

31<sup>st</sup> August

## Memory Verse

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved,  
**we have a building of God,**  
an house not made with hands,  
**eternal in the heavens.**

Or:

MY vejmo pak, kadar bo nasha pàrstena Hisha lete Vtte podèrta,  
de my imamo en zimper, od Buga s'Zimpran,  
eno Hiso nikar s'rokami sturjeno,  
katera je vezhna v'Nebi.

2 Corinthians 5:1

Can you guess the language?<sup>1</sup> For information about today's memory verse see yesterday's lesson.

## Somewhere to visit<sup>2</sup>

If you ever have a holiday on **Dartmoor** make sure you visit **Buckland Beacon**. On **31<sup>st</sup> August** 1928 work finished on the carving of two massive granite blocks, each about two metres in length, on top of the beacon. Buckland Beacon was the site of an ancient warning fire beacon. On its summit, in time of danger or potential invasion, a fire would be lit and Buckland would take its place in the chain of warning flashed from beacon to beacon. We read about these warning beacons in the lesson for 18<sup>th</sup> May. But now Buckland Beacon carries a very different kind of warning message.

Mr William Whitley a landowner who lived nearby, commissioned a local stone mason Mr W A Clement to engrave the Ten Commandments on two tables or slabs of stone on the Beacon. In addition to the ten commandments of Exodus 20, Jesus words in John 13:34 "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another" were carved at the end of the second table. Two hymn verses are also included and also the dates December 25<sup>th</sup> 1927 – June 14<sup>th</sup> 1928. What moved Mr Whitley to commission such an unusual monument?



Mr Whitley was evidently a man who liked to signal his gratitude by erecting monuments that could be seen by all. He was clearly grateful to his mother, for instance, for he had a clock installed on the village church which has, instead of numbers, the words "My Dear Mother" in Gothic letters round its face!<sup>3</sup> Can you distinguish them on the picture?



1 Slovene see below.

2 Information from: Ruth Ward, "The 11 Commandments on Dartmoor", *Bible League Quarterly* no.485 (April-June 2021) p.228-230 and other sources.

3 Image: By Herby talk thyme - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4124925>

In the case of the Ten Commandments, however, it was God himself to whom the landowner wished to show his gratitude. During the period December 25<sup>th</sup> 1927 – June 14<sup>th</sup> 1928 a new prayer book and been put together for the Church of England. The forces driving it were liberal Church of England clergymen who did not believe the Bible and Catholic leaning Clergymen in the Church of England who wanted to reincorporate ideas which had be removed from the Prayer Book at the time of the Reformation. The new Prayer Book was to include prayers for the dead, for instance. Catholics pray for the dead because they think that believers do not go directly to heaven but have to pass through the pains of Purgatory first where they can be helped by our prayers. Purgatory is a made-up place that you will not find mentioned in the Bible. Another innovation in the new Prayer Book affected the Ten Commandments. The old Prayer Book prescribed the whole of the Ten Commandments to be recited. The New Prayer Book required only a shortened form.

Mr Whitley, like many other people was energetically opposed to these proposed changes. Since the Church of England is the state church any changes to the Prayer Book had to be approved by Parliament. So it came to pass that, although the church hierarchy wanted the changes, Parliament threw them out. Mr Witley rejoiced (I expect he was one who loved to hear the familiar old words) and to show his gratitude commissioned the monument, on which were to be engraved the commandments in the form they appear in the old Prayer Book.

Mr W A Clement must have been a determined character as well for we read that after he and a colleague had dressed the stones he began “with prayer book in hand” to engrave them on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1928.

Living in a cowshed at the edge of nearby woods, where his bed was some wire netting and his light a candle, using a nearby stream for water to drink and wash in, he continued kneeling beside these stones chipping away in all weathers... [and] Buckland Beacon is a promontory very exposed to the prevailing SW winds!<sup>4</sup>

He himself suggested the inclusion of the “Eleventh Commandment” and also one of the hymn verses in order to fill up the blank space at the end of the second slab. As the task continued he found he had earned himself the nickname “Moses” with the local people. However, he refused to be identified with the Exodus leader saying that unlike Moses he was not going to carry the slabs down from the Beacon!

In the picture on the right<sup>5</sup> you can see work being carried out to restore Mr Clement's work. The carving had become weathered over time and in 2016 conservationists restored the lettering so that it can now be read again.



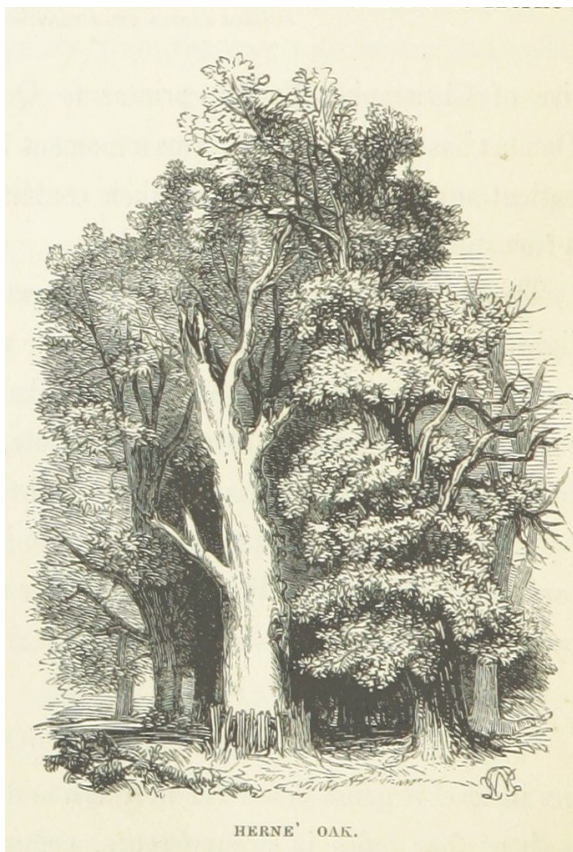
The words on the Beacon are a warning. They show us God's standards of behaviour. Jesus explained that not only our actions but also our thoughts and intentions must line up with God's standards. We cannot do this. We are sinful creatures and we only have to contemplate the first commandment to realise how far short we fall. Of what use is this warning then? The warning points us to Christ. Jesus Christ kept all God's commandments perfectly. He died on the cross to take the punishment his people deserve. If we go to him he will give us his righteousness which we will “wear” like a beautiful protecting garment on the day of judgement.

4 Ruth Ward, “The 11 Commandments on Dartmoor”, *Bible League Quarterly* no.485 (April-June 2021) p.229.

5 Image: By Sloop John B, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=118044770>

How well do you know the Ten Commandments? In today's optional resources files you will find some sheets which can be printed out and cut up to make a set of sorting cards.<sup>6</sup> These will help you do two things. First to learn how to sort the commandments into the correct order and second to learn the words of each commandment in full.

### Something to draw



Windsor Forest was once a great oak forest. Ship building, house building and so on thinned the trees. Yet today still in Windsor Park there are great solitary oak trees standing.

On 31<sup>st</sup> August 1863 a favourite tree of Queen Victoria's was blown down in Windsor Park. This was the tree thought to be Herne's Oak, mentioned by Shakespeare in his play *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and reputedly 630 years old.

A nearby tree that had been felled in 1796 was originally claimed to be the one to which Shakespeare referred but Queen Victoria preferred the claim of naturalist Edward Jesse (1780-1868) which was that another tree in the same avenue and still standing in her day was the one Shakespeare meant. The lost tree had been felled by mistake during a cull of trees that had become unsightly as it was for the most part dead. Jesse's preferred tree remained until the storm in 1863.

The logs from the tree were mostly burned in Windsor Castle. However one log was spared and carved into a bust of Shakespeare which can be seen in the Windsor

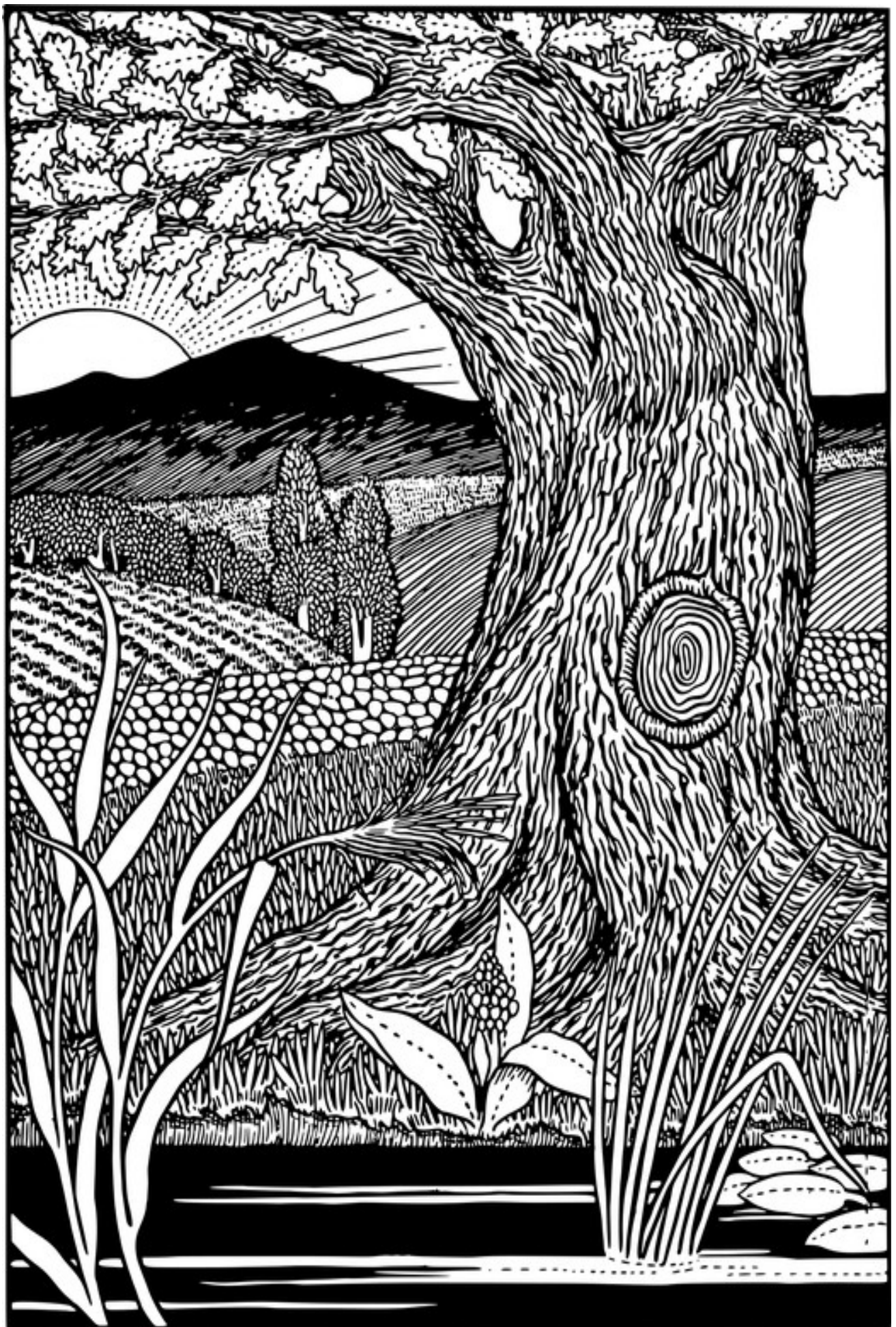
and Royal Borough Museum in the Guildhall, Windsor.

Queen Victoria had a new tree planted on the site to replace the old Herne's Oak. However this too was destined to be removed. In 1906, five years after the death of Queen Victoria, the whole avenue was replanted. The tree she had planted was removed along with all the rest but one of the new trees was designated "Herne's Oak" and is still there today.

In today's Optional Resources files is an instruction sheet that will show you one way of easily drawing a tree.<sup>7</sup> You can adapt this to make your own drawing of an old oak tree. I have also put an outline picture of an oak tree to colour on the next page.

<sup>6</sup> Reproduced from *Mothers' Companion* flashdrive available from <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com>

<sup>7</sup> From Volume 8 of the *Mothers' Companion* flashdrive available from <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com/>

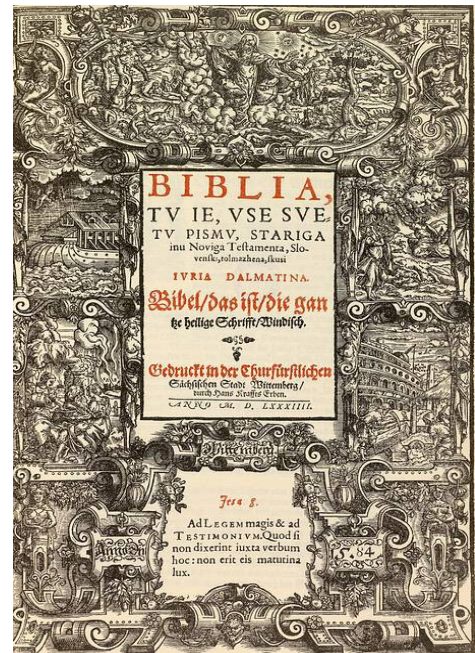




## Map work and some Bible translation history to read

**August 31st** marks the death in 1589 of an important Bible translator. You will have seen the unusual version of today's memory verse at the top of this lesson. Did you guess the language? It is Slovene, spoken today in the **Republic of Slovenia**. If you look at Slovenia on a map you will find that it is quite a small country but there are as many as fifty different dialects of Slovene spoken there among the two million inhabitants as well as among groups of Slovenian people who live in neighbouring countries. I have **highlighted** the places where the events took place so that you can follow with your atlas.

The whole Bible was first translated into Slovene by Jurij Dalmatin (c.1547-1589) and first published in 1583. The version of today's memory verse at the top of this lesson is in his translation. Jurij was from a very poor background but was taken under the wing of Adam Bohorič the Slovene Reformer who had made the first grammar of the Slovene language and codified the alphabet which is in use in a modified form today. As in so many languages throughout the world, literacy came along with the gospel. We need to read in order to study God's Word. This was just as true for Slovene speakers as for others. Bohorič had studied in **Wittenberg** with Luther's friend Philip Melancthon and he must have recognised the young Jurij's abilities for, despite his parent's poverty, Bohorič educated Jurij in his own home until he was eighteen.



With financial support from Bohorič and others Jurij was able to go to Wittenberg himself to study after which he returned to his native country as a preacher and teacher. Translating the Bible took him ten years. He was greatly helped by Luther's own German translation and just as the German translation had forged the German language so it was with the Slovene language and Jurij's translation. Much of the work is said to have been done in the castle pictured at the top of this page. Above you can see the title page of the finished Slovene translation.

Even before Jurij translated the Bible, Slovene teacher Primož Trubar had written twenty-two books in Slovenian including translations of parts of the Bible in an effort to evangelise. This godly man also made efforts to evangelise among the Islamic Turks who were Slovenia's historic enemies and also in Glagolitic<sup>8</sup> and Cyrillic scripts for **Croatia**, Slovenian **Istria**, and countries further east. These good books flowed from the press of the South Slovene Bible Institute founded by Baron Hans von Ungnad.

<sup>8</sup> For information on these scripts see the lesson for 14<sup>th</sup> February.

Why was there no Slovene literature before this? The Catholic church did not encourage those under its rule to read the Bible for themselves. The priests didn't trust the uneducated people to interpret the Bible. They didn't want people to deviate from official Catholic doctrines and were afraid that they would leave the church when they found that it did not follow what the Bible teaches. Once Luther in nearby **Germany** translated the Bible however it triggered a quest for universal education and not just for the nobility and better off in society but so that everyone could understand the Bible for themselves.

The capital city of Slovenia is **Ljubljana**. There had been many godly Christians in Ljubljana since around 1530. How they must have rejoiced to have all God's written word in their own language!

The flowering of all this good literature in Slovene led to increased literacy and also the united Slovene speakers whether they lived in Slovenia itself or nearby. But alas, it was not to continue. Archduke Charles II, the ruler of Slovenia under the Hapsburgs, was a fervent Catholic and would not allow this blossoming freedom in his lands. Non Catholics were exiled, the Slovene gospel books and bibles were burnt by the cart load and Jesuit<sup>9</sup> teachers were imported to "persuade" the people back to Catholicism.

When Jurij died in 1589 he was still only quite a young man. The church in Ljubljana where he lived was still persevering. How sad the Christians must have been to lose the friend who had translated the Bible for them. But God's time is always best. He had taken away Jurij just as we are told in Isaiah 57:1 "...the righteous is taken away from the evil to come." Jurij's work of translation strengthened the Slovene Christians for this terrible time of persecution, exile and death. Jurij himself was spared from those awful times.

And in Slovenia today? I asked my friend Lydia Adams who lives there and does Christian work among students. She told me:

Broadly speaking around half of the population of Slovenia still claim to be Catholic while the rest are either atheists, agnostics or have alternative, new age beliefs. There are very few evangelical Christians, around 0.1% of the 2 million population, which is around 2000 evangelical Christians. This places it among the most un-evangelized countries in the world. Many Christian organisations work in Slovenia to try to share the good news of Jesus with them, especially to the youth. However there are many regions in Slovenia without a Protestant church which means that many Slovenes might never meet a Bible-believing Christian.

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9 See the lesson for 23rd October.