

IN MEMORY OF JONAS OLSON

A memorial of Jonas Olson given by himself at Bishop Hill in the 90th year of his long life experience which was just as clear to him in his memory as if it would have happened today. He was born in Ina, Söderala, South Hälsingland on December 19th 1802. His parents were farmers. He was in the care of his parents until the time when he was to be confirmed according to the rules of the Lutheran Church so that he for the first time could celebrate the death of Jesus. During this time he was strongly reminded of God's spirit that he as well as all Adam's children were born into sin. But the remembrance he celebrated of the death of Jesus became for him a promise that his sins were forgiven. The spirits that punished him and the whole world for sinning gave him testimony of his righteousness through the resurrection of Jesus. And the happiness he felt he cannot describe right now, but he hoped to be able to do so when he receives the body of Christ, i.e when he dies.

After this happy and joyous time he worked for 7 years with people who did not know of the friend of his deep confidence, namely Jesus, the savior of him and all who believe, as Christianity in Sweden at that time had changed with few exceptions to a hedonistic life. And it did not take more than one year when he for the second time would celebrate the memory of the death of Jesus when his first love was abandoned, and only once in a while at certain times the spirit of God reminded him thereof. After the aforementioned time his father came to him and invited him to come home and take over the farm that he no longer could care for; and so he did. After a couple of years he married Brita Olsdotter from Heden, a very happy marriage. And as she was in confidence with the readers that started in Hudiksvall through fishermen and spread to Nörrala, she invited him to come with her to a meeting; and so he did. But during the conversation of God's words that they had it struck him what had struck Peter in the Palace of the High Priests. Jesus looked at him and he started to remember the promise he had given and broken. This caused a sorrow after the mind of Jesus which caused an improvement in righteousness that no-one regrets.

From that time he became more active among the readers while caring for his farm but now there was a pause in their happy family life. After one and a half years of marriage she gave birth to a child and soon thereafter became ill with fever and died along with the child. And although the sorrow was great he carried it with quiet submissiveness as the will of God and remained alone for four years. During that time his sister was his housekeeper. Then he married Karin Wexell and with her he had six children. Only two of them are still alive Karin and Martha.

During that time he educated himself through the blessing of God both in spirit and body and as he was clever he was offered many responsibilities in society. Among other things he was chosen as a jurymen,

a position he held until the time he himself and many others lost the rights of the church only because they believed in the word of God and spoke of it to others. And now we are in times with big changes in the society especially in Hälsingland.

In 1843 Eric Janson came from Västmanland, an insignificant farmer that was steadfast in his declaration that the Bible was the only book for a Christian to believe in and live after. During that time the readers had expanded to almost all parishes in the south of Hälsingland and many of the priests had joined them following their faith. Brother Olsson, among many, had preached among them for 17 years.

Eric Janson went home after a short visit, but returned with an agitating sermon that the teachings of the church of Sweden regarding confessing the sins after the sinner had been absolved from the sin through the faith in Christ was in contention with God's word; which he proved with the words of the Bible that he was well versed in.

Now started the prosecution mentioned earlier by the priests of the Swedish Church; first against Eric Janson and then against all those who followed his beliefs and there were only two choices - either deny the truth of God's words or loose the rights of both Church and State.

This was the first time that brother Olson had to declare himself a descender of the teachings that later by many with great contempt have called the teachings of Eric Janson. He realized that on one hand he would loose his confidence from higher and lower classes of his fellow beings and also from many friends among the readers who abandoned him; the most difficult being that his own family turned against him.

And on the other hand there was to stand on one person's side who was destined to both prison and death without any defense by people. And if he had not come to full certainty that this was the crossroad that he should begin to walk he could easily have avoided everything. But he would rather suffer with God's people than stand in high honor among people.

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Translated by Kerstin Lane; 1-28-2016