

4th November

Memory verse

There is a river,

the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God,
the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

Psalm 46:4

Tiny children could learn the words in bold and understand that the river is God's supply of everything his children need. More about today's memory verse in the lesson for 8th November.

One of our most famous landmarks was completed on 4th November 1834. You can see a picture of it on the right. Do you know what and where it is? Answers later in today's lesson.

A story from archaeological history¹

This is a story from Egypt so find **Egypt** in your atlas before you start. If, like me, you find Egypt a tricky word to spell, you can say “egg whipped” quietly to yourself when writing it – I find it helps!

At the beginning of November 1922, the archaeologist Howard Carter, was digging in the Valley of the Kings in the Theban Hills, near **Luxor** in Upper Egypt. His financial support was provided by Lord Caernarvon and the two men worked closely together. It was in this area that the ancient Egyptians had buried their pharaohs in great tombs carved out of the rock. For ten years Carter and Lord Caernarvon had been searching but nearly all the tombs had been ransacked by thieves long before they came on the scene.



Then on **November 4th**, Carter's men uncovered the top of a stairway leading to an entrance covered with plaster. Carter made a hole in the plaster wall and saw that the passage beyond was completely blocked with rubble. Certainly no thieves had passed that way.

“Alone, save for my native workmen, I found myself, after years of comparatively unproductive labour, on the threshold of what might proved to be a magnificent discovery.”

He had discovered the tomb of the young pharaoh, Tutankhamen, and the treasures that lay behind the blocked passage surpassed his wildest expectations.

Behind the rubble was another sealed doorway. Again Carter made a hole in the corner and peered into the room beyond, holding a candle for illumination.

“As my eyes grew accustomed to the light”, he wrote, “details of the room within emerged slowly from the mist, strange animals, statues, and gold – everywhere the glint of gold.”

For all its treasures, this was only an ante-room; the burial chamber was behind another sealed doorway, guarded by life-size statues of the king. Before he could proceed further Carter had to

¹ Adapted from Owen, Evan, *What Happened Today?* Book 3 available on the *Mothers' Companion* flashdrive <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com/>

supervise the clearing of the ante-room of all its priceless treasures, many of them so fragile after lying there for thousands of years that the slightest touch caused them to fall to pieces. Not until



February 1923, was the ante-room finally cleared and the burial chamber opened. Carter found the chamber almost filled by a great golden shrine. Inside there was another shrine, then another, four in all, before the ornate sarcophagus was reached. Under the granite lid of the sarcophagus there lay a gilded coffin in human shape, painted and decorated to resemble Tutankhamen. When the coffin was opened it revealed another gilded coffin containing in its turn the third and final coffin, made of solid gold set with semi-precious stones. On 4th November 1925 Carter removed from the sarcophagus the golden bier on which the last of the coffins rested. "Today", wrote Carter in his diary, "has been a great day for the history of archaeology... a day of days for one who... has longed to see in fact what previously has only been conjectural."² Here at last was the end of Carter's explorations, for when the gold container was opened, for the first time in thousands of years, the mummified remains of Tutankhamen were revealed.

On 4 November 2007, Tutankhamun's mummy was placed on display in his underground tomb at Luxor. The warmth and humidity caused by tourists visiting the tomb sped up the decomposition of the mummy. The linen-wrapped mummy was therefore removed from its golden sarcophagus and placed in a climate-controlled glass box. The gold mask you see in the picture³ above is now in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

Something to sing

One of the most prolific and popular hymn-writers, James Montgomery (1771-1854) was born on November 4th.⁴ Here is his entry in the *Companion to Christian Hymns*.⁵

James Montgomery was a great character. He was the son of a Moravian minister born in Ayrshire... A bachelor and a man of strong convictions he was intended, like his father, for the ministry and was sent to a Moravian school near Leeds but made little progress, spending most of his time writing poetry. He was dismissed from school and eventually found his way to London but failed to find a publisher for his youthful poems. ...In Sheffield he got a job as an assistant to a Mr Gales, an auctioneer, bookseller and printer of the *Sheffield Register* newspaper. Mr Gales too was a man of strong convictions and in 1794 had to leave the country to avoid political persecution. Montgomery took over the newspaper, changing its name to the *Sheffield Iris* and remained its editor for thirty-one years. He continued the radical and forthright style of Gales and was imprisoned at least twice for the controversial views expressed in his turbulent journal. He worked tirelessly to rid England of some of the gross social evils of the nineteenth century. He advanced the cause for the abolition of slavery and founded an association for the abandonment [of the use] of juvenile chimney sweeps. Despite his rebellious life Montgomery was made the first citizen of Sheffield and given a royal pension of £200 a year.

As a hymn writer Montgomery ranks in popularity with Wesley, Watts, Doddridge, Newton and Cowper having written some 400 hymns, the best of which were written in his early days. His finest

² Quoted in H V F Winstone, *Howard Carter and the Discovery of the Tomb of Tutankhamun*. (Manchester, 2008)

³ Roland Unger, CC BY-SA 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

⁴ Note to parents: Montgomery's life is a particular encouragement to us who try to provide a Christ-centred, Bible-based education for our children.

⁵ Cliff Knight, *A Companion to Christian Hymns* (Newport, 1993) Permission to quote from this source granted by the Minister and Diaconate of Emmanuel Evangelical Church, Newport granted by email 4th October 2022.



lyrics are “Angels from the Realms of Glory”... “Hail to the Lord's Anointed” and Songs of Praise the Angels Sang”.... Montgomery was a poetical genius, having an ear for rhythm and a deep knowledge of Scripture – a man to whom the Christian church owes a great debt....

It is not clear from this potted biography but in fact although Montgomery had Christian parents and a Christian education he wandered sadly before he found true faith in Jesus Christ for himself. His early upbringing caused him to shun the worst vices of his day. But he was in a sad condition. He wrote:

“Such has been my education, and such has been my experience in the morning of life, that I can never reject it, or embrace a system of morality not grounded upon that revelation [i.e. the Bible]. What can I do? I am tossed to and fro on a

sea of doubts and perplexities; the farther I am carried from that shore where I was once happily moored, the weaker grow my hopes of ever reaching another where I may anchor in safety, and my hopes of returning to the harbour I have left are diminished in proportion.”

It was not until he was in his forties that he was converted.

A statue of James Montgomery, erected to his memory by “the teachers, scholars and friends of Sunday schools in Sheffield” stands in Sheffield today.⁶ But what exactly were the “controversial views” that landed him in prison?

In the early days of the French revolution there were many good people, Christians among them, in England who thought that the French people were justified by what they were doing and that they would win political and religious freedom by their actions. We know now that this was a vain hope but at the time it did not seem so. It was printing a ballad about the fall of the Bastille⁷ that first got the young Montgomery into trouble with the Sheffield authorities in 1795. His second brush with the law came in the following year when in the newspaper he criticised a magistrate for forcibly dispersing a political protest in Sheffield.

After his conversion he continued to work for causes such as the abolition of slavery, the ending of the state lottery and the outlawing of the use of climbing boys to clean chimneys. His zeal for what is good and right and his care for the oppressed was not diminished but used by God.

Find one of Montgomery's beautiful hymns in your hymn book and sing it today!⁸ My personal favourite is:

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered, or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

The saints, in prayer, appear as one
In word, and deed, and mind,
While, with the Father and the Son,
Sweet fellowship they find.

Which one do you like best?

⁶ Image: By Mick Knapton - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4915442>

⁷ See the lesson for 14th July.

⁸ You can hear “Stand Up and Bless the Lord” here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrUFLf8qH74>

Monuments

Did you guess the name of the monument at the start of this lesson? It is Nelson's Column in London's Trafalgar Square. Have you ever seen it yourself? It is certainly impressive. We learned about the Battle of Trafalgar last month⁹ in which the famous Admiral Lord Nelson lost his life. The monument was built to commemorate that event. Of course, Nelson's is not the only column in Britain there are quite a few such monuments dotted around the country. Can you find out which is your nearest and plan a visit? Who (or what) does the monument commemorate? What can you find out about them (or it) before you go?

⁹ See lessons for 21st October. There is also more about Trafalgar Square in the lesson for 16th July.