

1st August

Memory verse:

The Lord is thy keeper:

the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.

Psalm 121:5

Something to read from history¹

In the colonies of the West Indies sugar was produced and exported. A large labour force was required for this and it was provided either by prisoners who had been transported as punishment or by black slaves imported from Africa. The trade in slaves was profitable and Liverpool was the main slaving port in Europe. A movement was begun, largely by Evangelical Christians, to agitate for the abolition of the slave trade. In 1772 it had been decided that a slave became free when he set foot on British soil: slavery did not exist in Britain. But this did not apply to the colonies. In 1787



William Wilberforce, a Church of England Evangelical, joined the Abolition Society and became its leader. Wilberforce was a friend of Pitt, the prime minister, and to start with it looked as if the prospects of success were good. However, the outbreak of the French Revolution caused all reforms of this type to come under suspicion. Pitt refused to advance the cause of freedom for the slaves and no progress was made until after his death. A bill was eventually advanced by Charles James Fox and passed into law in 1807. This made it illegal for Englishmen to take part in the slave trade. Slavery itself was still legal in the colonies and Wilberforce and his friends continued the campaign.

In 1822 (after the death of George III) the Anti-Slavery Society was formed with the aim of abolishing slavery itself, not just the *trade* in slaves, everywhere.

In the various social reforms that followed the First Reform Act of 1832 a great part was played by Evangelical Christians, both within the Church of England and in the Nonconformist denominations. We have already seen how William Wilberforce secured the abolition of the slave trade. He continued working with another Evangelical Anglican, the Earl of Shaftesbury, towards the goal of the complete abolition of slavery. For years Christians campaigned and protested against slavery. Some like William Carey (the founder of missionary work in India) never ate any sugar because it was produced by slave labour. In the first year after the passing of the Reform Bill, slavery was abolished in the British colonies and the enormous sum of 20 million pounds was granted as compensation to the slave owners. The act took effect on **August 1**, 1834. This was a generous act when there was still great poverty in Britain itself. "The generous instincts of the nation had, however, been aroused. The people had just been redeemed from what had been considered by them to be political slavery, and they seemed truly animated by the spirit of the divine precept, 'Freely ye have received, freely give.'"² Wilberforce lived just long enough to hear the news that the compensation had been granted. The compensation addressed one of the problems associated with the abolition of slavery. The other problems were harder to tackle. How would the slaves, used only to being owned by someone else, be able to adapt to their freedom, and how would the plantation owners, who now had to pay the workers on their plantations, compete with sugar producers in America where slavery was still allowed?

1 Adapted from *The Story of God's Dealings with Our Nation* Volume 2. Available from <https://www.creationresearchstore.com/s/search?q=The%20Story%20of%20Gods%20Dealings%20with%20our%20Nation>

2 Anon., *Chambers's Historical Readers* Book 4 (London, 1883), p. 165.

Some geography and history³

Get out your atlas and follow the “story” by looking up the places highlighted in green. In Europe several languages are spoken. German, French and Italian are three of the most important. If we were to draw a language map of Europe, we would find that the place where these languages have their common borders is Switzerland. In Switzerland all three languages are spoken: German in the areas nearest the border with German speaking countries, French in the areas nearest the border with France and Italian in the areas bordering Italy⁴.

How did Switzerland come to exist?

In 1032 all the little states which now form Switzerland were part of the Holy Roman Empire⁵. It was the German speaking Swiss who first began the movement towards a federation of Swiss states. They did so because they wanted protection from the powerful Hapsburg family. The Hapsburgs were the family that later gained possession of the Imperial crown – it was always a Hapsburg who was Holy Roman Emperor.

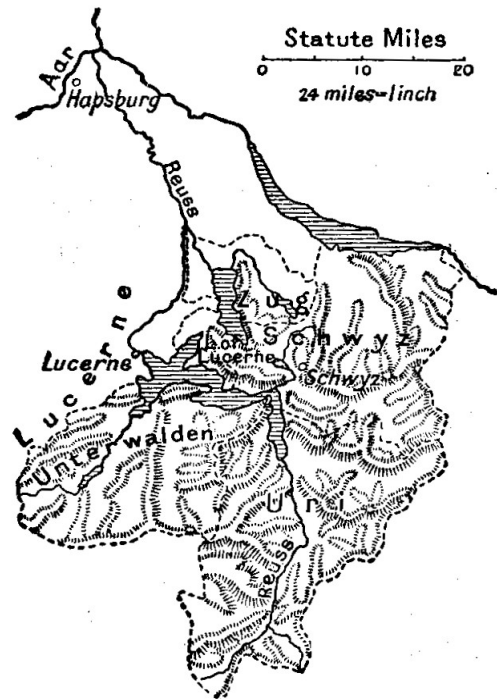
The Lake of Lucerne has many branches all of which end in forested valleys and it is these valleys which were the cradle of the Swiss Republic. In the Middle Ages the inhabitants of these valleys travelled by boat over the lake to sell their produce at the market in the city of Lucerne. Each valley was a separate community called a *Canton*. Today Switzerland consists of 22 *Cantons*. The first three of these to join together in a federation for protection from the Hapsburgs were Uri,

Schwyz and Unterwalden in the centre of modern Switzerland. These were called the Forest Cantons and in 1218 the Hapsburg family gained the office of *Vogt* or advocate over this area. About twenty miles from Lucerne on a hill top looking over the valley of the River Reuss was the castle of the Counts of Hapsburg. From here the Count’s agent, a cruel man called Gessler was sent to levy taxes.

On 1st August 1291 Uri, Schwyz, Nidwalden and Obwalden and (Nidwalden and Obwalden are half Cantons that together make up Unterwalden) joined together in an *Everlasting League for Self Defence*.

Something to read

The stories of William Tell are about this period and they recount how Tell, a leader of the Forest Cantons stood up to mistreatment by Gessler. In today's Optional Resources files you will find a complete retelling by H E Marshall of the stories about William Tell. They are excellent for reading aloud.



THE FOREST CANTONS.

3 Adapted from material on the *Mothers' Companion* flashdrive, available from <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com/>

4 There is also a fourth language, Romansh, which is only spoken in some areas of Switzerland.

5 Throughout the Middle Ages the kings of the Germans were crowned Holy Roman Emperor (a title harking back to the days of the old Roman Empire) by the Pope. After a period when there was no Holy Roman Emperor, the title was revived and given to the Austrian Count Rudolf of Hapsburg. The Imperial crown became hereditary in the Hapsburg family who carefully built up and consolidated their power. Charles V was the most powerful of all the Hapsburg emperors.