

October 9<sup>th</sup>

Memory verse

**Blessed be the Lord my strength**

which teacheth my hands to war,  
and my fingers to fight: Psalm144:1

Little ones can learn the words in bold and older ones the whole verse. The three parts mean the verse can be divided up between children to aid learning. For information about today's memory verse see the lesson for 12<sup>th</sup> October.

A word puzzle to solve and a story to read<sup>1</sup>

“*Vivat Christus, et pereat Barabbas!*” These words, spoken on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1580, were the last words of John Immanuel Tremellius (1510-1580). The words are in Latin. Here are some clues that will help you guess what they mean:

*Barabbas* is exactly who it looks like.

*Christus* is what you would think it is – just take off the *us*.

We use *et* every time we use the word *etcetera* (&c. or *etc.*) which means “*and* so on” or “*and* the rest.”

You might recognise the word *vivat* from the coronation or if you did the lesson for 27<sup>th</sup> February you might remember how the composer Sir Charles Parry incorporated the acclamation *Vivat Rex* into his coronation anthem.<sup>2</sup>

*Pereat* is the opposite of *vivat* and our English word “perish” is related to this Latin word.

If you are interested in grammar you might like to know that these two words are in the subjunctive mood which in English means “may...” or “let...”.

Can you work it out?

Write your guess here:

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The answer is on the next page. Have a look and see if you were right.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from <https://latinigcse.weebly.com/>

<sup>2</sup> You can hear the moment when the pupils from Westminster school proclaimed *vivat* during Parry's Coronation anthem in the 2023 Coronation here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxwJkpwXTIw&t=525s> at about 8 minutes and 30 seconds from the start.

The words mean: “Let Christ live and let Barabbas perish!” or “May Christ live and may Barabbas perish!”

But who was John Tremellius and why did he end his life with these Latin words? It is an interesting story...

At the time of the Reformation a great movement for translating the Bible into the language of the common people began. Latin was no longer spoken as a common, native or vernacular language and people could no longer read it for themselves unless they had learned Latin in addition to their own language. The invention of printing enabled the new translations to be widely spread. However, although ordinary people did not speak Latin, it was not a dead language. Scholars still used it as a regular means of communication, enabling them to exchange ideas all over Europe regardless of their individual mother tongue. The Latin translation of the Bible then in common use was that of Jerome<sup>3</sup> and it had many defects, especially in the rather corrupted form in which it circulated at the time. For this reason, some reformed scholars made a new translation into Latin.

Immanuel Tremellius (1510-1580) was a Hebrew expert. It was he who made the translation of the Old Testament into Latin which became very popular among protestant scholars. A Jew by birth, he came from Italy. He became a Christian, joining the Catholic church in the first instance, then after only a year he declared himself a Protestant. He left Catholic Italy and went to Protestant Strasbourg where he became a professor of Hebrew at the university. War in Germany led him to come to England where the young Edward VI was king. He became Regius Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge but when the boy king died, England was no longer safe for him under his successor, Catholic Queen Mary. Tremellius returned to Germany. His translation of the Old Testament into Latin began to appear in print in 1575. It was the favourite translation of the Old Testament of John Milton<sup>4</sup> among others and it was very influential among scholars in England.

Tremellius was a brilliant scholar, and, concerned for his fellow Jews, he translated Calvin's Catechism into Hebrew with the title *A Catechism for Inquiring Jews*. He also produced a Chaldaic and Syriac grammar. His life was difficult at times for many people looked down on Jews. Amongst his true fellow Christians, however, his immense learning and his love for the Lord Jesus commanded deep respect.

It was Tremellius's Jewish nationality that led him to exclaim, “*Vivat Christus, et pereat Barabbas!*” He was conscious that his people had cried out, “Away with this *man* [Jesus] and release unto us Barabbas,” (Luke 23:18). He was a descendant of those who had cried, “His blood be on us, and on our children,” (Matthew 27:25). He wanted to personally reverse the sentence passed by his Jewish ancestors. One old commentator also explained, “The sense of them [Tremellius' words] take thus: Let Christ live, and whatsoever comes into competition with Him, die.”<sup>5</sup>

### Something to read from history<sup>6</sup>

Get out your atlas because we are going to look at a wonderful phenomenon that spread over Europe in the early part of the nineteenth century. I have highlighted the places for you to find on the map in green. It was on the 9th of October, 1816, that Mr. and Mrs. Robert Haldane left Edinburgh, travelling by way of London, Dover, and Calais. It was to be a journey that had immense consequences.

<sup>3</sup> We read about this translation in the lesson for 30<sup>th</sup> September.

<sup>4</sup> We learned about this great poet in the lesson for April 27<sup>th</sup>.

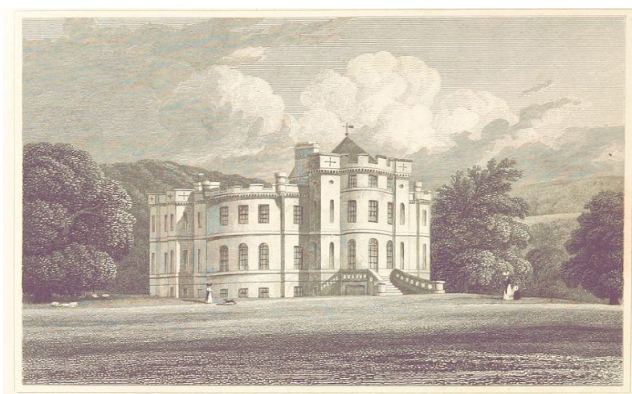
<sup>5</sup> Mall, Thomas, *A Cloud of Witnesses* (Edinburgh, 1747)

<sup>6</sup> Information from E H Broadbent, *The Pilgrim Church* (1931) and other sources.

Robert Haldane was a well-to-do Scotsman who had sold his estates (you can see what had been his grand house in the picture below) in order to promote evangelism.

Robert and his brother James had both served in the navy with distinction. They had then been converted and began to study the Bible very earnestly.

Together they travelled all over Scotland and preaching the gospel, often in the face of fierce opposition from those who questioned their right to do so since they were not “ordained” ministers of the Church. As well as preaching they wrote, published and distributed distributing gospel tracts. Now Robert Haldane was venturing overseas to continue the same work.



I will not go into details of all the happenings of that journey<sup>7</sup> but it was when he got to the city of **Geneva** that something really remarkable began.

During the reformation, Geneva had been the home of the Reformer John Calvin and it was a great centre for gospel preaching. By Robert Haldane's day, however, it was a different story. Here is how the wordly philosopher Rousseau, a native of Geneva, described the situation in the church there:

It is asked of the ministers of the Church of Geneva, if Jesus Christ be God? They dare not answer. It is asked, if he was a mere man. They are embarrassed, and will not say they think so. A philosopher, with a glance of the eye, penetrates their character. He sees them to be Arians,<sup>8</sup> Socinians,<sup>9</sup> Deists;<sup>10</sup> he proclaims it, and thinks he does them honour. They are alarmed, terrified; they come together, they discuss, they are in agitation, they know not to which of the saints they should turn, and, after earnest consultations, deliberations, conferences, all vanishes in amphigore;<sup>11</sup> and they neither say, yes or no. Oh! Genevans, these gentlemen, your ministers, in truth are very singular people! They do not even know what they believe, or what they do not believe. They do not even know what they would wish to appear to believe. Their only manner of establishing their faith is, to attack the faith of others...<sup>12</sup>

How true this was you will see from Robert Haldane's experiences in the city.

When Robert Haldane arrived in Geneva, he could make no headway with his efforts to evangelise. Then he encountered a student who was in the city studying theology. He discovered that the young man had no inkling of what the gospel was and that he (and his fellow students) knew very little about the Bible, having been required to spend their time studying only the teachings of the old pagan philosophers. As Haldane conversed with this student in what was apparently just a chance encounter, he made a great impression on the young man who went away very thoughtful. The following day he sought out Robert Haldane again and this time he brought a fellow student with him who was as ignorant of the Scriptures as he was. Both young men were eager to learn and Haldane, who had begun to despair of making any gospel impression in Geneva and had decided to leave, instead took lodgings in the city. These were suitable for student gatherings having two large

<sup>7</sup> You can read a good summary for yourself if you have a copy of *The Pilgrim Church* (p.280ff in my copy) if not it is available here: [https://www.gracenotes.info/documents/topics\\_doc/pilgrim-church-broadbent.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/documents/topics_doc/pilgrim-church-broadbent.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> We learned what Arianism was in the lesson for 25<sup>th</sup> July and we will look at it in more detail in the lesson for November 7<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> People who thought Jesus was not God but human only.

<sup>10</sup> We learned what Deists are in the lesson for 3<sup>rd</sup> March.

<sup>11</sup> Meaningless nonsense

<sup>12</sup> Rousseau, *Letters from the Mountains* (1762 and 1765)

rooms which could be combined into one. Here twenty to thirty students would sit with Haldine round a long table each with his Bible in his own language (for you may remember from the lesson for 1<sup>st</sup> August that the Swiss speak German, French, Italian and Romance) while Robert Haldine expounded the Scriptures using an interpreter and answered their questions.

The professors in charge of the students got wind of what was going on and forbade their students to attend but the students, some of them very able men, had now had a taste of the truth. Here at last was a man who believed the Scriptures and knew them deeply. They continued to attend Robert Haldine's exposition of the Book of Romans and to be greatly blessed by what they heard. Of those who realised the truth of God's word and came to faith, some were forced out of the Swiss church and others persecuted to the point of having to leave the country.

Among those students were men whose work has been of value to Christians right down to the present day. The historian Merle D'Aubigne whose masterly charting of the history of the Reformation still provides gripping reading today was one of them. Caesar Malan, the hymn-writer was another. See if you can find any of his hymns in your own hymn book. There is one in today's Optional Resources file for you to sing. Also, among the students was Frédéric Monod who went on to found the Union of the Evangelical Free Churches of France for this circle of men in Geneva was just the beginning. A revival began which spread out like the ripples of a pebble thrown into the water all across Europe. In French the movement was called *Le Réveil*, in Germany it was *Die Erweckung* and in the Netherlands *Het Reveil*. On and on it went, reaching Italy and even Hungary. God had used his servant Robert Haldane to begin a mighty work.

#### A poem to read and something to think about

On 9<sup>th</sup> October 1899 Britain received an ultimatum from President Kruger of the Transvaal which was the start of the Boer War.<sup>13</sup> This event inspired Rudyard Kipling to write his poem "The Old Issue," which contains the memorable line "Leave to live by no man's leave, underneath the Law." I have extracted some lines from the poem that would be worth learning if you began a poetry memorisation programme earlier in the year. In the poem Kipling compares Kruger to the "old King" in other words to the kings before the Glorious Revolution<sup>14</sup> who were not restrained from behaving as tyrants – and many of them did! He points out in the poem that, without vigilance on the part of the people, tyranny (the old King) can arise again. There are notes below the poem explaining words and phrases marked in pink.

All we have of freedom, all we use or know—  
This our fathers bought for us long and long ago.

Ancient Right unnoticed as the breath we draw—  
Leave to live by no man's leave, underneath the Law.

Lance and torch and tumult, steel and grey-goose wing  
Wrenched it, inch and ell and all, slowly from the King.

Till our fathers 'stablished, after bloody years,  
How our King is one with us, first among his peers.

So they bought us freedom—not at little cost  
Wherefore must we watch the King, lest our gain be lost,

<sup>13</sup> We will be looking at this war in more detail in the lesson for 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

<sup>14</sup> We will be looking at this key event in British history on 5<sup>th</sup> November.

Over all things certain, this is sure indeed,  
Suffer not the old King: for we know the breed.

Give no ear to bondsmen bidding us endure.  
Whining “He is weak and far”; crying “Time shall cure.”,

(Time himself is witness, till the battle joins,  
Deeper strikes the rottenness in the people’s loins.)

Give no heed to bondsmen masking war with peace.  
Suffer not the old King here or overseas.

They that beg us barter—wait his yielding mood—  
Pledge the years we hold in trust—pawn our brother’s blood—

Howso’ great their clamour, whatso’er their claim,  
Suffer not the old King under any name!

Here is naught unproven—here is naught to learn.  
It is written what shall fall if the King return.

He shall mark our goings, question whence we came,  
Set his guards about us, as in Freedom’s name.

He shall take a tribute, toll of all our ware;  
He shall change our gold for arms—arms we may not bear.

He shall break his judges if they cross his word;  
He shall rule above the Law calling on the Lord.

He shall peep and mutter; and the night shall bring  
Watchers’neath our window, lest we mock the King—

Hate and all division; hosts of hurrying spies;  
Money poured in secret, carrion breeding flies.

Strangers of his counsel, hirelings of his pay,  
These shall deal our Justice: sell—deny—delay.

We shall drink dishonour, we shall eat abuse  
For the Land we look to—for the Tongue we use.

We shall take our station, dirt beneath his feet,  
While his hired captains jeer us in the street.

Cruel in the shadow, crafty in the sun,  
Far beyond his borders shall his teachings run.

Sloven, sullen, savage, secret, uncontrolled,  
Laying on a new land evil of the old—

Long-forgotten bondage, dwarfing heart and brain—  
All our fathers died to loose he shall bind again.

Here is naught at venture, random nor untrue—  
Swings the wheel full-circle, brims the cup anew.

Here is naught unproven, here is nothing hid:  
Step for step and word for word—so the old Kings did!

Step by step, and word by word: who is ruled may read.  
Suffer not the old Kings: for we know the breed—

All the right they promise—all the wrong they bring.  
Stewards of the Judgment, suffer not this King!

In this poem Kipling contrasts two kinds of government, tyranny (the old King) and freedom (the Law). He highlights some of the steps in history by which British people established the right to “live by no man’s leave, underneath the Law” rather than to be ruled by a tyrant. His argument depends on an assumption: that there is some definable unchanging “law” under which we can live in freedom.

To the Christian this is obvious. We know what that law is, where it can be found and who is its author. Only the Creator has the authority to make such “law”. The atheist appeals to consensus (which changes over time) or the common good (defined by whom?) but these do not provide a satisfactory basis for law.

Older children may like to consider where threats to our right to “live by no man’s leave, underneath the Law” come from in the present day.

*grey-goose wing*  
*ell*

a reference to arrows fletched with goose feathers  
a unit of measurement equivalent to a cubit, 1.14 metres

*Suffer*

allow, put up with

*rotteness in the people’s loins*

a biblical sounding phrase that may be an echo of Psalm 38:5

*fall*

befall, happen

*calling on the Lord*

tyrannical kings such as Charles I justified their behaviour by claiming that Divine Right of Kings was their mandate to do whatever they thought fit.

*peep and mutter*

Isaiah 8:14

*Watchers*

spies

*sell—deny—delay*

a reference to Magna Carta,<sup>15</sup> one of the provisions of which is that justice shall not be sold, denied or delayed.

*Laying on a new land*

Kipling is speaking specifically of Kruger here. South Africa is the new land on which Kipling says Kruger is laying the old tyranny.

*Who is ruled may read*

Habakkuk 2:2: the basis of the opening line of Keeble's hymn “There is a book who runs may read.”

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<sup>15</sup> See the lesson for June 15<sup>th</sup> .