

ARAMAIC BIBLE COMPANION

PETHERICK' S EXPERIENCE AND THAT OF THOSE WHO ENDURE HARDSHIP

As a preface to the issue of this commentary in July of the year of our LORD 2010, I retold in brief the story of *William Petherick of Islington* who on the morning of July 16 had withdrawn from London with his two boys and two girls on account of the great plague. It was a Sunday morning and they all go to church together at Twickenham.

That Sunday was as **Frank Boreham** relates “a gorgeous sunny day-mocking the wretchedness so near at hand”. The churches of the land had called the nation to “fast and pray”. The sermon that day was on the text “**Although the fig-tree shall not blossom neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail and the fields shall yield no meat....yet I will rejoice in the Lord and joy in the God of my salvation**”.(cf. **Habakkuk 2.19**). They seemed to be as the nightingale singing her sweetest song amidst deepest gloom.

Frank Boreham remits from his story temporarily to speak of Jeanie McNab of his old parish in the Antipodes. Suppose” said Boreham to Jeanie. “**Now don't you have anything to do with supposings**” said **Jeannie**. “I know them all. Suppose I should lose my money! Suppose I should lose my health and all the rest. When they knock slam the door shut.

Boreham returns to Habakkuk. “It is a small thing to lose *the gifts* as long as we possess *the Giver*. That day at Twickenham “The words (of Habakkuk) took hold of me mightily” said Petherick. Once home Petherick threw himself on his knees by his bed. The red cross scrawled on so many London doors where plague visited in those days seemed to blaze before him with “Lord have mercy on us” as the legend underneath. He mentioned each of his children by name in prayer. He could not bear to think of their loss.

Now it was Sunday again-in the year 1666 and the day was September 2. Henry Petherick the merchant's eldest son came bounding in to the breakfast room. “Father, the city is on fire!” In the afternoon William and two of his sons drove to the outskirts of London. Tongues of crimson flame shot across the skies. Towers were falling-roofs collapsing and shots resembling artillery fire reported in the air. Somewhere in that red ocean of flame was Mr Petherick's warehouse. He smiled to himself. The fire could only take away the gifts-it could not rob him of the Giver. That Sunday night William returned home and slept like a child.

Now it was Sunday again-the 50th birthday celebration of William Petherick. He prayed “O Lord Thou hast been pleased by pestilence and by fire to redeem my soul from destruction. Thou didst threaten me with the loss of Thy choicest gifts that I might set my heart's affections more on the Giver. Accept the thanks of Thy servant this day. Help him all the days to rejoice in the Lord and to joy in the God of his salvation. William Petherick lived to enjoy a long life and abounding wealth with great honour and the affection of his family. He ever rejoiced in the LORD and joyed in the God of his salvation.

Paul the apostle in writing to Philippi said “Rejoice always”. It is not easy but it is the exhortation of the apostle who sang praises in the night in prison and was released by an Act of God. Put yourself and your family in the hands of God and sleep well.

It's not the *gifts* but the *Giver* that matters.

Knee drill and active service for the LORD still count

“He is faithful who promised-he will do it.” Hebrews 10.23

God has not promised skies always blue
Flower strewn pathways all our lives through
But God has promised help from above
Unfailing kindness undying love
Thank you LORD!

Bob Coffey L'shuvkha Marya

To the glory of the Lord

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