

An Litir Bheag le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Litir Bheag is a shortened and simplified version of Ruairidh's Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh (also available on the BBC website), designed for those who are at an earlier stage of learning Gaelic. The topic each week is the same as Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh so that, once the Litir Bheag is mastered, a student of the language might wish to try the full Litir. This is Litir Bheag 351 (which corresponds to Litir 655). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk.

In his book The Life and Conversion of Dugald Buchanan, Dugald tells us that he was dubious about his religion when he was between nine and twelve years of age. He writes that Satan was working on him. For him, the way of the Lord was the solution. About his early days, he writes that he wasn't "obedient to the voice of the Lord" and that he had been a "sinner since he had been in his mother's womb".

Dugald was raised in a pious family. His father was a miller and a farmer. His mother was extremely pious. As I told you last week, she died when Dugald was six years old. When he reached twelve years of age, Dugald got work with another family. He was teaching their children to read.

That wasn't easy, however. Here's a description that Dugald made of them: "This family was special for enacting every form of wickedness, each one of them outdoing the others in cursing and swearing and other vices, except for the woman of the house..." Dugald stayed with them for five months. He himself learned bad language from them!

Ann an leabhar aige *Beatha agus Iompachadh Dhùghaill Bhochanain*, tha Dùghall ag innse dhuinn gun robh e teagmhach mun chreideamh aige nuair a bha e eadar naoi bliadhna is dusan bliadhna a dh'aois. Tha e a' sgrìobhadh gur e Sàtan a bha ag obair air. Dhàsan, b' e rathad an Tighearna am fuasgladh. Mu na làithean tràtha aige, tha e a' sgrìobhadh nach robh e "umhail do ghuth an Tighearna" agus gun robh e "nam chiontach bho bhroinn mo mhàthar".

Thogadh Dùghall ann an teaghlach diadhaidh. Bha athair na mhuillear agus na thuathanach. Bha a mhàthair uabhasach diadhaidh. Mar a dh'inns mi dhuibh an t-seachdain sa chaidh, chaochail i nuair a bha Dùghall sia bliadhna a dh'aois. Nuair a ràinig e aois dusan bliadhna, fhuair Dùghall obair le teaghlach eile. Bha e a' teagasg leughadh don chloinn aca.

Cha robh sin furasta, ge-tà. Seo tuairisgeul aig Dùghall dhiubh: "Bha an teaghlach seo sònraichte airson gach seòrsa aingidheachd a chur an gnìomh, gach aon dhiubh a' toirt bàrr air a chèile ann am mallachadh 's am mionnan 's an dubhailcean eile, ach bean an taighe na h-aonar..." Dh'fhuirich Dùghall còmhla riutha airson còig mìosan. Thog e fhèin droch chainnt bhuapa!

A strange thing happened to him when he was with them. On a particular winter Sabbath night, the woman of the house was speaking about the day of judgment. She said it would come on a Sabbath night in winter. Before Christ came, there would be lightning and showers of hail.

On that very night, a big storm came. "The windows were open," Dugald writes, "and the hailstones poured into the room. I shook with fear ... because everything came into being according to the account that the woman of the house had given [gave] us on the day of judgment at the beginning of the night... [I reckoned] that it really was the final day.

Dugald left that family. He went to live in Stirling. And I'll continue with my account of his life next week.

Thachair rud annasach dha nuair a bha e còmhla riutha. Oidhche Shàbaid gheamhraidh a bha seo, bha bean an taighe a' bruidhinn mu latha a' bhreitheanais. Thuir i gun tigeadh e air oidhche Shàbaid anns a' gheamhradh. Mun tigeadh Crìosd, bhiodh tàirneanaich is frasan de chlachan-meallain ann.

Air an oidhche sin fhèin, thàinig stoirm mhòr. "Bha na h-uinneagan fosgailte," tha Dùghall a' sgrìobhadh, "agus thaom na clachan-meallain a-steach don t-seòmar. Chrith mi le eagal ... oir thàinig gach nì gu crìch a rèir a' chunntais a thug bean an taighe dhuinn air latha a' bhreitheanais air tùs na h-oidhche....[Bha mi dhen bharail] gum b' e an latha deireannach a bh' ann da-rìreadh."

Dh'fhàg Dùghall an teaghlach sin. Chaidh e a dh'fhuireach ann an Sruighlea. Agus leanaidh mi le mo chunntas air a bheatha an-ath-sheachdain.