

The Wicket Gate Magazine

A Continuing Witness



Internet Edition 117 issued November 2015

Index

1. The Pastor's Letter - "The Christian and Alcohol"
2. Gleanings in the Psalms – Psalm 72
3. Spurgeon's Eccentric Preachers – Rowland Hill 1744 to 1833
4. John Warburton – "The Loaves and the Fishes"
5. Philip and Matthew Henry
6. Mrs. Seaton's Letter to the Boys and Girls. Mary Jones and her Broken Lantern



At the Web Site of the Wicket Gate magazine www.wicketgate.co.uk you will also find the following recordings:

- Through the Bible with the Children – Bible Stories told by Mr Seaton.
- Congregational Praise – the singing of our Church during Worship Services
- Sermons preached by Dr Needham and Mr Seaton
- Historical Lectures given in the Church by Dr Needham



Podcast Service available at www.wicketgate.co.uk

The Christian and Alcohol

The Pastor's Letter (April 1976)

Dear Friends,

With almost continuous monotony we read and hear of the increase in drunkenness and alcoholism throughout our country in these days. We could only wish that the professing evangelical churches of our land would adopt a far more distinct policy with regards to the scourge.

In our own area in the north of Scotland the tolerance towards strong drink in some of the main branches of evangelicalism is to be greatly regretted. The height of “Highland hospitality” is often epitomised in a glass of whisky, and, as in some other respects, the churches have looked to the culture that they abide in rather than to the obligation of witness that is laid upon them in that culture. We have heard of one church elder (and, of course, he is not alone in this,) who transacted a bit of business with another, poured out two glasses to clinch the deal, and then proceeded to “ask a blessing” before downing the noxious poison! That may appear to have overtones of old-world piety about it to some some “reformed romantics”. Alcoholism has increased and drink-related problems account for a large number of admittances to Scottish mental hospitals.

It's time that such facts were beginning to trouble the consciences of that theology of tolerance that too much enjoys its “dram” to be prepared to abstain from such appearances of evil.

We would also like to send this short despatch, of course, to the southern half of our kingdom, as well, for we feel that a mock sophistication has a hold on some reformed impressionables with regards to the “drink” question. No matter how much some brethren (and sisters) feel that they can justify a moderate approach to drink from scripture – dear old Timothy's stomach, for example – we would beg to point out that there is one very pertinent principle enunciated by the apostle Paul, namely, that although all things might be “lawful”, all things are not “expedient”. And surely, in these particular days of such abuse in this particular area, it is far from expedient for any man or woman of the Church of Christ to give credence to a type of sin that may yet be one of

the greatest single factors in the total collapse and downfall of the generation in which the Lord has set us to shine as lights.

We purposely kept these comments short. The general situation of our day throughout our land is too obvious to require detailed analysis. It is an old, old poem that we reproduced in the last edition titled “The Public House Bar” (http://www.wicketgate.co.uk/issue116/e116_7.html) and we recommend it without apology, believing that the attitude which it breaths and speaks is one that would not go amiss in the midst of our churches today.

Sincerely,
W. J. Seaton

Gleanings in the Psalms

(Psalm 72)



This Psalm was penned by a king, it is dedicated to a king, and is chiefly intended concerning Him who is “King of kings.”

Joseph Caryl

Verse 1. “Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.” It is the gift of God that kings should judge righteously and observe justice. But, David does not simply say, O God, give judgments to the king, and righteousness to the king's son; but, **Thy** judgments, and **Thy** righteousness. Grant them this grace, that what is just in Thy sight they may judge. The world has its own judgments, and its own righteousness, but deals in such a way that true righteousness is more oppressed than approved.

Musculus

Verse 5. “They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.” The passing of one of the Lord's faithful saints is always an occasion of mixed emotions. On the one hand, those who are left to continue the battle and the warfare of the gospel feel the loss of a faithful soldier of Christ Jesus, while, on the other hand, that warrior has now entered into the rest of victory in the presence of Him who called him to be a soldier, and this is very far better.

So, many have, no doubt, felt at the passing earlier this month of the Rev. Murdoch Campbell, late of Resolis, and author of many books. As this psalm that we come to this month was one of Mr Campbell's own favourites, we thought it fitting to include his comments on this fifth verse, especially as they express the sentiments, and yet, give us the balance of what we have mentioned above.

“There was another night,” he tells us, “when, sitting in our manse in Resolis, I felt very discouraged at the state of God's cause, and over the departure of those witnesses who graced the firmament of the Church in other days. Then I moved outside. The sky was ablaze with stars, while the moon beamed on the silent woods and harvest fields nearby. It was then that these same words arrested my mind: 'They shall fear thee as long as the sun and the moon endure throughout all generations.' The Lord, I knew, has had His witnesses in this world from the days of Abel till the present moment. And the future was bright with many promises of better days. The Prince of Peace, I knew was sitting on His Throne in heaven; 'His name shall endure for ever,' and there shall be for all who love Him, 'abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.' that night, as I looked towards the heavens, I also recalled God's promise to Abraham, 'So shall thy seed be.'

But my greatest joy came through the knowledge that all the people of God who in every generation were spiritual lights in this world were shining more gloriously in that world wherein dwelleth righteousness. 'And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.' I knew also that, throughout her history, the Church of God, like the moon, did wax and wane, but that her most glorious hour in this world is yet to be. 'Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?'"

Verse 6. “He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.” Pastures mown with the scythe, or shorn by the teeth of cattle, present, as it were, so many bleeding stems of grass. But, when the rain falls it is balm to all these wounds, and it renews the verdure and beauty of the field. Fit image of the visits and benedictions of “the consolation of Israel.” My soul, how well it is for thee to be brought low, and to be even as the meadows eaten bare and trodden down by cattle, for then, to thee shall the Lord have respect; He shall remember thy misery, and with His own most precious love restore thee to more than thy former glory.

C. H. S.

Verse 7. “In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.” Do you ask what He is? The answer is “King of Righteousness.” Loving righteousness, working righteousness, promoting righteousness, procuring righteousness, imparting righteousness to those whom He saves. Do you ask what He is? The answer is “King of Peace.” A Sovereign whose kingdom is a shelter for all who are miserable, a covert for all who are persecuted, a resting-place for all who are weary, a home for the destitute, and a refuge for the lost.

Charles Stanford

(to be continued)

Spurgeon's Eccentric Preachers

Part 7 – Rowland Hill – 1744 to 1833.

It is not our design to write a life of Rowland Hill, but merely sketch an outline portrait from the “eccentric” point of view.

As a preacher Mr Hill was the child of John Berridge, whose church he attended while he was a student at Cambridge, riding over to Everton every Sabbath to hear him. From that veteran he no doubt learned that freedom and simplicity of language which always distinguished him. He

also associated much with John Stittle, one of Berridge's converts, and a man of very marked individuality, who preached in Green Street, Cambridge for many years. Their intimacy may be gathered from the incident recorded by William Jones: - "On one occasion, when Mr Hill was on his way to Duxford, to preach for the Missionary Society, he suddenly exclaimed, 'I must go to Cambridge, and see the widow of an old clergyman, who lives there, for I have a message to leave with her.' he was urged not to go, but he was firm to his purpose. He spent a short time with the venerable widow, and reached Duxford just before evening service. On entering his friend Mr Payne's house he said, 'Dear me, I quite forgot to leave the message with the widow,' and seemed almost determined to return to Cambridge. He, however, remained during the service, and on being asked whether the message he had forgotten was important he replied, 'Yes, sir, I wanted the old lady who will soon be in heaven, to give my love to Johnny Stittle, and tell him I shall soon see him again.'"

Mr Hill's first preachings were of an itinerant character. He was glad of a church and equally delighted with a meeting-house: but the village green, a barn, an assembly room, or a hovel were all used as they were offered. He was not reared in the lap of luxury as a preacher, nor was he surrounded by the society of unmingled aristocracy, so as to be guarded from every whiff of the air of common life. He mingled so thoroughly with the people that he became the people's man, and for ever remained so. With all the high-mindedness which ought to go with nobility he mingled an unaffected simplicity and benevolence of spirit, which made him dear to persons of all ranks. He was thoroughly a man, thinking and acting for himself with all the freedom of a great emancipated mind, which bowed only at the feet of Jesus; but he was essentially a child-man, a Nathaniel in whom was no guile – artless, natural, transparent, in all things unaffected, and true. He once said of a man who knew the gospel but seemed afraid to preach it, "He preaches the truth as a donkey munches a thistle – very cautiously:" this was exactly the opposite of his own way of doing it.

His fixed places of ministry were Surrey Chapel, and Wotton-under-Edge. He facetiously styled himself "Rector of Surrey chapel, Vicar of Wotton, and Curate of all the fields and lanes throughout England and Wales." Surrey Chapel was called by many "the Round-House," and it was reported that its form was chosen by Mr Hill that the devil might not have a corner to hide in. The locality is described by Berridge "as one of the

worst spots in London, the very paradise of devils.” it was hard by the assembling ground of Lord George Gordon's Protestant rowdies and was in many respects an unsavoury spot, and therefore so much the more in need of the gospel. The spacious structure was the centre of philanthropic, educational, and religious work of all kinds, and it would be difficult to find a building from which more beneficial influences have emanated.

At Wotton, Mr Hill lived in what he called “a paradisaical spot,” having his house near the chapel, and lovely scenery all around. He says of the village, “This place, when I first knew Gloucestershire, was filled with brutal persecutors; since they have been favoured with the gospel they have been wonderfully softened.” We visited the place with great interest, and were taken to the spot where dear old Rowland would sit with his telescope and watch the people coming down the neighbouring hills to the meeting and would afterwards astonish them by mentioning what he had seen. Both in London and in the country he was the universal benefactor, and mixed with all sorts of people. In London he might be seen in the streets with his hands behind him, gazing into the shop windows, and in the country the cottages and the cornfields were his study.

A friend told me an anecdote which I have not met with in print. When at Wotton he heard of a woman who was noted for her sausages, and therefore called in upon her, and bought a supply. “Now, my good woman,” said he, “how is it you make such good sausages?” “Why sir,” said she, “I think it is a gift from the Almighty.” Mr Hill shook his head at this, and began to repent of his bargain, as well he might, for the articles turned out to be stale. He told the story afterwards as an instance of how people try to pass off their bad goods by canting talk, and as a proof of the fact that fanaticism is often in alliance with knavery. “A gift from the Almighty!” said he, “and yet the produce of this precious gift is good for nothing.” We give this as an instance of the manner in which he turned every little incident to good account.

Our friend Mr Charlesworth, of Stockwell Orphanage, has written a life of Rowland Hill, which in our judgement surpasses its predecessors in giving a full length portrait of the good man, and as this is readily to be had, we refer our readers to it. We remember reading an article in one of the reviews of the day in which Mr Hill is abused after the manner of “the Saturday.” it does us great good to see how those who were before us

endured the tongue of malice and survived its venom. It is clear from many remarks made by contemporary writers, and especially from the way in which one of his biographers has tried to take the very soul out of him by toning down his wit, that he was regarded by many serious people as a good brother whose infirmity was to be endured, but to be quietly censured. Now, we are not at all of this mind. Mr Hill may have allowed his humour too much liberty, perhaps he did, but this was better than smothering it and all his other faculties, as many do, beneath a huge feather-bed of stupid formalism. When we hear our long-visaged brethren condemning all mirth, we remember the story of holy Dr. Durham, the Scotch divine, who wrote a commentary upon Solomon's Song, and another upon the Revelation.

His biographers say of him that he was so grave at all times that he very seldom smiled, much less laughed, at anything. We wonder if he had any children? What kind of father must he have been? But here is the story in the old-fashioned language in which we find it. The Rev. Mr William Guthrie, minister at Fenwick met with Mr Durham at a gentleman's house near Glasgow, some time before his last sickness, and observing him somewhat dull, endeavoured to force him to smile and laugh, by his facetious and pleasant conversation. Mr Durham was somewhat disgusted at this innocent freedom of Mr Guthrie, and displeased with himself that he was so merry. When Mr Guthrie, according to the laudable custom of that family, and at their desire, prayed, he showed the greatest seriousness, composure, and devout liveliness. When he rose from prayer, Mr Durham tenderly embracing his friend, and said to him, "O William, you are a happy man; if I had been so merry as you were before we went to pray, I should not have been serious, or in a frame for prayer, or any other religious exercises for two days." This occurrence led Mr Durham to judge more leniently of his lively brethren, and our trust is that it may have the like effect upon any sour person who may chance to read this little book. Mr Hill's name is very sweet in South London, and if you chance to meet with one of his old hearers, it will do your heart good to see how his eyes will sparkle at the bare mention of his name. He made religion a delight and the worship of God a pleasure; yea, he made the very memory of it to be a joy for ever to the hearts of the aged as they recall the days of their youth when Rowland Hill – dear old Rowland Hill as they like to call him – was in his glory.

**The Mercies of a
Covenant God
By
John Warburton**

The Loaves and Fishes

Work was now very bad, and provisions immensely dear. We had three small children, and had lost one about six months before.

One circumstance that occurred about this time I think I shall never forget. Here was a gloomy scene, not a morsel of food for husband, wife, or child; the wife, too, with an infant at her breast. If I ever prayed in my life, I did that night, that the Lord would take away our appetite, and send us to bed satisfied. And, I believe, the Lord heard my cry, for the poor children wanted to go to bed, and said not one word about anything to eat, for which I felt thankful. But my trouble was about the morning, for I could not leave the morrow to take care for the things of itself.

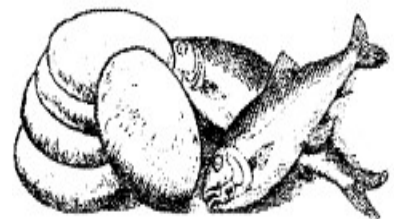
I rose early the following morning and worked until I was obliged to leave the loom, and could scarcely walk or stand, I was so weak and faint. My poor wife, who was as weak and sickly as I, burst into tears and cried, “O what shall we do? I cannot live; I am sure we shall die of want!” and I was sunk so low both in body and mind that I verily believed it would be the case. But what put the finishing touch to my feelings was, that my eldest child, who was about five years of age, looked up to me with tears running down its little cheeks, and cried, “Father, give me some bread.” I thought my soul would have burst with grief. “O”, cried I, “are my children to die of want before my face, and I cannot help them?” I ran into a little place under the cellar stairs, fell on my knees before God, and entreated the Lord with all my soul, to take away my life. “O Lord, do take away my life; let me die; how can I behold the death of wife and children?”

Whilst I was upon my knees, entreating God to take away my life, these words came with great power and force into my mind, “And they did all eat and were filled; and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets' full.” I did all I could to put it away. “What”, said I, “can it have to do with me in our situation? It has nothing to do with me.” I kept

crying for some time, but the whole connection came so powerfully to my mind, how the Lord had fed five thousand in the wilderness with five loaves and two fishes, and they were all filled. Well, thought I, He is as able to feed us now with fish and bread as He was then. That precious text flowed into my soul with such light, life, liberty, power, and glory, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and for ever,” (Hebrews 13:18) and my soul was so refreshed, and my faith so strengthened by it, that I was as sure that we should have a supply as that there was a God. I arose off my knees as strong as a giant in mind and body, and told my wife that the Lord would most certainly send us something to eat, and very soon. She wanted to know how and when. “it does not matter,” said I, “about the how nor the when; I know it will be the case, and my soul can bless God for it before it comes.”

Just upon the back of this, a man knocked at the door, and I went and opened it to him. It was a gentlemen's servant. “John,” said he, “my master has bought some herrings to give to his factory people. I had no orders to leave you any, but I thought as I came along that I would leave you twelve, if you like to accept them.” I was so overpowered that I could scarcely speak to the man. The goodness, mercy, and kindness of my dear Lord shone so brightly that I was quite lost in wonder. Whilst I was still wondering and admiring the goodness of God to a worthless worm, a neighbour sent two cakes of bread. I thought my very soul would have burst through my poor body, and taken its flight into glory, unto my dear Jesus. I withdrew into the little palace under the cellar steps, the very place in which a few hours before, I had begged God to take away my life. And O what a heavenly palace it was.

After returning my God thanks, some of the fish were soon ready, and we sat down to a table all crying together. “come, my dears,” said I, “we are now dining on the same food as Jesus and the five thousand dined on in the wilderness”; and I do believe in my very soul that Jesus sat with us at the table. O the sweetness of that fish and bread!



Philip and Matthew Henry

(Part 1)

When Philip Henry's mother lay dying of the consumption that was to remove her from this life on the 6th March 1645, she had this saying "My head is in heaven, and my heart is in heaven; it is but one step more, and I shall be there too." It was a sentiment well expressed, and one that was to characterise the Henry household, especially, perhaps, in her godly son Philip, and to no loss a degree in his son Matthew, whose praise is throughout the Church of Christ. A popular saying of our day declares that a person can become so "heavenly-minded" as to be "no earthly use." But a consideration of the lives of those who have been of most "use" to the Church of God on this earth puts paid to any such superficial cliché. Philip Henry believed that every day spent on earth was a day lost in heaven, and the earnest prayers of his son Matthew reduce themselves to this, - "Lord, let me not remain one day more than there is work for me to perform." It was this kind of thinking that ran in the spiritual bloodstream of the Henrys, and which ran richest during those years when God gave gifts to His Church in the lives of a father and a son of that family.

Philip Henry was born on a day, the name of which was to take on a black significance in the life of non-conformist Christianity – St. Bartholomew's - 24th August. It was on this day in 1631 that he was born, and in his own words, it was on this day thirty-one years later that he underwent a death-like experience with two thousand other ministers of the gospel who refused to subscribe to a persecuting King's Act of Uniformity, and were ejected from their livings. The place of his birth was Whitehall, in the City of London, and the manner of his early upbringing may be easily surmised from those dying sentiments of his mother, uttered above. Like a good many of that age he was something of a prodigy in learning, and his mother took pains to advance her son's education. However, one aim above all others was always present with her: the spiritual advancement of her family. Accordingly, when morning lectures were begun in one of the city churches by such men as Philip Nye and John Hill, she requested the Principal of her son's college that leave of absence might be granted from his studies to attend on these. Permission was granted (on the undertaking that his regular work was not abated) and we have a picture of the young Philip Henry, between the ages of ten and fifteen, sitting on the pulpit

stairs taking clear and copious notes of the things he heard concerning eternal life. “If ever any child,” he says, “... enjoyed line upon line, precept upon precept, I did. And was it in vain? I trust not altogether in vain.” That last remark is characteristic of the humility of Philip Henry; far from that time being in vain, it was this period in his life that brought him into that clear understanding of God's ways in the gospel. There is no specific date allocated to his actual conversion, and it is probably this fact that moves him to speak out against those of his day who pressed for an exact time in such eternal matters. His reasoning is still relevant for us today; “Who can so soon be aware of the daybreak, or of the springing up of the seed sown?” And his application is beyond dispute; “the work of grace is better known in its *effects* than in its *causes*.” The effectual life that Philip Henry manifested before the world and within the Church in the ensuing years can only mark him out as a man “in whom the grace of God is.”

From his school in London, Henry moved to Oxford in December 1647. His young life there is noted by his diligence, not only in normal studies, but in spiritual development – especially in discovering the ways of the Lord with his life. This “marking of providences” features very much in the lives of the Henrys, thus he can look back on a chain of events that might have concluded with him being admitted to the Royal Court at a young age, and rejoice that the Lord ordered it differently and chose a better inheritance for him. At Oxford itself he was always busily “tracing the rainbow through the rain,” and so, when an invitation was eventually extended to him to begin a work in the ministry in the village of Worthenbury in Flintshire, we may be assured that he desired to go only in the way that the Lord would lead him.

The future Worthenbury Minister's actual removal to that place was at the instigation of the wife of Judge John Puleston. The Judge's lady desired a tutor for her sons, and, after favourable reports and negotiations had been gone into, the young men arrived in that out of the way place in September 1653. The arrangements were that he should live with the Pulestons, look to the education of their sons in the classics, and preach the morning service each Lord's Day in the village church. This latter part proceeded favourably for a time, until one Lord's Day afternoon the stated supply failed to arrive. Philip Henry preached twice on that day and the die was cast for all future Sabbaths at Worthenbury.

With regards to that preaching, the biography draws out the wholesomeness of it, both in content and manner of serving; “As to the subjects he preached upon, he did not use to dwell long upon a text. - Better one sermon upon many texts, viz. Many scriptures opened and applied, than many sermons upon one text. To that purpose he would sometimes speak.” Again, we are told, “he used to preach in a fixed method, and linked his subjects in a sort of chain. He adapted his method and style to the capacity of his hearers, fetching his similitudes for illustration from those things that were familiar to them. He did not shoot the arrow of the Word over their heads in high notions, or the flourishes of affected rhetoric, nor under their feet, but by blunt and homely expressions, as many do under pretence of plainness, but to their hearts, in close and lively applications.” In this he seems to have been following some sound and seasonable words that found an entrance into his heart when spoken by Mr Malden at the close of his ordination. “This word went near my heart,” he records in his diary at that time, “As the nurse puts the meat first into her own mouth, and chews it, and then feeds the child with it, so should ministers do by the word, preach it over beforehand to their own hearts; it loses none of the virtue thereby, but rather, probably, gains. As that milk nourisheth most which comes warm from the breast, so that sermon which comes warm from a warm heart. Lord, quicken me to do thy will in this thing.”

From that, it will be seen that Philip Henry had retained the ability to be exhorted as well as exhort. Although now himself an ordained minister of God's word, he, too, was subject to that word, and to this end he never abandoned his childhood practice of writing down sermon notes and afterwards digesting them to his own soul. Time and time again, references are made to sermons heard with their effect upon him, while notes from other men's sermons, written out in his own hand, were retained by him to the last. He urged fellow-ministers to sit under the sound of the truth when opportunity presented itself; and to sit, “not as masters, but as scholars; not as censors, but as hearers.” Small wonder that such preaching, and such a high estimation of the preaching place, earned the testimony from Lady Puleston that the young man had done more for the parish in six months than had been done for the past eighteen years. Perhaps it is well to remember at this point that the actual communicants in the Worthenbury church numbered only around forty and never at any

time during the ministry of Philip Henry ever reached double this number. But, God was preparing certain instruments of witness in those days, and the young minister's course was clear: he must be diligent and faithful on the earth, all the issues and outcomes lay in the eternal purposes of God in heaven. The narrowness of the sphere of labour, however, in no way restricted Henry's work; numerous were the fruitful branches that ran over the wall from Flintshire village.

His own home was a very Bethel for many. God in His grace and goodness had early provided a young bride for His servant; one who was "of one heart, of one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel." A traditional story illustrates her temperament when barriers were being placed in the way of their forthcoming marriage; "Among other objections urged by her friends against the connection was this, - that, although Mr. Henry was a gentleman, and a scholar, and an excellent preacher, he was quite a stranger, and they did not even know where he came from. 'True,' replied Miss Matthews, 'but I know where he is going, and I should like to go with him.'" God blessed the marriage over the years with two sons and four daughters, the younger being the famous Matthew who would give such service to the Lord's people through his preaching and commentary. However, Philip Henry couldn't make his daughters preachers and commentators; but, he did the next best and lawful thing: he bequeathed each of them a full set of Matthew Poole's Annotations of the Bible to read in their families. (We may remember how profitable another father's bequest was to that daughter who married the Bedford tinker and first opened his eyes to the issues of eternal life revealed in her literary dowry.)

But the days were hastening on to that fateful year of 1662. Already, trouble had begun to brew for the Worthenbury pastor. Although the actual ejection day was not until the 26th August of that year, Philip Henry was forbidden to preach from the preceding October. Like Samuel Rutherford before Him, his "dumb Sabbaths" were to prove like "a stone tied to a bird's foot." While at Worthenbury, he had received many enticing "calls" to larger churches and congregations but these failed to draw him from his village charge. However, when that Black Bartholomew's dawned, what enticement had failed to accomplish, conscience performed, when it had its perfect work, and Philip Henry withdrew with his wife and family – in common with two-thousand others who could not conform, "for conscience sake."

The rigours of the coming years make sad reading for the Church of Christ. With one Act after another the non-conformists were pressed to extremes. The Five Mile Act forbade any minister to live within a radius of five miles of a place where he had held a pastorate. The Henrys had moved to a house at Broad Oak, but some of the zealous persecutors of the day claimed that this house was within “five reputed miles” of Worthenbury, and laboured for his eviction. In an effort to “live peaceable with all men” Mr. Henry withdrew with his family to Whitechurch. God soon granted a vindication to His silenced saint, however, for when the “actual” distance between Worthenbury and Broad Oak was taken, the house was found to be outwith the Five Mile Act by sixty yards.

Even more severe, perhaps, than the Five Mile Act, was the actual Conventicle Act itself. This among other things, denied any non-conforming preacher the right to minister to any more than eight persons at one time; in fact, little more than his own family and a few friends. Yet, the strictures of this Act only serve to highlight the faithfulness and diligence of the man whose heart was set on that eternal day. Not until the year 1689 was full liberty of conscience realised under William of Orange; and so, for the twenty-seven years between that event and the ejection, Philip Henry's main charge was the household of Broad Oak. Of course, there were other engagements – invariably carried out under the risk of arrest – and many spheres of service entered into – especially during several periods of respite. Yet, it remains true that the able minister's flock was found mostly within his own four walls. But, what ministry was forthcoming there! Over the years he followed a full and thorough exposition of the scriptures from end to end, and the doctrines of the gospel distilled all around and watered the thirsty souls of the Lord's people throughout the Land. When the final announcement of Indulgence came under William, it was a glad pastor who rigged-out and opened an outhouse at Broad Oak for the public worship of the Lord's Name. In this capacity he served the Lord for another seven years of his life, until the Lord, in His own purposes – and according to Philip Henry's great desire – removed him from the pulpit of active service to the rest of the redeemed of heaven with no lingering or waiting in between. He died at Broad Oak on the 24 of June 1669. (To be concluded)

BOYS AND GIRLS PAGE

Dear Boys and Girls,

It was just getting dark and was already windy and raining. The hens were beginning to roost, but one difficult hen still picked away at bits of corn on the grass, and kept well away from the henhouse. “Shoo, shoo,” cried the little barefoot girl, “you know it's time to go to roost; and I'm in a hurry – shoo!” With a loud squawk, the hen scuttled round the back of the henhouse and wouldn't come out. “Well, stay there! I'll go and get the lantern while you make up your mind,” said the girl.

She then went into a tidy tool-shed, but on taking the lantern down found that the catch was broken. “Dear me, everything is going wrong tonight when I am in such a rush,” she said; “now hurry up little hen or I'll lock you out for the night!” At last she got the hen into the henhouse and then fastened the door. “Now, what can be done about the lantern?” she puzzled. She then ran out of the gate and a little way down the hill until she came to a little farm cottage. “Mr. Williams, would you kindly lend me your lantern tonight? The latch of ours is broken.” “Why, it's Mary Jones,” said the man, “of course you can have the lantern; I suppose you are going off to the meeting tonight.” Mary quickly got the lantern from Mr. Williams and raced off home.

“Where have you been child?” her mother asked her when she got back “we certainly shall be late tonight.” When Mary explained about the hen and the lantern her mother said, “We could have done without the lantern.” “Yes, but then I could not have come with you,” said Mary, “for the people would have said that there was no need for me to come if I had no lantern to hold for you, and I do want to be at the meeting and hear all I can from God's Word; I do wish I had a Bible of my own.” With these words on her lips, this little eight-year old girl went off to the meeting with her mother.

Well, boys and girls, I wonder do you go off to church, or Sunday school, or Bible class with the same eagerness as this little girl. She was hungry to know more and more from God's word, and her great desire was to have a Bible of her own. She eventually got one, but not before she had many adventures and had overcome many obstacles.

You can read the rest of her story in a book called “Mary Jones and her Bible”. I hope some of you, if not all, think it worthwhile to read the book. In the meantime, learn a lesson from Mary, and seek out and study the Bible. Remember the words of the psalm, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.”

Love
Mrs Seaton