

Scott Family Archive

Rev Dr. James Scott (1791-1875) - Obituaries

Archive Note:

These obituary notices, transcribed from the Inverness Courier micro-film archive, concern the passing of the Rev. Dr James Scott, the first pastor of the United Free Presbyterian Church in Inverness. He was born in Perthshire in 1791 and died on 12th Dec 1875, aged 84 years. In 1871 Monmouth College, an Educational Institute and Theological Seminary in Illinois, USA, conferred an honorary Doctor of Divinity on him in recognition of his achievements.

Jim Scott (Great-grandson of the Rev James Scott) - Aug 2021

Inverness Advertiser - 14th Dec 1875

It is our painful duty this morning to have to record the departure from amongst us of another old and highly respected minister of Inverness. We refer to the decease of the Rev. Dr Scott, senior pastor of the Union Street United Presbyterian Church, which sad event took place on Sunday morning at his residence of Rosemount, Gordon Terrace.

Dr Scott was a native of Perthshire, and was trained in Edinburgh for the ministry. In the year 1819, after several attempts had been made by other ministers from the Presbytery of Elgin to form a congregation in Inverness, Mr Scott was appointed to occupy the station permanently. His whole congregation then consisted of not more than 70 persons, whose place of meeting was an old thatched house in a poor quarter of the town. After occupying this place for a short time, Mr Scott had to remove the congregation to the factory buildings in Albert Place, where they continued to meet for about two years. In the year 1821, Mr Scott, contrary to the advice of most of those associated with him in the ministry, accepted a call from this congregation to become their pastor. It may be interesting to note in connection with the call that an old member of Mr Scott's congregation, who is still alive, relates that during the two years the call was lying on the table of the Elgin Presbytery he must have journeyed between seven and eight hundred miles in attending the meetings, and this was all performed on foot, owing to the congregation being unable to afford the coach fare to and from Elgin! In the year stated Mr Scott was ordained as pastor of the congregation, and the ordination took place in a little house on the west side of the river, no other place being suitable at their disposal. In the same year the congregation were enabled to build a church in Baron Taylor's Lane, which they occupied until the new church in Union Street was completed in 1863. Mr Scott was only permitted to officiate in his new church for the short period of about four years, when failing health necessitated his being relieved of a portion of his ministerial duties by an assistant. Mr Robson was appointed to that office in the year 1867, but he had not held it more than a few months when Mr Scott was advised to abstain entirely from public preaching. Since then Mr Scott has rarely been abroad, and for some years back has been almost entirely confined to his room. Up till within a few weeks ago there was nothing unusually alarming in his condition, but after that prolonged fainting fits came on, which ultimately resulted in his death on Sunday morning last at the ripe old age of 84 years.

Dr Scott was a consistent and energetic supporter of the principle of Voluntaryism, and has frequently been heard addressing meetings on the subject in Inverness. He was greatly beloved and respected by his congregation, and by all with whom he came in contact for his consistent Christian character and unwearying devotion to his work. He was also endeared to his congregation from the fact of his long connection with them - a connection which has now lasted for close upon 60 years. In April 1871 Dr Scott's 50th year in the ministry was celebrated by his congregation and brother clergymen, and this meeting was largely attended. He leaves a family of three sons and four daughters.

We understand that the funeral is to take place on Thursday first at 1 pm and devotional exercises will be conducted in the church for half an hour previous, beginning at a quarter past twelve o'clock.

Inverness Courier - 16th Dec 1875

The most aged minister of this town, the Rev. Dr Scott, of the United Presbyterian Church, died here on Sunday last, at his residence, Rosemount, on Gordon Terrace. The doctor had for several years been withdrawn from public view, having, in 1867, sustained a shock of paralysis, which forced him to relinquish his pulpit duties, but he was able until a very recent date to carry on other ministerial work. It was only within the last four or five weeks, however, that he was confined to his bedroom, and a very few hours before his death he was in entire possession of his faculties, and conversed calmly and joyfully on the subject of his approaching dissolution. He was in the 84th year of his age. We can bear testimony to the energetic and intelligent interest which Dr Scott, in the days of his vigour, manifested in all public questions and discussions. He was a staunch voluntary and supporter of municipal and parliamentary reform, and a ready speaker at public meetings. As a pastor he was a diligent and earnest labourer - not successful as regards increase of adherents to the congregation, for dissent was never popular in the Highlands excepting as regards the Free Church, but the deceased enjoyed that success which is always most gratifying to the Christian minister. As a lecturer or expositor of scripture he was highly appreciated, and his morning lectures were often listened to with delight and instruction by some of our leading and most learned townsmen of the last generation. Dr Scott was a native of Perthshire, and was brought up in connection with the Antiburgher congregation of Pitcairn-Green. Having studied in Edinburgh, he accepted a call from the congregation of dissenters (about 60 persons) in Inverness. This small body of earnest Seceders worshipped sometimes in one place and sometimes in another, until 1821, when the church in Baron Taylor's Lane was erected. The new church in Union Street was opened in 1864; and in 1866 the present minister, Mr Robson, was ordained as colleague. In 1871, the 50th year of Dr Scott's ministry was celebrated here, when there was a large attendance of ministers and members of the United Presbyterian Church, with members of other sects, anxious to testify their regard for the worthy minister, and on this occasion a handsome silver salver and a purse of 150 sovereigns were presented to Dr Scott. Such a jubilee and demonstration are of rare occurrence. Most of Dr Scott's early friends and adherents had passed away, but never, he said had he experienced ought but kindness in the discharge of his duties. Dr Scott leaves two sons and four daughters, all of whom were with him a few days before his death. The funeral takes place today, and on Sunday funeral services will be conducted in the church in Union Street, in the morning by the Rev. Mr Pringle, Elgin, and in the afternoon by Mr Robson.