

The Explorer

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



SAVED BY AN ANGRY GIRL

Mr Rogers was one of the 2,000 preachers in England who were put out of their pulpits in 1662. King Charles II had passed a law that all ministers who were not ordained by a bishop, and who did not use the prayer book and form of service of the Church of England, were forbidden to preach.

Many ministers disobeyed and were cast into prison, others fled to Holland and Germany and other countries, and others, like Mr Rogers, secretly met in houses and barns to worship God.

Special judges were appointed to find and imprison those who broke this law. One such judge was Sir Richard Cradock, who prided himself on being very able to catch secret preachers and send them to prison. He hired men to become spies and attend the services, then report to him those who had preached and those who had attended the meetings. These spies secretly attended Mr Roger's meeting and reported him to the judge.

Mr Rogers and his congregation were summoned to appear before Judge Cradock, who had his offices in a hall.

While they were waiting to be called to answer the charges, the judge's granddaughter came into the hall. Now, Mr Rogers was very fond of children and he soon began to talk to her and they became good friends. After a while the judge announced that one of his witnesses was sick and they could all go home.

In a few days they were all called again and accused of holding a secret meeting and would be sent to prison. While they waited for the judge to write out the orders for them to be sent to prison, his granddaughter skipped into the hall. She went straight to Mr Rogers; he had not forgotten her and had brought her some sweets.

"What are you doing here?" she asked Mr Rogers.

"I believe your grandfather is going to send me and my friends to prison," he replied.

"Why?" she continued, "What have you done?"

"I did nothing but preach at such a place, and these people did nothing but hear me."

"But my grandfather shall not send you to jail."

"Yes, my dear, I believe he is now writing the orders to send us all there." The little girl, who was only seven or eight, angrily marched to the judge's office

door, and began banging and kicking it. When he opened the door, she shouted out, "What are you going to do with my good old gentleman in the hall?"

"That is nothing to you; go away and play," replied the judge.

"But I won't!" angrily replied the little girl. "He tells me that you are going to send him and his friends to jail; and if you do send them, I'll drown myself in the horse pond. I will, indeed."

This alarmed the judge, as she had always got her own way, and on one occasion when she could not get her own way she cut her arm endangering her life. After a while the judge gave way. He went to the hall and told them that at his granddaughter's request they were all set free.

Before he left, Mr. Rogers kindly placed his hand on the little girl's head, saying, "God bless you, my dear child! May the blessing of that God whose cause you did now plead, though you know him not, be upon you in life and death, and to all eternity!"

By the time the little girl grew up, both Mr Rogers and her grandfather had died, and by this time people were allowed to worship God freely. She became very depressed and gloomy, so she decided to visit a certain chemist who was a Christian. He tried several herbs, but they did not help her. He then told her that he had a book which he believed would help her, and he would give it to her if she promised to read it. She was surprised and a little angry when she saw that he had given her a New Testament, but as she had promised to read it, she did so. However, this still did not seem to help her.

After a time she married and moved to London, hoping that the change of place would help her, but it did not. One Saturday night she had a very vivid dream that she went to a church, and heard a preacher. The dream was so real that the next morning she set off to try to find that church. After a time she saw people going along a certain street, so she followed them, and they came to a Presbyterian Church. It seemed to be the one she had seen in her dream. She entered and the preacher spoke on Psalm 116:7, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

This sermon was the message of life to her soul, and the lady, now Mrs Tooty, was drawn to trust Christ as her Saviour. She became a faithful member of the church and often entertained visiting preachers in her home. On one occasion Mr Timothy Rogers visited her house. After the meal, he was talking about his father's experiences and how on one occasion a little girl had rescued him from being sent to prison.

Mrs Tooty was amazed to find the son of her old friend. She said, "I will now tell you something which you do not know. I am that little girl, and I have never forgotten the way your dear father blessed me on that occasion."

God even used a spoilt and self-willed child to deliver his people from the hands of those who persecuted them.

[From *Saved in the Icy Waters* by R. Cameron-Smith and used by kind

DEADLY DISEASE



At the present time there is a very widespread sickness which attacks many Christians and church-goers of all ages. This sickness makes them feel very tired and have a total loss of energy. Often it gives them a headache and other pains. Strange to say, this sickness only appears on the Lord's Day. There are no signs of it on Saturday evenings, then on Lord's Day mornings it is at its worst, but it usually wears off later in the day, and by Monday morning all the signs of it are gone.

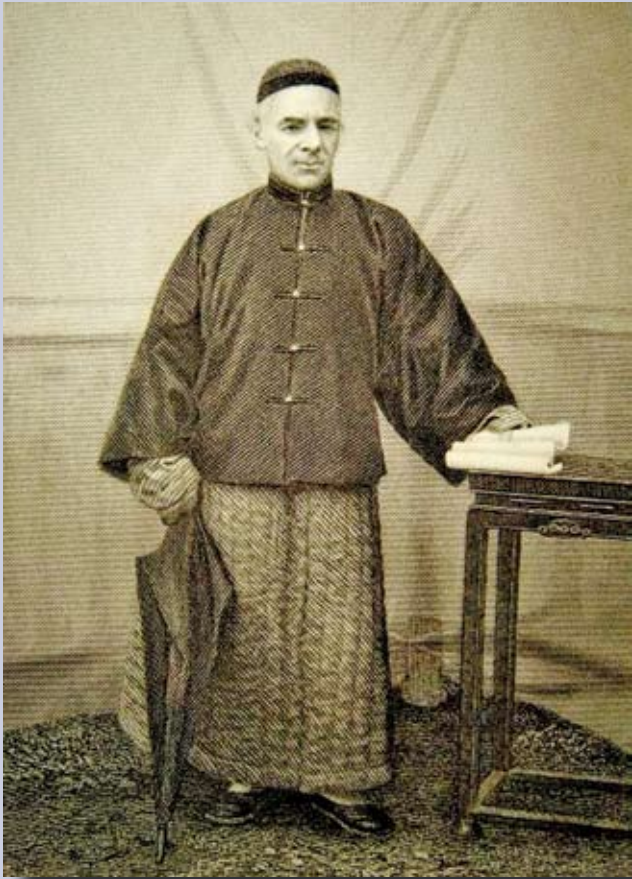
Like other illnesses this sickness has a Latin name, *Morbus Sabbaticus* or commonly known as "Sunday Sickness."

The usual pattern of this sickness is that it strikes early Lord's Day morning, and the patients feel just dreadful and could not possibly attend Church. However they improve markedly by dinner time and are able to eat a healthy meal, then after a short sleep, they feel well enough to go for a walk or drive or watch some TV programme. Sadly, another attack comes on the patients about the time of the next Church service, but happily they soon recover, and have a healthy meal, and after a good night's rest, all the symptoms have completely disappeared.

In treating this complaint, experience has proved that it can only be effectively treated from within the patient's own heart and mind. When the heart is filled with love to God and desire to worship him, then this "Sunday Sickness" wonderfully disappears. Those who have it should confess it as a sin to God and ask him to deliver them from it, and to put within their hearts a sincere desire to hear his word and to worship him, then the Sabbath will be a joy and delight to them.

Do you suffer from *Morbus Sabbaticus*?

[Adapted from *Saved in the Icy Waters* by R. Cameron-Smith and used by kind permission]



THE HOLIEST MAN IN CHINA

A LITTLE BOY IS BORN

We are told in the Gospel according to Luke that when John the Baptist was born some folk wondered, "What manner of child shall this be". There were probably similar thoughts in the Kilsyth manse, on the outskirts of Glasgow, on 1st of April 1815 for that day a little boy was born into that family. The little baby soon became a little boy and began to attend the local school. He turned out to be an excellent pupil. Hoping to do well in the world he decided to train as a lawyer. Enrolling at Edinburgh University he had his life planned out in his own mind. The Lord however had a different plan for his life, a far better plan.

THE YOUNG MAN IS BORN AGAIN

William was not long in Edinburgh when he was converted. His heart was so filled with joy in his new-found faith that he walked the thirty-six miles back to Kilsyth to share his good news with his parents. He soon felt a longing to serve the Lord and moved to Aberdeen University in order to train for the ministry. Some time later he moved to Glasgow where he attended the Milton Church whose minister at that time was the famous Rev John 'Rabbi' Duncan. His contact with the Student Missionary Society led to a growing interest in overseas mission and he concluded that it would be in some such missionary situation that his life work would lie.

He applied to go to India and in March 1839 he was

waiting for the arrangements to be finalised. Once again the Lord changed his plans and the course of his life.

REVIVAL!

As he waited for word on his trip to India a letter arrived for William. It was from a well-known minister, Rev Robert Murray McCheyne, minister of St Peter's church in Dundee. Mr. McCheyne had been appointed by the church to go abroad for a while in order to plan for missionary work amongst the Jews. Mr. McCheyne was looking for someone to look after his congregation whilst he was away. Having prayed about it he came to the conclusion that William Chalmers Burns was the man whom the Lord wished him to approach. William also felt that the Lord wished him to go to Dundee and so he accepted the invitation sent by McCheyne. His father was still the minister at Kilsyth and at this very time a wonderful revival had begun there with many people converted. This mighty work of God extended to Dundee and when Robert Murray McCheyne returned to the city it was to a full church with many new converts. These were wonderful times and William greatly enjoyed being there in the middle of it all. However these experiences did not lessen his desire to go abroad with the Gospel. Hearing of a great need for missionaries in China he applied to go. He was asked when he would be able to leave for China; his answer was, "now". And so in 1847 he was inducted as a missionary and set off on the long



Modern day Xiamen

journey to China. Never one to waste time he spent the long voyage learning the language and studying a Chinese translation of the Gospel of Matthew.

THE MAN OF THE BOOK

“The longing of my heart”, he wrote, “is to make known my glorious redeemer to those who have never heard”. This, by the grace of God, he was able to do in the vast mission field of China.

Arriving in Hong Kong he stayed briefly with some Europeans and then moved into the Chinese community, speaking their language and adopting, as far as possible, their ways. China at that time allowed British citizens to live in their five main trading cities and it was in one of these, a city called Amoy, that he established his first mission. From there he travelled as far as he was able. Often he worked alone, reaching into new areas with the Gospel, never sparing himself. If the Lord blessed his efforts and he managed to establish a congregation he would leave them to be looked after by others while he himself moved on to a new area. He pioneered church planting in places such as Guangzhou, Xiamen and Shatou, and despite the size of China and the slowness of travel, he covered enormous distances, becoming a familiar sight in province after province. He made it his practice to visit, with the Gospel, condemned criminals in prison and if he ever saw a market place he would stay there and preach of Jesus. It was the practice of the Chinese to gather together in the evenings in teashops and he would visit these places and engage folk in conversation. If he felt that there was some interest he would leave Bibles and good books with the people he had met.

As the years passed the work developed and others joined him. The little mission stations, which had begun with his preaching and a tiny handful of new Christians, grew into well-established mission compounds. Schools were established and hospitals were opened. Today, despite terrible persecution, there are millions of Christians in China. William Chalmers Burns was one of the important early missionaries who pioneered the work and opened up many areas of China for the

Gospel.

His mother likened him to a sharp knife that would be worn out by cutting, rather than by rusting; and the young Burns wished that it might be so. His mother had taken note of his compassion for the lost years before, when, newly converted, he had stood silently weeping at the side of a busy street in Glasgow. “I was so overcome”, he told her, “by the sight of countless crowds heading towards the eternal world that I could bear it no longer, mother, the thud of these Christless feet on the way to hell breaks my heart”.

The nature of his work meant that for most of his time in China he had no permanent home and indeed all his possessions could be packed into a single wooden box.

In the kind providence of God, however, he was not always left to work alone. He met up with that other famous missionary, James Hudson Taylor, and whilst one would preach by the roadside the other would be praying beside him. Hudson Taylor later wrote, “Never had I such a Spiritual father as Mr. Burns”.

His continual preaching from the Bible led to him being known as the “man with the book”. For him there was one book above every other book, God’s own word. He was also very keen that the people would have good reading material and was able to translate the *Pilgrim’s Progress*. Interestingly he also took steps to provide the Chinese Christians with a translation of the metrical Psalms.

In April 1868, at the age of 53 he died in Manchuria after a short illness.

Did you notice the title of this article? Another missionary to China was once asked, “Do you know William Burns?” The missionary replied, “Know him? All China knows him to be the holiest man alive!”

Was William Chalmers Burns the holiest man alive or even the holiest man in China? Well only the Lord knows that, but we know for a fact that he himself was not depending on anything like that to save him. His hope and trust was in the Lord Jesus Christ who had died for him and kept him safe in all his adventures down through the years. The Lord was his shepherd and on the day he died one of the last things he did was to repeat the twenty-third Psalm. Goodness and mercy had followed him all the days of his life and now that his life was at an end, he was confident that, “in God’s house for evermore”, his dwelling place would be. The Lord who had saved him and called him to China was now calling him home to be with himself. For William Chalmers Burns, as for the Apostle Paul, to live was Christ and to die would be gain.



MEETING JESUS

This image of Peter is from a painting by the famous artist El Greco

One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone. (John 1:40-42)

There is a lot we can learn from the godly men and women whose lives are recorded for us in the Bible. They loved and served God in their day as we are called to do in ours. Though times may have changed since the Word of God was written there is one thing that has not changed and never will: the need we have of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sinners in every generation have looked to him for salvation. We may be thankful that in his love to the guilty and hell-deserving Jesus is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb 13:8). In this series we are looking at one of the most famous people in the Scriptures. He was a fisherman and a preacher. He was eager to follow Jesus but not always wise. He was bold and brave yet sadly he denied his Lord. Lovingly restored by the Saviour he endured unto the end. His name? Simon Peter.

A Loving Brother

How did Simon Peter first meet Jesus? It was through Andrew his younger brother. Andrew was a disciple of a man named John the Baptist and one day he saw John looking upon Jesus and heard him say, “Behold the Lamb of God!” (John 1:36). Andrew was struck by these words, as was another of John's disciples. A new light dawned upon them. They thought of the Passover and the offerings in the temple and how the blood of the sacrifices made atonement for sin: they saw that Jesus was linked to these things. The two of them began to follow Jesus as their Master. That evening they sat at his feet and learned from him the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

The grace of God had touched Andrew's heart. The Spirit had called him and enabled him to believe in Jesus. In his new Master Andrew found everything his soul yearned for: forgiveness of sins, peace with God, heavenly fellowship and lasting joy. He was now a child of God and truly blessed. He had tasted of the bread of life and he wanted others to feed upon it too.

Andrew knew what he must now do. He must tell Simon about Jesus! They were not only brothers but also worked together to make a living at fishing. There was a closeness between them, although Simon did not yet have the same concern of soul that Andrew had. What glad tidings Andrew had for his older brother: they had found the “pearl of great price” (Matt 13:46)! Running quickly he found Simon, told him the good news and brought him to Jesus.

Are we like Andrew? Do we love others enough to tell them of Jesus? The gospel is to be made known to the ends of the earth but we must begin with those nearest and dearest to us. We may bring sinners to Jesus today by praying for them, encouraging them to read the Bible and inviting them to come to church to hear the preaching of God's word.

The Anointed One

What had Andrew learned about Jesus that was so important? He was convinced that Jesus was the Messiah or Christ, meaning the ‘Anointed’. Long ago God had promised his people Israel that he would send them a Saviour. He had raised up many prophets, priests and kings among them, men who by their work pointed towards Jesus and the special work that he would do. These men were appointed to their office by being ‘anointed’; they had holy oil poured upon their heads by other men. This was how Aaron the high priest entered upon his work, as the psalmist tells us:

“Like precious ointment on the head,
which down the beard did flow,
Ev'n Aaron's beard, and to the skirts
did of his garments go.” (Ps 133:2)

The same Book of Psalms tells us of Jesus and how he was anointed, not by men but by God and not with oil but with the Holy Spirit:

“Thou lovest right, and hatest ill;
for God, thy God, most high,
Above thy fellows hath with th' oil
of joy anointed thee.” (Ps 45:7)

When Jesus began his work as our great High Priest he was baptised by John in the river Jordan. The Spirit of God descended upon him like a dove and rested upon him. God the Father spoke from heaven saying: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt 3:16,17). In this way Jesus was fully equipped and encouraged for his mighty work of bearing our sins, suffering the wrath and curse of God and purchasing eternal life for his people. Andrew had found this great Saviour and Simon must meet him!

A Change of Name

What happened when Simon first met Jesus? The Lord fastened his eyes upon Simon and told him that in the future he would be called by another name. In time to come Simon would be called Cephas or Peter, which means ‘a stone’. That must have made a great impression upon Simon! He is not the only man in the Bible whose name was changed by God: Jacob became Israel and Saul became Paul. Jesus was showing Simon how his character would be fashioned by God's marvellous grace to fit him for service in his kingdom.

The stone is a symbol of stability and strength: that is the sort of man Simon became through faith in Jesus Christ. Before he met Jesus Simon was a determined individual but stubborn, proud and prone to fall. After he met Jesus, though he still had his faults, Simon became a pillar in the house of God, firm in the truth, fruitful unto good works and faithful unto death. Simon Peter was never a rock, for God alone is “the rock of our salvation” (Ps 95:1), but in his own words he was one of those “lively stones” which by grace through faith are built upon Jesus Christ the “chief corner stone” of the church (1 Pet 2:5,6).

May God enable you, like Simon, to put your faith in Jesus, the Lord's Anointed, and to be “stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor 15:58).



Family Likeness

A little while ago we considered genealogies — especially those in the Bible. We saw, in particular, that our Lord Jesus could trace his ancestry right back to Adam. That line stretched right back through King David, Ruth, Rahab, Abraham and Noah as well as many other important Bible characters.

Now, would you like to trace your ancestry back to some important person in more recent history? Wouldn't it be exciting if you found that you were related to say, John Knox, or Samuel Rutherford, or William Tyndale, or perhaps Charles Haddon Spurgeon? But of course we are all related; all the families of the earth came through Noah and then right back to Adam.

If you have brothers or sisters you will look, more or less, like them; you will have a family resemblance, to your parents or to your aunts or uncles. Sometimes you will hear people say, 'Doesn't he look like his dad.' Sometimes the resemblance is more than skin deep. In families there is often resemblance in personality. Perhaps one of you reading this has a twin. Sometimes twins are so alike they can be mistaken the one for the other. Yet some twins are so unlike, as Jacob and Esau were in the Bible. They were very different both in appearance and personality. Read Genesis 25:27-34 and Genesis 27:1-40 and see how many differences you can discover between these twin brothers.

There is one way, sadly, in which we are all exactly the same; can you guess? Yes you are right — we are all sinners. Because our genealogy stretches right back to Adam, the very first man, we have inherited his sin. That dear little baby lying in his cot does not need to be taught to sin because, sadly, he is a born sinner.

We are all sinners, kings, queens, ministers, elders, politicians, and all in authority are sinners; and me, and you. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is but one person since Adam who was born without this inherited sin — our Lord Jesus Christ. He had no inherited sin, nor did he ever commit sin; even when he was taken by wicked hands and crucified and slain not so much as a single sinful or unkind thought entered his mind. Although he had an earthly mother, the Bible says of him, 'God was manifest in the flesh,' 1 Timothy 3:16. That means although he was a man he was still every bit as much God as when he lived in eternity with God the Father. That is why he is able to save all that come to God by him. Now here is the most important question of all; have you asked him to forgive you your sin? When you ask him to forgive you he will, for he said, 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' John 6:37.



TAKING STOCK

“When’s Dad coming home?” asked Donald. “I can hardly wait to tell him about all the things I saw today.” It was the quiet time during the New Year holidays and his friend’s dad had managed to organise a trip for some of the boys in his class to the factory he worked in — a factory that made giant earthmoving machines. Donald knew his Dad used to drive one of these before he got his job in the warehouse. Mum didn’t have the same interest in these things that his Dad had but at least she would still listen.

“The man in charge let me switch on one of the drilling machines and at the end of the visit we were each given a ride around the yard in a brand new dumper truck.”

“I’m afraid your Dad will be late tonight,” his Mum explained.

“Don’t you remember that he told us last week that today is stocktaking day in the warehouse and all the folk have to work on until the work is finished.”

“Well I hope he’s not too late,” Donald said with disappointment. “Can I sit up until he comes home?”

“You can stay up for an extra hour” said his Mum. “You don’t have any school tomorrow, but if he’s not home within the hour you’ll have to go to bed.”

After tea Donald waited impatiently. The time seemed to drag by and he kept looking at the clock. Half of him wished it would move quicker. Half of him wished it would slow down in case the deadline for bed passed. But the clock just ticked away, second by second, no faster and no slower than it had always done. What was this thing that was keeping his Dad so late? He decided to ask his Mum who by this time had sat down and was reading the newspaper.

“Mum,” he asked at last. “What’s stocktaking?”

“It’s a very important part of any business,” she replied.

“Some companies take stock around New Year and some do it just before the new tax year in April. It tells them three important things.”

“It tells them how well the company has been doing in the past year,” she explained. “That lets them work out how much has been sold and how much profit has been made.”

“It would also let them see what their customers like to buy and what they don’t,” added Donald.

“That’s right,” said Mum. “The second thing it lets the company know is how many of the things they make they have left and that helps them to know how much their company is worth.”

“I think I know what the third thing is,” said Donald excitedly.

“It helps them to work out what they need for the next year!”

“That’s exactly right,” said his Mum. “You can see why it’s so important for them. It helps them look at the past, present and future state of the company.”

“But you know,” Mum continued, “we all have to take stock.”

“What do you mean by that?” asked Donald.

“The Bible tells us that we need to examine ourselves,” she explained. “It’s good for us at the beginning of the new year to think back over the past year and consider how we have served Jesus. But we need to look at how we are serving him just now as well. Both these things will help us serve him better in the future.”

“When we look at our past we will remember many sins. But we will also remember the many times Jesus has forgiven us and also the many good things he has done for us. When we think of the present we are reminded that trusting in Jesus is something we need to do every single day. When we think of the future we know that we do not need to fear if Jesus is our Saviour. He will keep and protect us and at last take us to be with himself in heaven.”

“I think I understand,” said Donald. “I think I will do my stocktaking tonight when I say my prayers.”

Just then Donald heard the key in the lock. His Dad was home at last.

“I’m glad to see you home, Dad,” he said. “There were just a few minutes left before I would have to go to bed. I have so much to tell you!”

