapon

Jesus told Peter to put away his sword. No-one may use it in anger to sort out a private quarrel, for "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt.26:52). And Peter had forgotten once again why Jesus came. He came to be crucified and bring about the kingdom of God. Christ is not like earthly rulers. Soon he would utter these words to one such individual, Pontius Pilate the Roman governor: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36).

By the kingdom of Christ is meant God's people, the church, for it is over them that Jesus specially reigns as King. He brings them to himself, governs their lives and overcomes all their enemies so that they finally enter heaven. How does he do this? Not by a metal sword but by a spiritual one, by "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph.6:17).

This tells us that the church's great work is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. By this means the Lord will win men's hearts with his mercy and grace! So we put away all worldly weapons when we enlist in the service of Christ. To confirm what he said Jesus touched the servant's ear and healed him (Luke 22:51).

The Willing Saviour

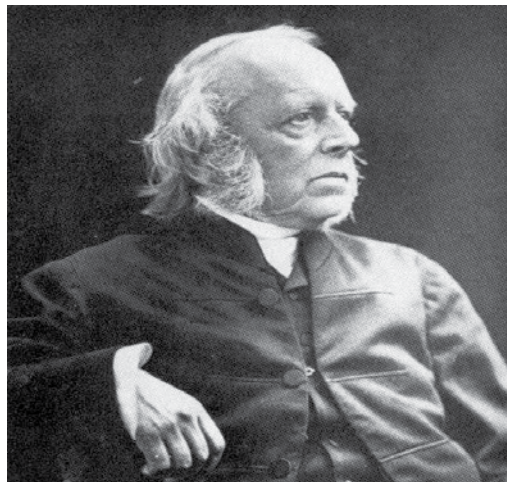
Jesus tells Peter that he must drink the cup which his Father has given him. As we saw previously this refers to Christ's suffering at the hands of God on behalf of guilty sinners. He was a most obedient and willing Saviour.

The Son of God, uniting his divine Person with our frail flesh and entering our wicked world said: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God" (Heb.10:9). He was to lay down His perfect life according to the will of his Father: "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself" (John 10:18).

At Calvary Jesus would be made a curse for the sins of his people. A terrible sword, held by his Father, would pierce his soul (Zech.13:7). Yet he was ready for this for he "stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51). Christ's resolve to follow this path with the horrors it involved had been foretold by Isaiah: "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. ...I set my face like a flint" (Isa.50:6,7). Jesus could not rest until he had accomplished the redemption of his people. So there in the garden and with his consent the men who had come with Judas "laid their hands on him, and took him" (Mark 14:46).

Christ was "led as a sheep to the slaughter" (Acts 8:32) and what led him above all was love to his people. Jesus said of his own sacrifice: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Yet in our sinful state we behave towards him as enemies! Oh, the wonderful love of Christ! Only he can save us from our sins. Let us confess them to the Lord and enjoy his pardon and eternal life.

Young People's Challenge 2010



The Biblical library is pleased to announce this year's 'Young People's Challenge.' The challenge set for 2010 is:

"THE LIFE OF REV. ANDREW BONAR"

Please include the following in your paper:

- 1) What was his particular interest in the Jews? What did he believe would happen to them before Jesus Christ returned?
- 2) Did he keep a diary? What benefits do you think there are in keeping a diary?
- 3) How is he an example to God's people today?
- 4) This year is the 200th anniversary of his birth. Why is it important to remember anniversaries?

For further info go to: www.newblehome.co.uk/bonar

Junior category — age 14 and under.
1500 words maximum.

Senior category — age 15 to 23.
2000 words maximum.

Closing date is (end of) September 2010.

Please send all entries to:

The Biblical Library (NW)
C/o Mr Roy Thornton
The Young People's Challenge
59 Leith Avenue
Thornton Cleveleys
Blackpool
FY53NN



GOING TO BOTANY BAY

THE STORY OF RICHARD JOHNSON

As we have looked together at different missionary explorers over the last two years we have frequently focused more than once on certain parts of the world, whether India or China or various parts of Africa. This month we are going to be thinking about a country we have not considered before. It is a country we have all heard of and if I tell you that it is a very large country on the other side of the world maybe some of you will guess that I am thinking of Australia. After all the exciting missionary explorers we have looked at in this series perhaps it seems strange to concentrate on Australia but as we shall see some of the first ministers to visit Australia played a very important role in establishing that nation as a country built on a Christian foundation and shaped by Christian values. Although they did not go to the jungles of Africa or the cannibals of the South Sea Islands the best of them really were missionary explorers who deserve to be remembered as faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we in the United Kingdom read about our own history going back many hundreds of years we tend to assume that other countries have the same long history. That however is not the case and Australia is one of these 'young' nations which has only recently become established in the way we know it today. We have to remember that less than two hundred and fifty years ago Australia was virtually unknown as far as Europe was concerned. Some of you will have heard of the famous Captain Cook and his ship the *Discovery*. It was in the year 1770 that Cook discovered the eastern shores of Australia and about twenty years later the first British settlement was established. Amongst those who went to Australia in those early days were a number of ministers

and one of them was an Englishman called Richard Johnson.

JOHNSON'S BACKGROUND

Richard Johnson came from Yorkshire and would appear to have been a very clever man. He was able, after finishing school, to go to Cambridge University. Early in his life he came to understand that we need more than a good education if all is to be well with our souls. So he sought and found the Saviour and gladly spent the rest of his life in the service of the Lord. Having trained for the ministry he could have remained in this country as a minister and never have faced the hardships and problems of being the first Christian minister in Australia. However he believed that the Lord had a work for him to do in that far-off land and with this conviction he set sail along with his young wife Mary and arrived in Australia in January 1788.

JOHNSON'S DIFFICULTIES

Personal Difficulties — The Johnsons arrived with about a thousand others on the east coast of Australia where life was very basic indeed. They were not used to the heat and found it very difficult to manage in such a climate, long before there was such a thing as air-conditioning. For the first few years they lived in a little hut and to their great sorrow their first child died shortly after birth. They often thought of their families back in England felt very homesick.

Practical Difficulties — Like all pioneer missionaries Richard Johnson was working in a situation where he had to manage without things we take for granted. As

Bare Island and Botany Bay



the day but this was refused. Another Governor would also march his soldiers out of the service when Johnson was half way through causing the maximum amount of distraction. Most of them also refused to give him any help with building churches and on at least one occasion the building which he hoped would become a place of worship was turned into a prison. This meant that he had to try and erect buildings by himself.

the boats arrived with more and more people the area he had to travel around became much greater. At first he would set off by boat to visit different areas along the coast. Eventually he was also able to use a horse to get around but travel was never easy and he would frequently leave home at three and four in the morning and not return until late into the evening. Every day he faced sadness and problems. There was little by way of medicine and illness was rife. In a letter he tells of conducting sixty funerals in just one month. When the boats would arrive from Britain many of the people on board were very ill as a result of the terrible conditions on board the ship during the voyage. To his distress he would find some of the children left without parents or anyone to care for them. He longed to help but he had very few resources and little by way of assistance.

Spiritual Difficulties — These were by far the greatest difficulties he faced. As I am sure you know most of the people to whom he ministered were convicts who had been sent to Australia as punishment for different crimes. Whilst some of these people were not really criminals at all many of them were very dishonest and led very bad and brutal lives. Alcohol was a terrible problem and many of their lives were ruined by drinking rum. For the most part they were not interested in the Gospel Johnson preached and resented his emphasis on the need to be born again. They would tear up the Bibles and use them as waste paper and mocked the young missionary and the message he preached. He wrote to a friend that he would be quite happy to live on bread and water if he would only see “some of these poor souls begin to think about their latter end”.

This situation was made much worse by the fact that the Governors who had the final say in everything which happened were also very worldly men. Some of them discouraged the people from attending the services which Johnson arranged. To make his life difficult one of the Governors insisted that the main Sabbath service was held at six in the morning. Johnson asked permission to hold a second service at a more reasonable hour of

JOHNSON'S BLESSINGS

Having painted such a gloomy picture of the situation he worked in you might expect that no blessings at all were experienced by Richard Johnson. That, however, was not the case and in spite of all the opposition he faced the Lord blessed his ministry. Not all the Governors were opposed to his work and one particular man gave him a great deal of assistance and support. On the practical front he was able to improve the lives of the people by setting up a hospital. He was very concerned for the young people and did his best to get them educated. From small beginnings his schools gradually grew and by the time he left Australia there were over a thousand children in various stages of education. Most importantly of all he saw men and women converted and lives and families changed by the power and grace of God. This was what he wanted above all else and nothing could give him greater satisfaction.

His health gradually got worse and in 1800 he and his family returned to England. He was spared for another 27 years and spent them in the ministry in different parts of the country. After his death a plaque was erected in his last church in London which bore the inscription: To the memory of the Rev Richard Johnson, B.A. who died March 13th 1827, aged 74 years. He was the first, and for many years the only, chaplain appointed to the extensive Colony of New South Wales, and afterwards 17 years Rector of these parishes, where he faithfully preached Christ and him crucified.

Whilst Australia today, like our own country is a very worldly place it does have Christian principles at its base and Richard Johnson was one of those men who, at great personal cost, laboured to ensure that was the case. It was very important that missionary pioneers went to Africa and China and different corners of the globe but we should also remember that it was very important that amongst the early European settlers in Australia there were those who loved and served the Lord and preached the Gospel.

PUZZLE PAGE

The Children of Israel



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

Plagues

Below are a list of the plagues God sent upon Egypt. Can you find them in the word search?

Frogs
Death (of)
Firstborn
Locusts
Water (turns to)
Blood
Lice
Flies
Boils
Cattle (die)
Hail
Darkness

Wilderness Journey

Write the answers to the questions in the grid. What do all the letters in grey spell?

					1				
		2							
					3				
4									
					5				
	6								
		7							
					8				



1. The children of Israel ate this in the desert
2. Birds which they ate in the dessert
3. Moses got water from this in the desert
4. Moses parted this with his rod
5. The children of Israel where lead by this during the day
6. Aaron and Hur held up Moses arms and God helped the people win the _____
7. The children of Israel where led by this during the night
8. When Moses cast the tree into the waters and it made them?

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

Name: Age.....

Address:

.....

.....

Congregation:

Please note that from now on you ought to send your completed puzzles to Miss Anne MacAuley, 30 Mackenzie Place, Maryburgh, Ross-shire, IV7 8DY.

The Editor would like to thank Mrs Kirsteen Murray for all the hard work she put into marking the puzzles and supplying the names of those who completed them. We wish her God's rich blessing as she gives her time and attention to raising her family.

Scalpay Overnight Camp to Scaladale



On Friday 16th April the young folk from our congregation in Scalpay went to Scaladale Outdoor Centre. The planning took some time due to trying to find a suitable date but the day finally arrived and there was great excitement when we got to the centre. Some people had not been there before so it was especially good for them. We had our tea when we arrived. It was lovely and afterwards we had some free time. Then a man came to tell us how he became a Christian and how important it was for all of us to believe in Jesus as our Saviour. After he gave his testimony he gave us all a Bible and that was nice. Then it was time to go to bed. Ali, who was looking after us was happy, as none of us were chatting or getting out of our beds.

On Saturday we had planned to do raft building but the weather was not so good and our plans had to be changed. We were put in two groups. One group played games in the Centre with one of the leaders and the other group went for a hike. It was great. After those things we all came together for lunch. After lunch we had to go and tidy our dorms and get everything together. Then following a time of games we went swimming, which was great fun. So it was the end of our trip and it was a trip we will never forget.

We would like to say a big thank you to our minister for setting it up, to the Deacons' Court for meeting most of the cost, and say thank you to the parents who came to support us. We also want to give a huge, huge thank you to Ali because you were in charge of us and that was a big responsibility.

It was an amazing trip for us all which we hope to do again soon.

Rebecca Macleod.

God in History

"We have heard with our ears, O God. Our fathers have told us what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old." Ps 44.1

Much of the Bible is History, the revelation of God's mind and will. The best kind of historical study is that which searches for God in History.

Consider God at work in the history of Israel, "of old". When the tribes were enslaved in Egypt God caused plague after plague to fall upon their oppressors, led the way out of Egypt and made a way for them through the Red Sea – destroying their enemies in the waters. He gave them his Law at Mount Sinai, revealed himself in the Tabernacle, sent down their daily bread and gave them water to drink out of the Rock. He delivered them from enemy attacks, held back the waters of Jordan, and caused the walls of Jericho to fall down. He gave them possession of Canaan, set up his Tabernacle at Shiloh and afterwards his Temple at Jerusalem. He also raised up in Israel a long line of saints and prophets whose lives were instrumental in bringing blessing to the nation.

The Jews did remember their early history, especially at the appointed festivals. The book of Psalms in particular is full of these holy memories. While the songs of other nations celebrated the heroism of men, those of Israel praised the works of God. This is an abiding benefit of singing the Psalms.

Consider God at work in the history of Britain.

He brought the Gospel to this island, He delivered us from the bondage of Popery at the Reformation and he delivered us from the Spanish Armada. As recently as 1940, he also protected us from invasion by the Nazis. On each of these occasions the nation remembered God and gave thanks.

In the 19th century, God sent out from this island many missionaries and many translations of the Bible for the missionaries to take with them to foreign lands – so highly esteemed was the Bible and so concerned was the Church here about the danger faced by unbelievers.

Consider God at work in the preservation of his Church.

Although the nations of the world have forgotten God and are actively seeking to abolish his name, yet God maintains his Church, small though it may be, on earth. This nation, in particular, has shown the worst ingratitude and intolerance toward God. His-story is not yet finished on earth and we know the ending; we have simply to turn to the last page in the Book. The Church will triumph with and because of Christ.

Consider God at work in your own history.

He has given you birth and brought you into contact with the Bible, where you will find information about his purpose for sinners. There are two paths running through this world. You need a new birth to get on the path to heaven. You know about the way, but are you on it yet? How will your story end? God knows the end already.



Abigail pleading with David

David's Restraints

1 Samuel chapters 23, 24, 25, 26.
"but my hand shall not be upon thee."

The Life of David Part 5

It is difficult not to yield to the temptation to retaliate when you have clearly been treated unjustly and hurtfully. The "fruit of the Spirit is...longsuffering, gentleness...temperance" (**self-control**), and David, just like us, spent a lifetime learning it. Moreover, just like David, we are better on some days than on others!

David's restraint at Keilah (Ch.23:1-12) — David delivered the people of Keilah from their enemies and the people seemed grateful and friendly. Many of David's men thought that they could stay there and be secure but David did not trust in appearances and he consulted God. God's Word told him that he could not trust the men of Keilah, they would deliver him up to Saul. The Word of God again restrained him from misinterpreting Providence. Why would the men of Keilah be so deceitful and hand him over to Saul? Because they were just using David, they had no loyalty to him. They were seeking only their own advantage. They did not think there was as much advantage in following David at this time as in following Saul (and no doubt when David became king they changed sides!) Likewise the Lord Jesus, despite the appearances, did not trust himself to man "because he knew what was in man" John 2:24,25.

David's restraint towards Saul (ch.24 & 26) — Saul was a very emotional man, rash and changeable, but he was determined to rid himself of David. David had opportunities to kill him and his own men said that seeing that God had given him the opportunity he should use it (24:4. 26:8). However, David rightly did not accept that he should be guided solely by the opportunities of Providence. While it was difficult to respect Saul as a man he was to be respected for his office; he was king and David refused to take the law into his own hands, he would wait for God to deal with him — Saul was fighting against God! David restrained himself and others. The opportunity to do something does not mean it is the right thing to do. David would not repay evil for evil but

responded with good towards his enemy who hated him, as the Lord Jesus taught. Be guided by conscience and not by ambition. You need the Word of God because you cannot trust your feelings. The book of *Proverbs* has much to say on this matter. David was a good example when he said "I have delivered him that is without cause my enemy" (Psalm 7:4). But there is a greater example, Christ *died* to deliver his enemies!

David is restrained towards Nabal (ch.25) — David and his men protected Nabal but Nabal cared more about his sheep than about people. He lived for one thing only — to please himself: "my...my...my.." (25:11). The word Nabal means "Fool", and he showed it by his lifestyle. After showing such patience with Saul, David became angry at Nabal's insults and lost his self control. Nabal's ungratefulness and nasty words were sinful but that did not give David the right to take revenge by killing him. How often we overcome in great matters but are irritated by the small! We have no record of David praying at this time; such is the power of anger to distract us. Abigail was used by God to prevent David from sinning and David thanked God for that (25:32). We should always be thankful when God prevents us from committing sin, even when he uses crosses and affliction to do so. "Be ye angry and sin not." Do nothing when you are feeling angry; wait until the storm in your soul has passed. "Ye know not what Spirit ye are of." You seldom make a wise decision when you are in a hurry — patience, patience. Ten days later God took Nabal from the earth, just like the 'rich fool' in Luke ch.12. "Vengeance is mine ,saith the Lord, I will repay."

The Bible speaks highly of self-control, e.g. Proverbs 16:32. We must pray to the Spirit that he would fill us with his fruits; we are responsible for bearing fruit. It is also the evidence that 'Christ dwells in the heart by faith.'

David had the virtue to accept advice from Abigail regarding his angry feelings, but it was wrong for him to take her as a second wife.