

23rd June

Memory verse

While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. Genesis 8:22

Something to read from History¹

Today is the anniversary of the Battle of Plassey in 1757. It is not a Battle much remembered today but it is interesting in a number of respects. In the eighteenth century, India was being opened up to trade with western nations. The French traders had their headquarters in the south-east of India at **Pondicherry**² with trading posts (known as “factories”) in **Bengal** in the north and **Calicut**, **Surat** and **Mahe**. The English also had their factories – **Bombay** on the west coast, **Calcutta** (Fort William) in Bengal, and **Madras** (Fort St. George) in the south east. India was in a state of chaos because the rule of the Great Mogul had broken down. The Islamic Mogul dynasty had ruled India for centuries. Local Indian leaders (Nawabs and Rajahs) were now fighting for independence or trying to conquer one another. The French, whose company was inferior to the British in trade, had exploited this situation for the benefit of their company. The governor of the French company cleverly managed to gain control of the **south-east coast** (the Carnatic) and was about to stop British trade there altogether. The British traders saw that they must either beat the French or give up trading in India altogether.

Robert Clive (1725-1774) had been sent out to India as a lad because he had misbehaved. He volunteered for the army when the war with the French began. He suggested a plan of capturing the capital of the Carnatic and carried out the plan with a small force of 500 men, half of whom were Sepoys or Indian troops. He and his men then defended the town for two months against a siege by a French army 10,000 strong until the French gave up the siege.

Clive returned to England and was sent back to India when the general war against the French broke out in 1755. He was put in command of the forces of the East India Company. When he arrived in India he was met with the news of a terrible massacre of English men, women and children. The Indian ruler of Bengal was jealous of the British and angry that they had protected a rival of his. He had captured 146 English residents and crowded them into a tiny prison cell about 7 metres square. He kept them there throughout the unbearably hot Indian night and denied them any water. Only 23 people came out from this terrible place alive. Clive’s forces were greatly inferior to those of his enemy, but he determined to attack at once to avenge the massacre. He defeated the enemy at the Battle of Plassey on **23rd June** 1757 and Bengal was won for the British.



But... there are details in the story that leave a bad taste in the mouth. You can read the full story of the Battle of Plassey in *Our Empire Story* by that great re-teller of history, H E Marshall in today's Optional resources files. We can see good and bad in Clive and if the story of British involvement in India ended here, it would be a depressing tale.

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

² You will need to look at a map of India to understand this paragraph properly.

Something to think about

The next chapter about India in H E Marshall's book is called "Times of Misrule" and it is a fair title. Why did the British treat India in this way?

The spiritual and moral state of the Britain was in general very low at this time. One historian called it a "... coarse and brutal age"³ and that is a good summary. Things did not improve in Britain until the Wesleys and Whitfield "... broke up the fallow ground ..."⁴ and prepared the way for the period of intensive revival and spread of the gospel which was to occur later, in the period 1795 to 1835. It is no accident that the first British Governor of India who strove to govern *for the benefit of Indians* was Lord William Bentinck (1774-1839) who ruled from 1828 to 1835. By this time the activities of evangelicals in the Church of England (gathered round William Wilberforce) as well as a revival of Christianity in the nation as a whole was making itself felt. We saw this working itself out in a very different sphere on 16th June when we looked at legislation regarding cruelty to animals. Bentinck and those better governors who followed him represented this new moral force in British society. India felt the benefit in a fairer justice system and the abolition of Sati,⁵ female infanticide, and human sacrifice. The suppression of thuggee (a kind of violent secret society of bandits) was also Bentinck's work along with his associate, William Sleeman.

We can see from all this that the fundamental need of any society is the gospel. When the gospel is widely and fearlessly preached, every other good thing flows from it. When Christians do not carry out their responsibilities in this respect, evil follows in every department of life. Can you think of other examples of where widespread gospel preaching had improvements in society as a by-product? Can you think of other examples of where a loss of gospel preaching had/has a negative effect? Are there any parallels in our own society to the female infanticide, and human sacrifice abolished by Bentinck?

Map Work

Use a good atlas (a historical one if you have one might be useful) to find the places in India highlighted in **green**.

Something to cook

What was it that traders with India were buying? One valuable item that made its way to western countries from India was spice. Many of the ingredients in what we call curry powder come from plants that grow best in climates such as that of India. Can you find out from looking at a drum of curry powder what spices are in it?⁶

Here is an easy Indian treat that uses curry powder.

You need:

- Tin of chickpeas drained (or 1½ cups of chickpeas pre-soaked and boiled)
- 1½ tablespoons olive oil
- ¾ teaspoon Curry Powder
- ¾ teaspoon Garam Masala
- ¼ teaspoon Garlic Powder
- pinch White Pepper
- 2 pinches salt

3 Brett, S. R., *From George III to George VI* (London, 1959), p. 60.

4 Cook, P. E. G., "The Forgotten Revival", *Evangelical Times*, August 2000, p. 18.

5 Burning alive of widows.

6 This Indian shop <https://thottamfarmfresh.com/Stories/articles/complete-list-of-indian-spices> has a comprehensive list.

Method:

Preheat the oven to 220°C. Line baking sheet with foil.
Rinse the chickpeas and dry thoroughly with a paper towel.
Pour the dried chickpeas out onto the baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil. Shake the pan to coat the chickpeas in oil.
Sprinkle the curry powder, garam masala, garlic powder, white pepper and salt over the chickpeas and then shake the pan again to evenly distribute the spices.
Bake in the oven for 15 minutes, then toss and mix the chickpeas and return to the oven for another 15 minutes. If you want your chickpeas to be extra crunchy, turn the oven off and leave the chickpeas in the oven for another 15-20 minutes.

If you have any of these left over (!) you can store them in an airtight jar.

Write a letter

If you have any friends who are missionaries in India or if your church supports any Indian churches or missionaries, today would be a good day to write them a letter. In the picture you can see some girls who live in a Christian orphanage in India where they are well looked after and hear the gospel.



Something to learn

One of the other Indian products traded in the eighteenth century was tea. Younger children might like to learn how to make a cup of tea and how to **safely** handle boiling water. Everyone has their own favourite way of making tea. Here is one:

You need oxygen in the water to bring out the flavour in tea. Run the tap first so that the water is aerated and always fill the kettle with fresh water to maximize the amount of oxygen.

Warm the pot with a little boiling water from the kettle as hot water brings out the flavour in tea and if you pour the boiling water from the kettle into a stone cold tea pot it cools the water down.

A spoonful of tea and one for the pot is an old rule but don't try to make tea for ten in a normal sized teapot! A good rule of thumb is two tea bags to a normal sized pot. **Always take the pot to the kettle; not the kettle to the pot.** Pour the boiling water in and stir. The tea should be left to steep/stand/mash/brew⁷ for 3 to 5 minutes before being poured out. A tea cosy will help to keep the tea hot and so bring out more flavour.

Whether tea should have milk added before being poured or after has divided tea drinkers into two camps (Miffies and Tiffies) for about a hundred years. If you make tea in a cup not a pot (see Camp Tea below) it does make a difference because obviously the milk will cool the tea. If you make tea in a pot there should be no difference. I have heard it said that in the past cheap china would not stand near-boiling tea and so milk was put into the cup first to stop the cup cracking. However, if you had good quality cups you could show off the fact by putting the tea in first!

Camp Tea. When camping a teapot is not something you take with you – especially if you are cycle camping! In that case teabags are better than loose tea and should be put in the cup to brew. Some of us now live such rushed lives that camp tea is a permanent way of life!

Tea sayings. In our family when I was a child if someone was handed a cup of tea that was not very full the recipient would say, “Fulham's playing away!” If someone replied to the question, “would

⁷ The word you use for this process varies depending on where you live in Britain.

you like another cup of tea?” with “just half a cup please,” they would then be asked, “top half or bottom half?” Does your family have any “tea sayings?”

Something to draw

On the next page is a “blank” teapot. If you can print the page out you can put your own design on the pot. If you would prefer to copy it the shape it is very simple and easy to draw.

