

H. Pardon Me, O My God – 1600's

- i. A Spiritual Song
- ii. Focus: The Suffering Saint
- iii. Author: Thieleman J. van Braght, 1625-1664
- iv. Translated by: Joseph F. Sohm, unknown
- v. Recast by: John J. Overholt, 1918-2000
- vi. Notes on the author: Thieleman J. van Braght was born to a cloth merchant on January 29, 1625. From the start the boy showed great talent. He applied himself at first to a study of languages and learned 5 different languages (Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French and German). In 1648, he was made a preacher in his hometown, and served in that office for 16 years, until his death. He was a warm defender of Mennonite principles, engaged in disputes on the streets, ships, or wherever the occasion might arise.

Van Braght played an important part in the difficulties that developed in Holland around 1660 between the progressive and conservative Mennonites. He aligned himself with the conservatives. After being offered the eldership of the conservative congregation in Rotterdam, and declining the offer, he went on to Utrecht where he helped to depose of the more progressive leadership. In 1657 Van Braght published his work "School of Moral Virtue" to deter youth from unvirtuous lifestyles and to lead them to a true fear of God. This work went through 18 editions. His most famous work was his publication "Martyrs Mirror". The first edition appeared in 1660, the second in 1685. Van Braght gathered much information from city archives and made successful use of it. He also visited the congregations of South Germany. By doing this, he was able to replace erroneous reports with correct ones, and did not hesitate to publish what been hitherto uncertain or unknown.

According to modern standards van Braght work was not scholarly, his preferences and aversions played a part. His work soon, however, superseded the older martyr books. As a preacher van Braght was widely celebrated. Van Braght also wrote some hymns. – information taken from:

<https://www.ccel.org/cCEL/vanbraght>

- vii. Taken from the hymnal *the Christian Hymnary, 1972 [see below]* (See also pg. 5 from "Martyrs Mirror, Thieleman J. van Braght)

1. Pardon me, O my God,
That I, dust, ashes approach thee,
The cruel death of thy martyrs,
Defenseless lambs, altogether,
Yet that which caused my tears to flow

Was the remembrance of suff'ring;
Innocent, led to the water and fire,
To the sword and beast's devouring;

Refrain

*There to suffer and there to die
For thy name's sake most holy;
There to suffer and there to die,
For thy name's sake, O my God!*

2. Howe'er I joy contemplated,
As I their confidence seeing,
Ah! how I often did wish then,
To be a partaker with them,
In thy great grace as they fought valiantly
Through the strait gate all forseeing
My soul went with them to prison and then
In the tribunal I stayed them,

Refrain

3. Patiently bear, I besought them,
Without gainsaying or flinching;
Scaffold and stake, saying to them,
Fight valiantly, sisters, brethren,
Suffer the sentence of death urging them
At the place of execution,
The crown awaits you – and died thus with them,
So great my love bound up with them,

Refrain

viii. The Biblical and Doctrinal Significance

1. First stanza – “dust, and ashes approach thee,” – (Genesis 18:27)
2. First stanza – “remembrance of suffering” – (Revelation 2:13)
3. First stanza – “cruel death of thy martyrs” – (Hebrews 11:36)
4. First stanza – “led... to the sword” – (Acts 12:2)
5. Second stanza – “In thy great grace they fought” – (Philippians 3:10)
6. Second stanza – “To be a partaker with them” – (2 Timothy 4:7)
7. Second stanza – “ My soul went with them” – (1 Corinthians 12:26)

8. Third stanza – “Patiently bear, I besought them,” – (1 Peter 2:20)
9. Third stanza – “Suffer the sentence of death urging them” – (Philippians 1:20-21)
10. Third stanza – “Scaffold and stake” – (2 Corinthians 1:9)
11. Third stanza – “The crown await you” – (Revelation 2:10)

- I. Shall We Survey Our Time? – 1600’s
 - i. A Spiritual Song
 - ii. Focus: Young Saints
 - iii. Author: Abraham Cheare, 1626-2668
 - iv. Notes on the author: Born in 1626 to “parents of lowly social standing”, Abraham Cheare was raised in the things of God in his early years. He was called to pastor the Particular Baptist Church in Plymouth, England in 1648, during the period of the Commonwealth.

Cheare possessed little formal education and worked as fuller before accepting the call to pastor the church at Plymouth. Apart from a journey to London, it appears that he traveled little and spent most of his life around Plymouth, where he was born. History shows that Cheare took no part in the fighting during the English Civil War, however, he did serve a short time in the local Militia. He also served a brief stent as a military chaplain.

While less is known about Cheare during his first dozen or so years as pastor at Plymouth, his name arises in both primary and secondary historical sources for his ministry during the early years of persecution under Charles II (r. 1660-1685) and the Restoration of the Monarchy. The return of the crown brought with it the restoration of the Episcopacy and the state church. In 1661, a group of statutes, collectively known as the Clarendon Code, passed which were designed to punish dissenters from the official church. Thousands of separatists and non-conformists were persecuted violently and imprisoned during this time, including many Baptists among which were Cheare, Thomas Hardcastle and the famous tinker of Bedford, John Bunyan.

Cheare, while not as well known as John Bunyan, suffered dearly for the faith. The Plymouth preacher spent his final years (3 years) in prison for the faith. The English officials imprisoned him on the island of St. Nicholas located in Plymouth Sound, a stretch of water south of his home town.

The courts charged him with holding unlawful religious meetings and with refusing to conform to the Church of England. He died in prison on March 5, 1668.

Like Bunyan, Cheare wrote several works while in prison, many of which were published posthumously, including his work *Words in Season*.

- v. Taken from *A Looking Glass for Children*, by Abraham Cheare pg. 28-29 published posthumously by H. P. 1673.

[28]

And kindly to attract your eye,
From vanity to things on high :
My thoughts to Meet me were inclin'd,
As thinking on a Scholar's mind,
It might at first with fansie take,
And after deep impressions make :
w'ich Ob ! If God would but inspire,
Conuince of folly, raise desire;
Discover Beautie, Kindle Love,
Fix your delight on things Above ;
These weak endeavours then may stand,
As Christ's remembrances at hand.
To warn you, folly to avoid,
w'ich hath such multitudes destroy'd ;
And thence your nobler part incline,
To Meditations more Divine ;
w'ich have a faculty to raze,
Immortal Souls to flames of p'ize:
By means of w'ich, when you obtain,
Your Spirit in a serious strain ;
When vanity bath least respect ;
And thoughts are fittest to reflect ;
Then from your Treasure you may bring,
This brief Soliloquy, and Sing,
Come Soul ! let you and I,
A few discourses have :
Shall we bethink, how near the brink,
We border of the Grave ?
Shall we survey our time,
How vainly it is spent ;
How youthful dayes consume in wayes,
Which Age must needs repent ?
The things which others please ;
What profit do they merit ?
What are the Toyes, of wanton Boyes,
to an immortal Spirit ?
How will our Reckoning pass,
Of psalm, Pleasure, play,
When every thought and Deed is brought,
Unto the Judgment Day ?

Would

[29]

Would not our time and strength,
Be better far employ'd,
If every thought, were this way wrought,
How Christ may be injoy'd ?
Should not a young man's way,
Be ordered by the Word ?
Should not his mind, be still inclin'd ?
To know and fear the Lord ?
If we behold our Frame,
Our parts and powers compare ;
Sure, God intends some glorious ends,
To form a piece so rare.

A Letter sent to a Friend's Child.

Sweet Child. I pray you, think not long,
E're I have sent my Pr'in'-Song ;
To turn, after Godly sort,
Your tongue, and thoughts, from sinful sport.
Pray let it frequently be brought,
With holy fear upon your thought ;
And when indeed your Son is bent,
On things that are most permanent.
When least to foolish mirth inclin'd,
Then from the Treasure of your mind,
This serious Song, you forth may bring,
With Golpet Melody, and Sing,

Lord what a worm am I ?
what couldst thou here espie ?
That ever thou, shouldst humbly bow,
On me to cast an eye ?
What kind of Love is this ?
What reason can it have ?
Shall God through Grace, himself abase,
So vile a Wretch to save ?

How

- vi. The Biblical and Doctrinal Significance

1. First stanza – “a few discourses have” – (Ecclesiastes 11:9)
2. First stanza – “we border of the grave” – (Proverbs 27:1)
3. Second stanza – “Shall we survey our time” – (Ephesians 5:15-17)
4. Second stanza – “How youthful days consume in ways” – (Psalm 25:7)

5. Third stanza – “What profit do they merit?” – (Mark 8:36)
6. Fourth stanza – “How will our reckoning pass” – (1 Corinthians 3:13)
7. Fifth stanza – (1 Timothy 4:12)
8. Sixth stanza – “Should not a young man’s way, Be ordered by the word? – (Psalm 37:23)
9. Sixth stanza – “To know and fear the Lord?” – (Proverbs 9:10)
10. Seventh stanza – “If we behold our frame” – (Psalm 139:14)
11. Seventh stanza – “To form a piece so rare” – (Ephesians 2:10)

J. Stone Walls Do Not a Prison Make – 1600’s

- i. A Spiritual Song
- ii. Focus: The Suffering Saint
- iii. Author: John Bunyan, 1628-1688
- iv. Notes on the author: On November 12, 1660 Bunyan was scheduled to speak to a small group in the hamlet of Lower Samsell, near Harlington, Bedfordshire, England. Even though a warrant for his arrest had been issued, he decided to go ahead and preach the gospel, as he was convinced, he had done nothing wrong. The state believing otherwise, arrested him just after he had opened God’s word.

Bunyan being placed on trial for his actions, was told that he had violated the Elizabethan Conventional Act of 1593 which stated that anyone who “devilishly and perniciously abstained from coming to Church [i.e. the Church of England] to hear Divine Service” and who was an “upholder of . . . unlawful meetings and conventicles” could be held without bail until he or she agreed to submit the authorities of the Anglican Church. According to the authorities, Bunyan was an uneducated, unordained common “mechanic”. The authorities promised to release Bunyan if he would promise to desist from preaching.

During Bunyan’s trial, he defended his right to preach by quoting 1 Peter 4:10-11. The judges of the case maintained that only those ordained by the Church of England could lawfully preach. Bunyan maintained that his rights to preach the word was rooted in the Scriptures and their author, God.

Bunyan spent a total of 12 years in prison.

v. Taken from: *The Works of John Bunyan, vol. 3, Edited by George Offor, 1855, pgs. 19-20. (See Below and Next Page)*

INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR. 19

and one night he felt so uneasy, when at home, that at a very late hour he went back to the prison. The news of his being with his family at Elstow, was that very day taken to a neighbouring priest, who at midnight sent a messenger to the jail, that he might be a witness against the merciful keeper. On his arrival he demanded, 'Are all the prisoners safe?'—'Yes.' 'Is John Bunyan safe?'—'Yes.' 'Let me see him.' He was called, and appeared; and all was well. His kind-hearted jailer said to him, 'You may go out when you will, for you know much better when to return than I can tell you.' While he was suffering this imprisonment, his friends in Bedford were severely visited by the ruthless hand of persecution.

Mr. Rufhead¹ was one of Bunyan's principal friends and supporters, and had the honour of being the first that had his house plundered in the general persecution, when those who refused to attend the Church service were so severely visited.

The effect of persecution upon this excellent and pious man was, that he, within two years, opened his house for the reception of the despised Christians, and it was the *first place of worship* that was licensed in Bedford for the use of the nonconformists, if not the first in the United Kingdom. The account of the ruffianly transactions which took place at this time, is contained in a rare tract, called, 'A True and Impartial Narrative of some Illegal and Arbitrary Proceedings against Innocent Nonconformists in the Town of Bedford, 4to, 1670.'² On Monday, the 30th of May, Feckman, the chief apparitor, with the churchwarden, constable, and overseer, began to distrain. The person's name is J. Rufhead, at whose house they first began. He had been fined three pounds, and they took away two timber trees, value seven pounds.³

He must have been a man of some consequence in the town, to have been dealt with so leniently; for in most cases they swept away all the stock in trade, tools, and household furniture, and left the bare walls to shelter the widow and her lamenting orphans. Mr. Foster, a justice, went with the band, and in some cases doubled the fine, because it was not immediately paid. The misery was such, that the porters said *they would be hanged, drawn, and quartered before they would assist in that work*. Two of them, for so refusing, were caught and sent to Bedford jail, where, doubtless, they gave an account to Bunyan of the cruel trials to which his pious friends were subjected. The trained bands were called to assist, but 'the tradesmen, journeymen, labourers, and servants having either left the town or hid them-

selves, to avoid his [Feckman's] call, the town was so thin of people, that it looked more like a country village than a corporation; and the shops being generally shut down, it seemed like a place visited with a pest, where usually is written upon the door, *Lord, have mercy on us!*' Similar desolations fell upon many cities in the kingdom, which must have been utterly ruined, had the absurd attempt to enforce uniformity been continued.

In reading the narrative of these distressing and cruel proceedings, the mind is strangely relieved by the humours of the mob who accompanied these legalized plunderers. 'Whilst Battison and the other officers were attempting to break into a malt-house, a great number of all sorts of persons were gathered about them, expressing their indignation against him, for attempting this against Bardolf, the maltster, whom the whole town knew to be a just and harmless man. And the common sort of people covertly fixing a calf's tail to Battison's back, and deriding him with shouts and hollows, he departed without taking any distress there.'

Our pious teacher had his time so fully occupied in prison, that his hours must have passed more sweetly and swiftly than those of a debauched monarch, surrounded with luxuries, in his magnificent palaces. To tag laces, the profit of which supported a beloved wife, and his family of helpless children, must have employed many of his hours to procure the scantiest food, and most homely clothing. But he found time also to study his Bible, teach his fellow-prisoners, and compose books which inscribed his name on the page of history more indelibly and brilliantly than it could have been if set with diamonds on the most splendid earthly crown. He who could write, and loved to write, such volumes, wanted not occupation or solace; he might have said, I have found a nest of honey in the carcass of the lion that roared upon me. The world has from that time been refreshed with its sweetness, while, as a spiritual medicine, it counteracts the guilt and wretchedness of man. From such adversity God has extracted manna for the nourishment of his church in the wilderness.

Stone walls do not a prison make
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for a hermitage.

For though men keep my outward man
Within their locks and bars,
Yet by the faith of Christ I can
Mount higher than the stars.

These be the men that God doth count
Of high and noble mind;
These be the men that do surround
What you in nature find.

¹ Spelt 'Roughed' in the Indulgence, 1672.
² In the library of the Editor.
³ *Narrative*, p. 9.

* *Narrative*, p. 4.

First they do conquer their own hearts,
All worldly fears, and thru
Also the devil's fiery darts,
And persecuting men.

How refreshing for such scriptures as these 'to thrill through the soul' of a prisoner for Christ—'Let not your heart be troubled,' &c.; 'In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.' Thus Bunyan says, 'I have had sweet sights of the forgiveness of sin in this place. O the Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the innumerable company of angels, and God the Judge of all; Jesus the Mediator, and the spirits of just men made perfect! I have seen here what I never can express. I have felt the truth of that scripture, "Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Many years after he had obtained his liberty, notwithstanding all his sufferings, he, with the majesty of truth, hurled defiance at all persecutors, and exhorted those who had put on Christ to be steadfast unto the end. When preaching upon the unsearchable riches of Christ, he thus applied his subject, 'We are environed with many enemies, and faith in the love of God and of Christ is our only succour and shelter. Wherefore, our duty, and wisdom, and privilege is, to improve this love to our own advantage—improve it against daily infirmities—improve it against the wiles of the Devil—improve it against the threats, rage, death, and destruction that the men of this world continually, with their terror, set before you.'

It may be asked, Why dwell so much upon the sufferings of our pilgrim forefathers? My reply is, To those trials in the person of John Bunyan, we are indebted for his invaluable book. To the groans and tears, and blood of these saints we owe the great privileges we now enjoy. And my object also is to warn my readers not to touch the unclean thing. Antichrist is governed by the same principles and powers now as she was then: the Acts of uniformity and coercion, to use the *Book of Common Prayer*, remain unaltered; but a more humane state of society protects our persons from her despotism. So long as the wealth of the state is the bribe to conformity, and the power of taxing and imprisoning the nonconformist is continued, so long must she lie under the strong suspicion of hypocrisy and tyranny. She was formerly defiled with the sufferings unto death of many of the saints of God. And while the system is the same, it becomes us to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. Come out from among

them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord.'
² Co. vi. 14, 17.

It would not be proper to pass by the contemptible sophistry with which Mr. Southey justifies an intolerant bigoted hierarchy in sending our Pilgrim to prison, 'where his understanding had leisure to ripen and to cool . . . favourable for his moral and religious nature.'³ Can this be the language of the author of *Wat Tyler*? Yes; the smile of royalty had elevated and corrupted him. He might now regret that he was not born in Bonner's days, to have assisted in improving the morals and religion of the martyrs, by flogging them in the coal-house!

The same language which Southey uses to justify the Church of England in sending our Pilgrim to prison, would equally justify the horrid cruelties practised upon those pious and amiable martyrs, Tyndale, Latimer, or Ridley. The alleged offence was refusing to transfer the obedience of a free immortal spirit from God, who justly claims it, to erring, debauched, or ungodly man, who, instigated by Satan, assumes the prerogatives of Deity to exercise dominion over the mode and form of worship; to impose trammels upon that which must be free if it exists at all; for God is a Spirit, and they who worship him must do it in spirit and in truth.

When the English Established Church considered herself unsafe, unless Bunyan and many hundred kindred minds were shut up in prison, it proved itself to be a disgrace to the gospel, and an injury to a free people.⁴ All national hierarchies have estimated the minds of others by their own standard; but no real minister of the gospel can be like the Vicar of Bray, who was determined to retain his vicarage, whatever doctrine he might be ordered to preach.

How strangely different were the feelings of the poor, pious, unlettered teacher, to those of archbishops, bishops, and clergy, thousands of whom swore under Henry VIII. and Edward VI. to abjure the Pope; perjured themselves under Mary, by swearing to maintain him; and under Elizabeth, again perjured themselves by taking a new oath to un-oath Queen Mary's oath; and all within the space of a few years! The state, by enforcing conformity to an Established church, naturally puts the people upon desperate courses, either to play the hypocrite, and have no conscience at all, or to be tortured for having a conscience not fashionable or pleasing to the court party. They must either deny their faith and reason, or if virtuous, be destroyed for acting according to them.⁴ Those who have no religion have always persecuted those who have religious principles; and to enable them

² Southey's *Life of Bunyan*, p. lxi.

³ Dr. Cheever, p. 95.

⁴ *England's Present Interest*, 4to, 1575, by Wm. Penn.

¹ See 'Saints' Knowledge of Christ's Love,' vol. ii. p. 38.

vi. The Biblical and Doctrinal Significance

1. First stanza – "Stone walls do not a prison make – (Ephesians 6:20)
2. First stanza – "take that for a hermitage" – (Romans 7:25)
3. Second stanza – "For though men keep my outward man – (2 Corinthians 4:16)

4. Second stanza – “I can Mount higher than the stars” – (Ephesians 1:3)
5. Third stanza – “These be the men that God doth count...” – (Hebrews 11:36)
6. Third stanza – “What you in nature find” – (Ephesians 2:3)
7. Fourth stanza – “First they do conquer their own heart” – (1 Corinthians 9:7)
8. Fourth stanza – “Also the devil’s fiery darts,” – (Ephesians 6:16)

K. What is the status of Hymns and Songs of the Church currently?

i. From Medieval to the Reformation

1. Changes abounded

- a. During the almost ten centuries that make up the Medieval times (aka Middle ages [or Dark ages]). Music became more complex.
- b. During the long period of time between the seventh and sixteenth centuries, many very gradual changes occurred in the development of Western music;
 - i) composition slowly replaced improvisation as a way of creating musical works,
 - ii) the invention of musical notation made it possible to write down music along with directions that could be learned from the score,
 - iii) music began to be more structured and subject to principles of order, eg., the development of modes (keys), scales, rules of rhythm, etc., and
 - iv) the most important and dramatic change to develop was the advent of polyphony. The first clear description of music in more than one voice, *Musica enchiriadis* (“Handbook of Music”), dated around the end of the ninth century, refers to polyphony as something already being done - not something new. Along with these developments during this thousand years came an increasing secularization of music.
 - 1) Polyphony - **Polyphony**, in music, the simultaneous combination of two or more tones or melodic lines (the term derives from the Greek word for “many sounds”). Thus, even a single interval made up of two

simultaneous tones or a chord of three simultaneous tones is rudimentarily polyphonic.

- 2) Homophony - **Homophony**, musical texture based primarily on chords, in contrast to polyphony, which results from combinations of relatively independent melodies. In homophony, one part, usually the highest, tends to predominate and there is little rhythmic differentiation between the parts, whereas in polyphony, rhythmic distinctiveness reinforces melodic autonomy.

2. The Renaissance

- a. Time – From about 1450 to 1600
- b. What occurred
 - i) The period from about 1450 to 1600 in the history of music is now generally known as the “Renaissance”.
 - ii) It is said that “more music was written during this time than in any other previous age.
 - iii) The largest use of music was once again found in the churches.
 - iv) The church once again became the center of musical activity.

c. The Guttenburg Press

- i) The rise of printing with Johann Gutenberg's movable type in 1440 was applied to music notation in 1473.
- ii) This enabled a more plentiful supply of music, more accurate copies, and the fact that more works could be preserved for later generations. The period of time between 1450 and 1550 also saw a great increase in instrumental music (although this could be an illusion due to the fact that more music was starting to be written down) as well as the development of European national styles.
- iii) Many of the early Anabaptists were hymn writers, about 130 being identifiable by name. Among them

were Hans Hut (German) and Menno Simons (Dutch) ("Foundation-Book"). Many of the hymns of these writers were included in the several German and Dutch Anabaptist hymnals printed around 1560-1565.

ii. In the Reformation – 1517AD – 1648AD

1. From monasteries to the common man

a. Monastic hymns had been used for centuries, however, these disappeared in Britain at the Reformation, along with the monasteries themselves. In English and Scottish worship they were replaced with by the metrical psalms. These were beloved by Calvin in Geneva (John Calvin, 1509-1564) and by the English Protestant exiles who had fled the country (England) during the reign of Mary Tudor (1553-1558). The accession of Elizabeth I in 1558 brought these exiles back in force, carrying their psalm-books with them.

b. "Calvin's exclusive reliance on metrical psalms contrasted with Luther's love of hymns. The Lutheran church in Germany began a tradition of hymn-singing and hymn-writing that was, in the words of Catherine Winkworth (describing Luther's hymns) 'full of fire and strength, of clear Christian faith, and brave joyful trust in God.' These hymns were translated in the nineteenth century by German scholars such as Winkworth herself, Frances Elizabeth Cox, Richard Massie, and others, including Thomas Carlyle."

"At the same time, there were Roman Catholic resistance to the Reformation. One of the great hymns of the period 'Jerusalem, my happy home', perhaps written by an imprisoned priest; and the Counter-Reformation is represented by a hymn sometimes attributed to St. Francis Xavier." – Taken from: *An Annotated Anthology of Hymns*, Edited with commentary by J. R. Watson, 2002. Pg. 65.