

16<sup>th</sup> October

### Memory Verse

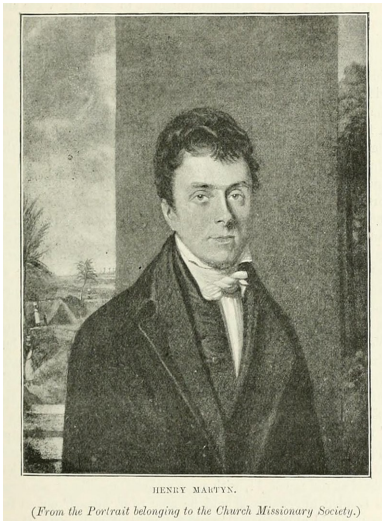
**Go ye therefore,  
and teach all nations,**

baptizing them in the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Ghost. Matthew 28:19

Younger children could learn the words in **bold** and understand that what we are to teach is the truth of the Bible: that Jesus came to save sinners. More about today's memory verse in tomorrow's lesson.

Three very interesting people died on **16<sup>th</sup> October**. The first one definitely lived his life and died his death in the light of today's memory verse.

### Map Work



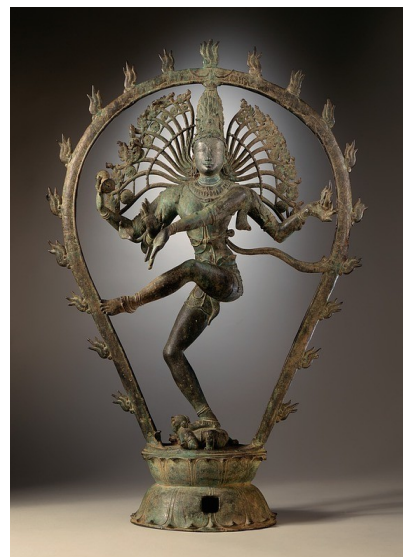
Today is the anniversary of the death of Henry Martyn (1781-1812), missionary associate of William Carey, Joshua Marshman and William Ward.

Henry Martyn was born in Truro, Cornwall. His father was a Christian, a miner who came from a poor background and had risen by hard work to the point where his son could go to Cambridge University to study. At Cambridge Henry Martyn did very well: he was hard working like his father. However, he did not share his father's faith and it was not until his father's death left him alone in the world – his mother had died when he was young – that he began to realise just how empty his very successful life was. He read his Bible once more, going through the Book of Acts. This opened his eyes at last and he prayed earnestly to God for salvation. A

Christian book helped him too, *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul* by the hymn writer, Philip Doddridge.

Last month we looked at the work of Charles Simeon (1757-1836) who was at Cambridge at the same time as Henry Martyn.<sup>1</sup> He helped and advised him but it was reading the biography of David Brainerd (about whom we read a few days ago)<sup>2</sup> that convinced Henry Martyn to become a missionary. The rest of his life was devoted to carrying out, whatever the cost, the command that begins today's memory verse. To do this he first studied to become a Church of England parson and then became a chaplain to the East India Company which at that time effectively ruled India. Henry Martyn set off for India in 1806. When he arrived he was filled with horror at what he found there.

At that time in India, the Hinduism that prevailed caused horrible practices to be tolerated as normal. This included the burning alive of widows at their husbands' funerals and the sacrifice of many



<sup>1</sup> See the lesson for 24<sup>th</sup> September (yet to come).

<sup>2</sup> See the lesson for 5<sup>th</sup> October.

babies who were thrown into the river.<sup>3</sup> Henry Martyn longed to see these things stopped and he knew that the only way this could be done was to preach the gospel, for only when the hearts of people are changed will they be freed from the cruel grip of false religion.

Already at work in India were the Baptist missionaries Carey, Marshman and Ward about whom we have read earlier this month.<sup>4</sup> They were delighted to meet Henry Martyn and welcomed him to their circle. Now his abilities and training became useful. He learned the Hindustani language and was soon able to preach in it, drawing large crowds to hear him. He began translating too, and in a remarkably short time he had translated the Bible and some Christian literature into Hindustani.

It was laid on Henry Martyn's heart that there were millions of Muslims who had never heard the gospel and so he made a Bible translation into Persian.<sup>5</sup> Alas, by this time he was ill: he had contracted tuberculosis, the same fatal wasting sickness that had been the death of his inspiration David Brainerd. It was thought that a sea voyage might improve his health, so taking with him his Persian translations, he set sail from Bombay (now called **Mumbai**). You can follow his heroic journey to take his translation to Persia in your atlas by looking up the places highlighted in **green**.

He travelled first to **Bushehr**, a Persian port which was a vital communication point for the British East India Company. Nowadays, ships travelling from Britain to Indian ports can pass through the **Suez Canal**.<sup>6</sup> In Henry Martyn's day there was no canal. Goods from India had to travel all round Africa to reach England by sea. Look at your atlas to see how far it is. Messengers could take a short cut overland through Persia. Bushehr was one of the points where anyone travelling to India by this sea-land-sea route could re-embark after their overland journey. Here Henry Martyn obtained some Persian travelling clothes including a large hat made of sheepskin.

After arriving at Bushehr, Henry Martyn travelled inland (by night to avoid the terrible heat) to the ancient city of **Shiraz**. Throughout this time he was revising and improving his Persia New Testament, learning more and more of the language and preaching the gospel to all those around him who would listen. Here in Shiraz he held debates with all sorts of religious leaders, who were eager to test their debating skills with him. He then went north to **Isfahan**, the once the capital of Persia and then on to **Tabriz**. This was his goal because that was where he would find the ruler, or Shah, of Persia, Fath-Ali Shah Qajar. There was also a British Ambassador, Sir Gore Ousley, in Tabriz and Henry Martyn hoped he would arrange for him to meet the Shah in person and present him with a beautifully hand written New Testament in his own language. Sir Gore Ousley arranged for him to meet the Shah's Vizier

...in an unpleasant and hostile gathering, where he was challenged to speak the Muslim creed – “Say ‘God is God and Mohammed is the Prophet of God’”. There was a silence, then our man of God replied, “God is God, and Jesus is the Son of God”. In the ensuing uproar Henry Martyn was glad to come away without injury, and his precious Testament safe ...<sup>7</sup>

No meeting with the Shah was forthcoming after that.

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3 These things shock us but older children may like to consider whether our own society has any practices which are similar.

4 See the lesson for 2<sup>nd</sup> October. There is also information about Carey in the lessons for 6<sup>th</sup> February and 9<sup>th</sup> June.

5 This language is called Farsi in Iran, Dari in Afghanistan and Tajik in Tajikistan.

6 See the lesson for 17<sup>th</sup> November.

7 C P Hallihan, “Henry Martyn”, *Quarterly Record, The Magazine of the Trinitarian Bible Society* Part I (Jan-Mar 2003); Part II (April-May 2003)

While in Tabriz Henry Martyn held many debates with Muslim clerics. By now he was very weak from tuberculosis. Made worse by fevers that he had contracted, Henry Martin was now at death's door. The kind Ambassador and his wife looked after him and he recovered a little. They helped him plan out a route by which he could return home to Britain but it was a journey of some 12,00 miles along Persia's ancient Royal Road and at the end of it he would be only in Constantinople (modern **Istanbul**) where he would have to take ship for Britain via Malta.

How delighted Henry Martyn must have been to hear later by letter from the Shah that he was going to allow his translation of the New Testament to be circulated in Persia! The Shah wrote of the

...high, dignified, learned, and enlightened Society of Christians, united for the purpose of spreading abroad the Holy Books of the religion of Jesus (whom, and upon all prophets, be peace and blessing!)... In truth, through the learned and unremitting exertions of Rev. Henry Martyn, it has been translated in a style most befitting sacred books, that is, in an easy and simple diction ... We, therefore, have been particularly delighted with this copious and complete translation. If it please the most merciful God, we shall command the Select Servants, who are admitted to our presence, to read to us the above-mentioned book from the beginning to the end, that we may, in the most minute manner, hear and comprehend its contents.



Weary and sick he might be but Henry Martyn was determined. "I cast all my care upon Him who hath already done wonders for me," he said. The route which was planned was via Erivan (modern **Yerevan**), **Kars**, and **Erzroom**, travelling by night on horseback and accompanied by servants who turned out to be less than faithful and took advantage of their master's failing health.

No horses being to be had, I had an unexpected repose. I sat in the orchard and thought with sweet comfort and peace of my God; in solitude my Company, my Friend, and Comforter. Oh! When shall time give place to eternity! When shall appear that new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness! There, there shall in no wise enter in anything that defileth: none of that wickedness which has made men worse than wild beasts, none of those corruptions which add still more to the miseries of mortality, shall be seen or heard of any more.<sup>8</sup>

So reads the last entry in his journal, ten days before his death on **16<sup>th</sup> October** 1812 at **Tokat** in Turkey. His burial place in Tokat is uncertain.<sup>9</sup> his eternal destiny is sure.

**Something to listen to**<sup>10</sup>



Dutch composer Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562–1621) and German composer Sylvius Leopold Weiss (1687–1750) both died on **16<sup>th</sup> October** so this is a good day to listen to and find out something about their music.

Sweelinck came from a musical family and lived his whole life in Amsterdam in the Netherlands. This did not stop him being a truly international figure. His entire adult life was spent as organist in the Oude Kerk or Old Church in Amsterdam. Sweelinck lived during the Reformation in the Netherlands and when he was a little boy of four the Dutch people smashed and removed the idolatrous statues and images in the churches, including the Oude Kerk where his father was the

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in C P Hallihan, "Henry Martyn".

<sup>9</sup> Murat Hanılçe, "Henry Martyn's Personal Effects and His Grave in Tokat" *The Journal of Mediterranean Civilisations Studies* V (2017) 543-566.

<sup>10</sup> Information from *The New Oxford History of Music IV* OUP 1968 and other sources.

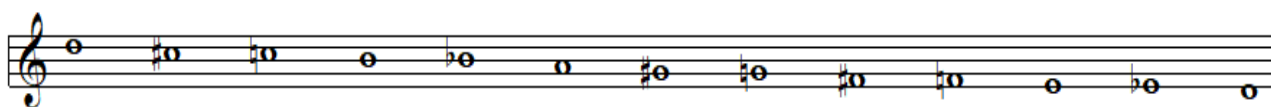
organist. After this act of rebellion by the Protestant Dutch against their Catholic Spanish rulers, there followed a prolonged and destructive war during which the Dutch defended themselves against the Spanish, finally gaining their freedom in 1648 with the Peace of Munster – long after Sweelinck had died. Towards the end of his life, however, there was a long truce (1609-1619) and when war resumed again it was mostly fought at sea.



During the wars there was quite a bit of contact between England and the Netherlands. Queen Elizabeth sent the Dutch help and you can read about this in tomorrow's lesson. English composers of keyboard music such as John Bull (1562/63–1628) travelled to the Low Countries at this time bringing with them the English style of keyboard music with its virtuosic fantasias and sets of variations. Sweelinck developed this type of music further passing it on to Germany via his many German pupils. Interestingly, he also wrote sets of variations on German Chorale (hymn) tunes. These tunes were not used in church in the Netherlands where the Psalms were sung to the tunes from the Geneva Psalter. Perhaps Sweelinck made his variations for his German pupils or perhaps the Dutch enjoyed the German Chorales at home even though they did not sing them in church. These wonderful sets of variations were lost for many years and were rediscovered in a manuscript in the National Library at Budapest in the 1930s. The manuscript where they were found includes sets of variations where Sweelinck himself and also his pupils contributed to the variations on each particular chorale.

Sweelinck also had contacts in Italy as well as in Germany and England. He learned so much from Italian composers that at one time music historians thought he had gone to Italy to study with, among others, the great composer Giovanni Gabrieli (1554/7-1612) in Venice. This is now considered to be unlikely but he certainly knew the work of the Venetian composers.

Find a recording of some of Sweelinck's music to listen to. A good place to start might be his Chromatic Fantasia.<sup>11</sup> Chromatic means “coloured” and a chromatic scale is one that includes all twelve notes, (on the piano keyboard that is both the black and the white notes) in order:



You can play this yourself on the piano or any other suitable instrument such as a recorder. You can hear what it sounds like in the file in the optional resources section for today. Sing it over a few times before you listen to the fantasia. You will hear this descending scale over and over again as you listen. To make his theme for the fantasia, Sweelinck adds a repeated note at the beginning of the scale:



Again, you can play and sing the theme and I have put it in the optional resources files.

Back in May we looked at the music of Johann Sebastian Bach.<sup>12</sup> Bach was a great organist and he may have known Sweelinck's work. Certainly he formed part of the German tradition of organists that stretched back from pupil to teacher to the great Dutch master, Sweelinck.

<sup>11</sup> An excellent performance can be found here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikf2v7Wp\\_pA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikf2v7Wp_pA)

<sup>12</sup> See the lesson for 7<sup>th</sup> May.

The second composer who died on **16<sup>th</sup> October** was Sylvius Leopold Weiss, a contemporary and associate of Bach. He was a player of and composer for the lute.<sup>13</sup> The lute used a special system of notation that was different to the notation used for other instruments which we use today. Our musical notation represents the pitch (highness and lowness) of the notes and the rhythm (relative length of the notes). That means that singers or players of any instrument can read any music because the notation represents how the music *sounds*. Lute players used (and can still use) a kind of notation called tablature. This shows, not the pitch of the notes, but the lute string and fret position of each note. (The frets are the strips of material fixed or tied across the neck of a lute at right angles to the strings.) It looks like this:



*Prélude, Ré mineur.*

In ordinary notation the lines and spaces represent pitches. In tablature, as shown above, each line represents a lute string and the notation shows the player physically what to do with his hands.

Just as Sweelinck and Bach were born into families of organists, Weiss was born into a family of lutenists. His abilities were legendary and he was renowned as an accompanist and also as an improviser. To improvise is to make up music on the spot just as Bach did so brilliantly for Frederick the Great as we learned in the lesson for 7<sup>th</sup> May. There is a story that Bach and Weiss once competed at improvisation:

Anyone who knows how difficult it is to play harmonic modulations and good counterpoint on the lute will be surprised and full of disbelief to hear from eyewitnesses that Weiss, the great lutenist, challenged J.S. Bach, the great harpsichordist and organist, at playing fantasies and fugues...

wrote music historian J.F. Reichardt many years later although I cannot find out what his source of information was nor anything about the outcome of the contest.

Find some music to listen to by Weiss. He wrote solos and duets for his instrument and you might start by finding a recording of his magnificent Chaconne in g minor for two lutes.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> For information about the lute see the lesson for 29<sup>th</sup> December.

<sup>14</sup> A good recording can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cfz8O5b6TI>