

March 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Memory Verse:**

Gather my saints together unto me;  
those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

Psalm 50:5

For notes about this verse see the lesson for March 1<sup>st</sup>.



**Something to think about<sup>1</sup>**

This beautiful cabinet miniature shows Edward Herbert, 1st Baron Herbert of Cherbury and Castle Island<sup>2</sup> (1583-1648) who was born on **3<sup>rd</sup> March**. A cabinet miniature is a small but detailed painting which a gentleman or lady would hang in their “cabinet” which was not a cupboard but a small private room, rather like a study.<sup>3</sup> Today it hangs in Powys Castle in Wales, not far from Chirbury (modern spelling of Cherbury) which is just over the border in Shropshire. It was painted around 1613-4 when Herbert of Cherbury was in his early 30s.

The picture shows Herbert of Cherbury in a special context designed to tell us about him. He is lying down in a contemplative pose. Near him are things that symbolise the “contemplative life” of a poet or thinker such as the spring of water to his left in the foreground and the peaceful hilltop on

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from material on volume 9 of *the Mothers' Companion* flashdrive available from <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com> and other sources.

<sup>2</sup> Castleisland is in Co. Kerry in Ireland. Herbert held land there.

<sup>3</sup> We read about Woodward's cabinet in the lesson for 27<sup>th</sup> January (yet to come).

which he lies. Off to his right are symbols of the “active life”: his horse paws the ground eager to be off while his squire gets his armour ready for a jousting tournament. You can see his great jousting lance leaning against a tree. In the far distance is a river with a ship on it showing that Herbert of Cherbury was not only a poet, a thinker and a soldier but a traveller and a linguist.<sup>4</sup>

Herbert of Cherbury was indeed a poet, a soldier, a traveller etc. but it is his ideas as a thinker which are particularly interesting to us today because his ideas had consequences that carried on even after he died. Herbert of Cherbury was a Deist, in fact he is generally considered to be the first of a group of philosophers now known as *The English Deists*.

Deism is a way of thinking about the world. Deists decided that religion should be considered as something that was within the bounds of human *reason*. They did not like the idea of special revelation (i.e. the Bible) and wished to replace it in their thinking with the light of reason. They thought that it was *reasonable* to believe in God and that we do not need an authority such as the Roman Catholic Church in order to know about God. Nor, said the Deists, do we need divine revelation such as the Bible.

The Deists decided they could deduce certain things about God and what He is like by using *reason*. They deduced that the God who is known by the light of reason left the universe to its own lawful devices once creation was completed. He does not and did not intervene in the operation of universe and so there are, in their view, no miracles. They believed in life after death and thought that men would be judged by God on the basis of rational moral principles. If they had lived well men would be rewarded and if they had lived badly they would be punished. They therefore denied the teaching of redemption and salvation: they taught that we must be good and God will judge us. There is no room for a redeemer in this philosophy.

Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648), first of the English Deists, proposed Five Pillars of Deism:

1. God exists
2. God is worthy of worship
3. we relate to God by means of virtue
4. sin is expiated (or atoned for) by repentance
5. justice requires eternal punishment or reward

The Deists were missing something out in their ideas and it was very important. Perhaps they might have realised what it was if they considered this question: if religion can be deduced from the observation of nature by human reason alone, why are there so many different religions in the world? The problem with human reason is that it has fallen. It no longer works faultlessly. Reason *alone* can only take us so far. That is why God in his mercy has revealed to us what he is like in his Word.

If we compare Herbert of Cherbury's Five Pillars with God's revealed word we can see that he has got some things correct. Pillars 1, 2 and 5 are certainly true. There is some truth in Pillar 3 but the problem is that everything we do is tainted with sin and we have no virtue to “offer” to God. Cherbury's idea of repentance, expressed in Pillar 4 is not the biblical one. Repentance for sin does not of itself save us, although we must repent. It is Christ's death on our behalf that saves us, not our act of repentance.

Other thinkers followed Herbert of Cherbury and developed his Deist ideas. One was the Irish writer, John Toland (1670–1722), whose book *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696) we will meet

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4 For more information about the picture see <https://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/article/magic-and-mystery-the-secrete-conceit-of-a-jacobean-cabinet-miniature>.

later this month.<sup>5</sup> Can you see from the title of his book that Toland was claiming that the true form of Christianity (i.e. the form he and the other Deists had invented) was based on *reason*?

### Something to listen to

Herbert of Cherbury played the lute and made a collection of lute music which still exists. It includes at least one piece he wrote himself. He called it “Pavan of the composition of mee Herbert of Cherbury and Castle Island”. Try to listen to a recording of it.<sup>6</sup> There is more information about this beautiful musical instrument in the lesson for 28<sup>th</sup> December.

### Piet Pieterszoon Hein's great victory<sup>7</sup>



In 1627 The United Provinces of Holland were at war with Spain, fighting for their **independence**. The Spanish paid for the war against the Dutch with gold and silver mined in their possessions in the New World. This was one reason why English sailors like Francis Drake were happy to capture Spanish ships and take their treasure. They were on the side of the Dutch and they knew that the silver and gold in the ships was going to pay soldiers who were fighting to **repress** the Dutch. It was not just Spanish soldiers who took money to fight in the Netherlands on the side of Spain. Our own Guy Fawkes was a **mercenary** soldier in the Netherlands and it was here that he learned how to use gun-powder. He put that knowledge to use when he came home to England during the reign of James I and joined the gun-powder plot. The horrific cruelties he must have taken part in while he was in the Netherlands may have turned him into the kind of man who would be prepared to blow up parliament, killing all the people inside.

Sailor Piet Pieterszoon Heyn (1577-1629) was the son of a sea captain from Delft, probably one of the Sea-Beggars we will learn about in the lesson for 6<sup>th</sup> April next month. He was captured by the Spanish and served as a galley-slave for about four years, probably between 1598 and 1602. Galley-slaves were prisoners made to row ships about for the Spanish as a punishment. Piet got his freedom when he was exchanged for Spanish prisoners.

After his release from the galley, Piet joined the Dutch East India Company which was a merchant company trading in Asia. When he returned from his travels to Asia, he had risen to be the captain of a ship. He got married and lived in Rotterdam. Then he became **vice-admiral** of the Dutch West India Company and sailed to the West Indies. Piet was very strict with the sailors who sailed under him and always made them behave well to the native people they encountered. He **abhorred** slavery. He had been a slave of the Spanish himself and he never forgot it.



It was on **3<sup>rd</sup> March 1627** that Piet achieved his most famous victory over the Portuguese allies of the Spanish. At Salvador he was involved in fighting against the Portuguese and captured over thirty Portuguese ships with a large cargo of sugar.

<sup>5</sup> In the lesson for 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

<sup>6</sup> You can hear it played by the Lutenist Paul Odette here: <https://radiomixer.net/en/track/730436-paul-o-dette-pavan-of-the-composition-of-mee-herbert-of-cherbury-and-castle-island-1640>

<sup>7</sup> Adapted from lessons in Volume 5 of *The Mothers' Companion* flashdrive available from <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com/>. This volume includes a full length children's book in verse, illustrated in colour, based on the life of Piet Heyn with associated worksheets and activities.

Piet Heyn, was promoted to admiral, set out with Witte de With, Admiral Hendrick Lonck and Vice-Admiral Joost Banckert to capture the Spanish treasure fleet. The Spanish captured a Dutch cabin boy who was forced to tell them about the Dutch plans. Because of this, the part of the Spanish fleet that sailed from Venezuela had been warned of the Dutch plan. The Spanish ships that were leaving from Mexico, however, did not know that Piet and his friends were out to get them.

The Dutch captured goods worth 11,509,524 Dutch **guilders**. There was gold, silver, indigo (expensive blue dye) cochineal (red dye). To the surprise of the Spanish, the Dutch took no prisoners. Piet could speak fluent Spanish after his time serving in a Spanish galley and the Spanish were surprised to hear him tell them in their own language that they were free and that they would be given supplies of food and other **necessities** so that they could march off to Havana. The merciful treatment that the Dutch gave their enemies is a tribute to the Christian values of the Protestant Dutch, and a stark contrast to the cruelty of the Spanish, both in the Netherlands during the wars with the Dutch and in the colonies they founded in the New World.

Piet was a hero when he arrived home in Holland with all the Spanish treasure. The people rang the church bells for joy.

The only picture we have of Piet Heyn is the one on the page above. It is a copy, made in 1629, of a portrait by Jan Daemen Cool painted in 1625. Cool's original painting has been lost. I think you can see from Piet's face in this portrait that he was a merciful man as well as a brave one.

After the adventures, you have been reading about, Piet became Lieutenant-Admiral of Holland and West Frisia. This meant he was in charge of the whole Dutch fleet. He died while protecting the Dutch trading fleet from raiders at sea and is buried in the *Oude Kerk*<sup>8</sup> in Delft.

In the story above I have highlighted some words in **turquoise**. Do you know exactly what they mean? Write down what you think and then check the meaning in a good dictionary. Were you right?

### Something to look out for

Indigo and Cochineal were very valuable dyes, Indigo is a blue dye made from the leaves of a tropical plant but what about cochineal? Cochineal is a food colouring and it is still used today. It is made from a beetle that feeds on cactus plants! On the right you can see an old picture of a Mexican cochineal grower dusting the beetles off the cactus with a deer's tail brush and collecting them in a bowl. I wonder if his bright red trousers have been dyed red with cochineal!



Where can you find cochineal today? Keep an eye out for the word *carmine* on food labels. This is the useful dye which is made from the cochineal beetle. It is used in any products that need a pleasant red or pink colour. You can find it in sausages, sweets, yoghurt, bought cakes and drinks. Have a look in your mother's food cupboards and read the labels carefully. Can you find anything with carmine (or E120) in it?

### Maths

It is very hard to compare the value of money over time. Living costs not only vary but different commodities vary by very different amounts. However, as a very rough approximation we can say that one Dutch guilder in the 1600s was equal to around £440 today. Can you work out what the Spanish treasure was worth in modern money?