

Mr. Wesley's Faith

From: **Autobiography of Adam Clarke**, LL.D F.A.S. Page 155-158

The Reader will not have forgotten the most remarkable circumstance of his obtaining the money by which he purchased a Hebrew Grammar. These two providential circumstances, were the only foundation of all the knowledge he afterwards acquired either in Oriental learning, or Biblical Literature. In obtaining both these works, he saw the hand of God, and this became a powerful inducement to him to give all diligence to acquire, and fidelity to use that knowledge which came to him through means utterly out of his own reach, and so distinctly marked to his apprehension by the especial Providence of God. He continued in the Norman Islands three years, laboring incessantly for the good of the people who heard him, though by the abundance of his labors, and intense study, he greatly impaired his health. In the year 1787, the Rev. J. Wesley, accompanied by Thomas Coke, LL.D., and Mr. Joseph Bradford, visited the Norman Islands; where he was well received, and preached to many large congregations both in Jersey and Guernsey. While in Jersey, he lodged at the house of Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq., who has been already mentioned: and when in Guernsey, at Mon Plaisir, the house of Henry De Jersey, Esq., under whose hospitable roof Mr. Clarke had lodged for more than a year, and was treated by all the family as if he had been their own child. There was no love lost, as he felt for them that affection which subsists between members of the same family.

Mr. Wesley's time allotted for his visit to these Islands being expired, he purposed sailing for Southampton by the first fair wind, as he had appointed to be at Bristol on a particular day: but the wind continuing adverse, and an English brig touching at Guernsey on her way from France to Penzance, they agreed for their passage, Mr. C. having obtained Mr. Wesley's permission to accompany them to England. They sailed out of Guernsey Road on Thursday, September 6 with a fine fair breeze; but in a short time, the wind which had continued slackening, died away, and afterwards rose up in that quarter which would have favored the passage to Southampton or Weymouth, had they been so bound. The contrary wind blew into a tight breeze, and they were obliged to make frequent tacks, in order to clear the Island. Mr. W. was sitting reading in the cabin, and hearing the noise and bustle which were occasioned by putting about the vessel, to stand on her different tacks, he put his head above deck and inquired what was the matter? Being told the wind was become contrary, and the ship was obliged to tack, he said, Then let us go to prayer. His own company, who were upon deck, walked down and at his request Dr. Coke, Mr. Bradford, and Mr. Clarke, went to prayer. After the latter had ended, Mr. W. broke out into fervent supplication, which seemed to be more the offspring of strong faith than of mere desire, his words were remarkable, as well as the spirit, evident feeling, and manner, in which they were uttered: some of them were to the following effect: "Almighty and everlasting God, thou hast [Thy] way every where, and all things serve the purposes of thy will: thou holdest the winds in thy fist, and sittest upon the water floods, and reignest a King for ever: -- command these winds and these waves that they obey THEE; and take us speedily and safely to the haven whither we would be, &c.!" The power of his petition was felt by all: -- he rose from his knees, made no kind of remark, but took up his book and continued his reading. Mr. C. went upon deck, and what was his surprise when he found the vessel standing her right course, with a steady breeze, which slackened not, till, carrying them at the rate of nine or ten knots an hour, they anchored safely near St. Michael's Mount, in Penzance Bay. On the sudden and favorable change of the wind, Mr. W. made no remark: so fully did he expect to be heard, that he took for granted he was heard. Such answers to prayer he was in the habit of receiving; and therefore to him, the occurrence was not strange. -- Of such a circumstance how many of those who did not enter into his views, would have voiced at large, had it happened in favor of themselves; yet all the notice he takes of this singular circumstance is contained in the following entry in his Journal: --

"In the morning, Thursday, (Sept. 6th, 1787,) we went on board with a fair moderate wind. But we had but just entered the ship when the wind died away. We cried to God for help: and it presently sprung up, exactly fair, and did not cease till it brought us into Penzance Bay." Mr. Wesley was no ordinary man: every hour, every minute of his time was devoted to the great work which God had given him to do; and it is not to be wondered at that he was favored, and indeed accredited, with many signal interpositions of Divine Providence. Mr. Clarke himself has confessed that high as his opinion was of Mr. W.'s piety and faith, he had no hope that the wind which had long sat in the opposite quarter, and which had just now changed in a very natural way, would immediately veer about,

except by providential interference, to blow in a contrary direction. There were too many marked extraordinary circumstances in this case, to permit any attentive observer to suppose that the change had been effected by any natural or casual occurrence.

As Mr. W.'s appearance in that part of England was totally unexpected, (having formed his route to Bristol,) it was necessary to announce it. Mr. Clarke, therefore, a few hours after his landing, took horse and rode to Redruth, Truro, St. Austell, and Plymouth Dock, preaching in each place, and announcing Mr. W. for the following evening, all the company meeting at Plymouth Dock, on Tuesday 10, they proceeded to Exeter the next day; and on Friday 13th, they took the mail-coach, and in the evening arrived safely at Bath; where having tarried till the following Monday, Mr. W. proceeded to Bristol, and Mr. Clarke to Trowbridge, in Wilts, where the lady resided, to whom, in the course of the next year, he was married.

The fertility of these islands has been noticed by historians in general, -- as a proof of this, take the following examples: --

In a garden in the parish of St. Saviour's in Jersey, he saw a lot of cabbages, which, on an average, measured seven feet in height, with large and solid heads. In Mr. De Jersey's garden, at Mon Plaisir, in Guernsey, where he lodged, there was a cabbage that grew beside, and surpassed in height, a full-grown apple tree: when cut down, the stem was sixteen feet in length! The strawberry garden in the same place was very remarkable, both for the abundance, size, and flavor of the fruit. It will surprise the Reader to hear that from this one garden, which though large, was not enormously so, there were gathered daily, Sundays excepted, for nearly six weeks, from fifty to one hundred pounds weight of strawberries! All other fruits were in proportion, both in quantity and flavor. In Mr. Brackenbury's garden, in St. Helliers, Jersey, he cut down a bunch of grapes, which weighed about twenty pounds! When he and Mrs. Clarke returned to England, they could not relish any of the fruits, as the finest peaches and nectarines were only like good turnips, when compared with fruits of the same species produced in those fertile islands.

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