

February 6<sup>th</sup>

**Memory Verse:**

**God is our refuge and strength,**  
a very present help in trouble.

Therefore will not we fear,

though the earth be removed,

and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,

though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

Psalm 46:2-3

Very young children can learn the words in bold. More about today's memory verse in tomorrow's lesson.

**A Missionary supporter and a code breaker<sup>1</sup>**

Collections of sermons from the past are a very valuable asset. They tell us about what people believed and understood and how they thought about God's Word in days gone by. Best of all, great sermons from the past can encourage us today as we read them. Libraries round the world hold the original notebooks of famous preachers that have been donated to them. This enables scholars to consult them. As a result, many collections of sermons have been carefully transcribed and published so that we can enjoy and benefit from them today, long after they were first preached.

Sometimes sermons have been saved for succeeding generations by being taken down in shorthand or even in the form of longhand notes. But sometimes there are difficulties that make old sermon notes very difficult to read. Some are written in a kind of private shorthand or even a code.



This is the case with many of the sermons of Andrew Fuller (1754-1815) who was born on **6<sup>th</sup> February**. His sermons – hundreds of pages of shorthand notes – are kept in the library of Bristol Baptist College.

Andrew Fuller was a pastor at Kettering in Northamptonshire and he is famous for his support of missionary work. During his lifetime missionary work began in India and although he never went to India himself, God used Andrew Fuller to enable others to go. In Fuller's time India was largely controlled by the British East India Company so you might think that sending missionaries from Britain to India would be easy. But this was not the case. The East India Company did not want missionaries to come to India. This was because they feared preaching the gospel would cause trouble with the Indians who were largely Hindus. This would disrupt trade and it was for trade that the East India Company existed.

Shoe-maker and preacher William Carey (1761-1834) was concerned that no one was going to India (or anywhere else outside Europe) to tell the gospel to those who had never heard before. He stirred up the members of the Particular Baptist churches to form a Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Heathen. Here is a description of how it happened:

The next Association [meeting] was held at Nottingham at the end of May, 1792. The pulpit was **ceded** to Mr. Carey, and the sermon which he preached may be considered as the foundation of the Baptist Mission in India. He took for his text the passage in Isaiah 54: 2, 3:-

“ Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy **habitations**: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes: for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.”

<sup>1</sup> Information from <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/2019/february/andrew-fullers-shorthand-code-cracked-interview.html> and other sources

From this text he explained and enforced two principles.

1. Expect great things from God.
2. Attempt great things for God.

The discourse was animated and eloquent. The concentrated energy of the feelings which had been fermenting in his mind for so many years, was poured into his exhortations, and it seemed as if the fruition of his long-cherished hopes depended on the impression he could then produce on the audience. With such vigour did he denounce the criminality of that indifference with which the cause of Missions was treated, that Dr. Ryland, who was present, said he should not have wondered if the audience had “lifted up their voices, and wept.” But when the assembled ministers came to deliberate on the subject, the old feelings of doubt and hesitation predominated, and they were about to separate without any decisive result, when Mr. Carey seized Mr. Fuller by the hand in an agony of distress, and inquired whether “they were again going away without doing anything?” The expostulation was successful, and to his delight he saw the following resolution recorded on the Minutes: - “That a plan be prepared against the next ministers' meeting at Kettering for the establishment of a Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Heathen...<sup>2</sup>

A Society was constituted, and a Committee of five appointed, consisting of Andrew Fuller, John Ryland, John Sutcliff, Reynold Hogg, and William Carey. Mr. Fuller was nominated the secretary...

It was William Carey<sup>3</sup> that the society sent first to be a missionary in India and you will find more about him in the lesson for 9<sup>th</sup> June. Before leaving for India, Carey said to Andrew Fuller, “I will go down into the pit, if you will hold the ropes.” He meant that he would undertake the dangerous task of going to India if Fuller would support him with prayer and funds. This Fuller did faithfully until his death in 1814. He travelled all over the British Isles, raising funds and preaching missionary sermons.

Why did Andrew Fuller go to the trouble of writing down his sermons in his own shorthand? Why did he not just use ordinary longhand writing? We don't know for sure but it has been suggested that it saved paper to use shorthand and paper was an expensive commodity.

In the summer of 2018, researcher Dr Steven Holmes of St Andrew's University was in the Bristol Baptist Library looking at Fuller's notes. He knew that no one had been able to read them and he did not expect to be able to do so himself. He noticed that although he could not read Fuller's shorthand, every sermon had a title above it in ordinary long hand. He began to note down the longhand titles. Near the end of the book he came across a sermon headed, “Confession of Faith, October 7, 1783”. This was exciting! October 7, 1783 was the date of Fuller's induction into the pastorate at Kettering and Dr Holmes knew that that particular sermon had been published.

If you did the lesson for 15<sup>th</sup> July last year you will remember the Rosetta stone. Dr Holmes had found a sort of Rosetta stone. He knew that with painstaking work comparing the printed sermon with the shorthand version, Fuller's other shorthand notes could be translated.

But this was a task that would take a huge amount of time that Dr Holmes did not have with his busy teaching schedule and other commitments. So, he got some help. One of his students, Jonny Wood set to work to tackle the task. Gradually Jonny began to build up a list of words which he put into a special dictionary. It was not long before he could translate all the words in the “Confession of Faith” sermon.

When Jonny reached that point Dr Holmes gave him another two sermons – ones that he particularly wanted to read. Dr Holmes explains what happened next:

A week after I'd given them to [Jonny], I got an email from him with an attachment saying, “Here's the text of the first one.” And I think I got the “eureka moment” that Jonny never got, because he'd

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<sup>2</sup> John Clark Marshman, *The Life and Times of Carey, Marshman, and Ward*. Volume 1(1859) p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> More about Carey in the lessons for 9<sup>th</sup> June and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> October.

been slogging and getting better and better. And even reading the sermons, he'd ... been going word by word, painstakingly. And then I... open[ed] this document and read the sermon that no one had ever read before.

What an amazing experience! Sometimes Dr Holmes and Jonny were able to work together. Transcribing the notes was not always easy. Once they came to a shorthand word that looked as if it said "brangles". Dr Holmes thought there was no such word but Jonny mused, "It really does look like brangles." On consulting an 18<sup>th</sup> century dictionary they found that in those days there was a word "brangles"! It meant quarrels or discussions. I have highlighted some words in purple in the paragraph on the previous page that *you* might want to look up in your own dictionary. Can you use them in sentences of your own?

Now Dr Holmes and Jonny Wood are hoping to work through all Andrew Fuller's shorthand sermons with a view to publishing them again. Then, when the sermons are available again we in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be able to benefit from some 18<sup>th</sup> century encouragement to reach the lost with the gospel.

### Something to do

You may remember the lesson about shorthand from January 4<sup>th</sup> but you do not have to be a shorthand writer to make a valuable contribution to the future – and to your own understanding too. You can take sermon notes just using longhand. Don't try to write every word, of course, just get down the main points or headings. If you keep trying you will get better at it and you can invent your own shorthand characters for words that are common in sermons. Introduce them gradually and don't forget to keep a note in your sermon notebook saying what they mean! That way no one will have a problem translating your notes if they come across them two hundred years from now!

### Something to do

What is the most famous cookery book in the world? Ask around if you don't know the answer and I think you will find most people think it is Mrs Beeton's cookery book, the proper name of which is *The Book of Household Management*. Mrs Isabella Beeton (1836-1865) was born on February 6<sup>th</sup>. Her family circumstances as a child meant that she was often in charge of children younger than herself and she became very good at looking after them. When she married a man in the publishing trade she found herself editing the cookery page of one of his magazines. To do this she used recipes she found elsewhere or which were sent in by readers. Her *Book of Household Management* was first published in weekly instalments, appearing in its complete form in 1861. Here she gave solid advice about everything from looking after babies to managing money as well as cookery. The book was outstandingly popular and has never been out of print since – although the modern editions have been drastically changed from the original.



In the *Book of Household Management* all Mrs Beeton's recipes were presented in a standard form with the ingredients listed before the method or instructions. This was by no means usual at the time and only later became the rule when presenting recipes. Why do you think it is the most helpful way of setting out recipes? Mrs Beeton also stated how many people each recipe would serve. The book also included lists of food in season at various times of year, menus for elaborate meals and also suggestions for "Plain Family Dinners" for every month of the year. On the next page are her ideas for February:

## PLAIN FAMILY DINNERS FOR FEBRUARY

Sunday . 1. Ox-tail soup. 2 Roast beef, Yorkshire pudding, broccoli, and potatoes. 3. Plum-pudding, apple tart. Cheese.

Monday . 1. Fried soles, plain melted butter, and potatoes. 2.Cold roast beef, mashed potatoes. 3. The remains of plum-pudding cut in slices, warmed, and served with sifted sugar sprinkled over it. Cheese.

Tuesday . 1. The remains of ox-tail soup from Sunday. 2. Pork cutlets with tomato sauce; hashed beef. 3. Boiled jam pudding. Cheese.

Wednesday . 1. Boiled haddock and plain melted butter. 2. Rump-steak pudding, potatoes, greens. 3. Arrowroot blancmange, garnished with jam.

Thursday . 1. Boiled leg of pork, greens, potatoes, pease pudding. 2. Apple fritters, sweet macaroni.

Friday . 1. Pea-soup made with liquor that the pork was boiled in. 2. Cold pork, mashed potatoes. 3. Baked rice pudding.

Saturday . 1. Broiled herrings and mustard sauce. 2. Haricot mutton. 3. Macaroni, either served as a sweet pudding or with cheese.

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Sunday . 1. Carrot soup. 2. Boiled leg of mutton and caper sauce, mashed turnips, roast fowls, and bacon. 3. Damson tart made with bottled fruit, ratafia pudding.

Monday . 1. The remainder of fowl curried and served with rice; rump-steaks and oyster sauce, cold mutton. 2. Rolled jam pudding.

Tuesday . 1. Vegetable soup made with liquor that the mutton was boiled in on Sunday. 2. Roast sirloin of beef, Yorkshire pudding, broccoli, and potatoes. 3. Cheese.

Wednesday . 1. Fried soles, melted butter. 2. Cold beef and mashed potatoes: if there is any cold boiled mutton left, cut it into neat slices and warm it in a little caper sauce. 3. Apple tart.

Thursday . 1. Boiled rabbit and onion sauce, 2. Stewed beef and vegetables, made with the remains of cold beef and bones. 2. Macaroni.

Friday . 1. Roast leg of pork, sage and onions and apple sauce; greens and potatoes. 2. Spinach and poached eggs instead of pudding. 3.Cheese and water-cresses.

Saturday . 1. Rump-steak-and-kidney pudding, cold pork and mashed potatoes. 2. Baked rice pudding.

How does her menu plan compare with what you usually eat? Make a list of things you enjoy that do not appear in her scheme. What foods does she list that you have never eaten?

Girls may like to make their own book of favourite recipes that can be kept and treasured all their life. Depending on what kind of book you have for your recipe book you can decorate the cover, or cover it with pretty paper or paste an appropriate picture on the front. When I made myself a book of this kind I wrote a Bible verse inside the cover. It was Proverbs 15:17. Why do you think I chose



this verse? Choose a verse to go on the first page of your book. Gather your recipes from older members of the family, friends at church etc. Try them out and then write them in your book. You could head the recipes like this: Aunt Susan's Shepherd's Pie or Grandma's Fruit Cake. If you are told anything about the recipe e.g. "your Dad always loved this when he was little" or "my granny told me how to make this" or "I got this one out of a magazine years ago" put that in too.