

WW1 REMEMBRANCE OVERVIEW

Introduction

*For old unhappy far-off things, And battles long ago¹ **Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons** Deuteronomy 4:9.*

Attached Studies

N.B. Some readers may find the contents of the attached studies distressing.

The studies aim to show the reality of Remembrance from a Biblical perspective. They are as follows in approximate chronological order:

The Angels of Mons

The Lord the Unknown Warrior

Captain Siegfried Sassoon at the Somme

Flanders Fields and God's Son

1918 and God's Deliverance

Those studies highlight this testimony of Remembrance.

Remembrance Testimony²



What follows is key to Remembrance.

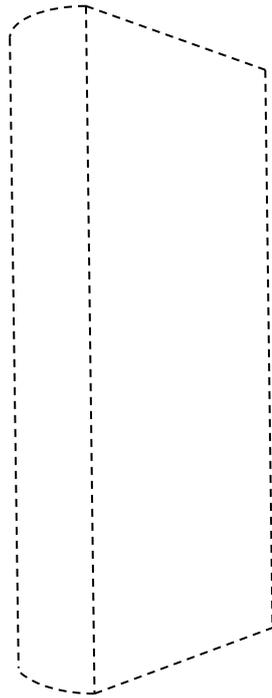
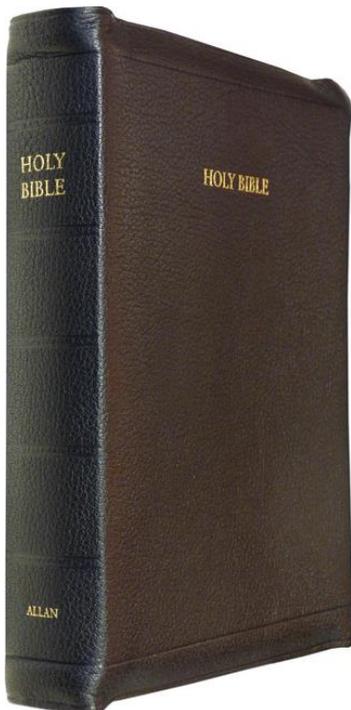
Preeminent Enemy Aim

Force, and fraud, are in war the two cardinal virtues - Thomas Hobbes³, *Leviathan*

The preeminent enemy aim of both world wars, though not publicized as such, was to take away **the book of the LORD** Isaiah 34:16 by force. That can be proved.

Force failed, so the enemy continued with the parallel aim that persists to this day of removing that Book by fraud and **by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple** Romans 16:18 to discard that Book and to embrace via Vatican versions - any so-called bible first published in English post-1611 - the non-extant original⁴.

It was a classic Emperor's New Clothes⁵ ploy and it worked. That can be proved as well.



The Emperor's New Clothes

The 1611 Holy Bible versus the Non-Extant Original

The Indestructible Book

The indestructible Book, thanks in no small part to the efforts of the 1914-1918 Allies in France and Flanders, is nevertheless still with us and it shall be vindicated as the Lord promised Isaiah the prophet, especially with respect to salvation and the 2nd Advent:

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it Isaiah 55:11.

The Lord had already revealed to Isaiah His promise of salvation⁶.

Isaiah 53:10-11 (KJV)

- ¹⁰ Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.
- ¹¹ He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

The First Lights of Home⁷



Will Bird, 25 years old in 1916

Concerning the Lord's promise of the 2nd Advent, an illustration arises from the book *And We Go On: A Memoir of The Great War* by Corporal Will R. Bird⁸ who served on the Western Front 1917-1918 with the 42nd Battalion The Black Watch of Canada.

Returning from France after the war aboard a troop transport, Corporal Bird recounts at the close of his book, his emphasis:

Dark figures came and stood beside me. I had not thought that anyone save myself would come on deck, and here they were, ten, a dozen, still more, all hunched in greatcoats, silent, staring. I looked at my watch. It was three o'clock in the morning. These men could not sleep; they were come to see the first lights of Halifax... They were all "oldtimers," the men of the trenches. We went on and on and on... *Nova Scotia*

The watchers stirred... It was the moment for which we had lived, which we had dreamed, visioned, pictured a thousand times...

*Far ahead, faint but growing brighter, we had glimpsed the first lights of **Home**.*

The best of Remembrance is that we too will be greeted by *the first lights of **Home**.*

the holy city, new Jerusalem Revelation 21:2⁹



...ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, **And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant,** and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel

Hebrews 12:22-24

Alan O'R

The Angels of Mons
“I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me” Psalm 50:15



The Angels of Mons – Our Protective God

*“Shining Angels throw a protective curtain around men from the Lincolnshire Regiment at Mons.”
 Illustration by Alfred Pearse published in *The Chariots of God*, by A. Churchwoman, 1915*

“What hath God wrought!” Numbers 23:23

Though it is over a 100 years since the Great War 1914-1918 it is well to remember the great deliverance that God wrought for the British nation at that time and which resounds for the English-speaking peoples to this day. That deliverance centred on the first major action that the BEF, British Expeditionary Force, fought against the enemy, near the Belgian town of Mons in August 1914.

“I will deliver thee” Psalm 50:15

Bible-believing researcher Bruce Horner¹⁰ writes as follows concerning the vivid depiction¹¹ above. In 2 Kings 6:17 we read,

“And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain [was] full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha”...

[W]e are similarly instructed of deliverance by the Psalmist in Psalm 50:15

“And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.”

During the World War of 1914-18...God fulfilled His Promise, as far as Great Britain was concerned, in a most noticeable manner. In the early months of World War 1 the contemptible little British Army, as the German High Command termed it, was hurriedly equipped and sent across the Channel to support the French and Belgian Allies; but these combined forces were far weaker in guns and man power than the Germans, and so, fighting a dogged rearguard action, they fell back before the terrific impact of massed enemy attacks. Serious defeat and tremendous losses appeared inevitable; but, during two days fighting around Mons, the German advance was halted long enough to allow the British Expeditionary Force to withdraw...

[T]he *“Angels of Mons”*...[was] an event claimed to have been seen in late August 1914...

While a detachment of British soldiers was retiring through Mons under very heavy German artillery and machinegun fire in August 1914 they knelt beside a hastily erected barricade and endeavoured to hold up the enemy advance... See graphic.

Suddenly, firing on both sides stopped dead and a silence fell...the astonished British saw four or five wonderful beings much bigger than men, between themselves and the halted Germans. They were white robed and bareheaded, and seemed rather to float than stand. Their backs were towards the British, and they faced the enemy with outstretched arm and hand as if to say: "*Stop. Thus far and no further*"...Next thing the British knew was that the Germans were retreating in great disorder...

Before the surprised British were able to realise what had happened, the whole of the apparently victorious enemy force were retreating in great disorder. This allowed the British and the Allied Armies to reform and fall back upon a line of defence several miles further west, where they "*dug in*". Then began... "*trench warfare*" which continued for over three years...until the Spring of 1918.

"A succourer of many" Romans 16:2

Mr Horner describes a second great deliverance that God wrought for Britain and her allies in the summer of 1918 that was instrumental in breaking the deadlock of trench warfare on the Western Front and led to the Allied victory in November 1918¹². Though four long and terrible years were to elapse between the two deliverances, the Lord was nevertheless "***a succourer of many***" in individual distress. One account from 1915 by researcher Mr Harold Begbie¹³ is as follows.

"Wounded for our transgressions" Isaiah 53:5

Rev. R. F. Morton said... "Now and again...a wounded man on the field is conscious of a comrade in white coming with help and even delivering him. One of our men who had heard of this story again and again and had put it down to hysterical excitement had an experience...he himself fell...as he lay helpless...he saw one in white coming to him... The white-robed came near and bent over him. The man lost consciousness for a moment, and when he came round he [was] out of danger. The white-robed still stood by him, and the man, looking at his hand, said, 'You are wounded in your hand'...He answered, 'Yes, that is an old wound that has opened again lately.'" Never forget:

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" Isaiah 53:5.

'The Angel of the Covenant'

Begbie reports further "There is a wonderful story of a man called by the soldiers 'A Comrade in White,' who is going about at the front, helping the wounded...many soldiers [had seen] Him. He was supposed to be 'The Angel of the Covenant,' our Lord Himself." Our covenant¹⁴ with 'The Angel of the Covenant' is "***the royal law***" James 2:8 the King James Bible.

"Thou shalt glorify me" Psalm 50:15

Observe therefore last part of Psalm 50:15. Rest assured no "***peace on earth***" without "***glory to God in the highest***" Luke 2:14 and similarly rest assured no deliverance from evil without exaltation of "***the God of my salvation.***" "***The LORD liveth...and let the God of my salvation be exalted. Great deliverance giveth he to his king...and to his seed for evermore***" Psalm 18:46, 50. Therefore, individually and nationally "***Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God***" 1 Corinthians 10:31 especially keeping "***the royal law***" James 2:8. The scripture is severe on "***covenantbreakers...Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death...***" Romans 1:31-32.

The Lord - The Unknown Warrior



11th November 1920: King George V placing a wreath on the coffin of the Unknown Warrior¹⁵



The Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey¹⁶

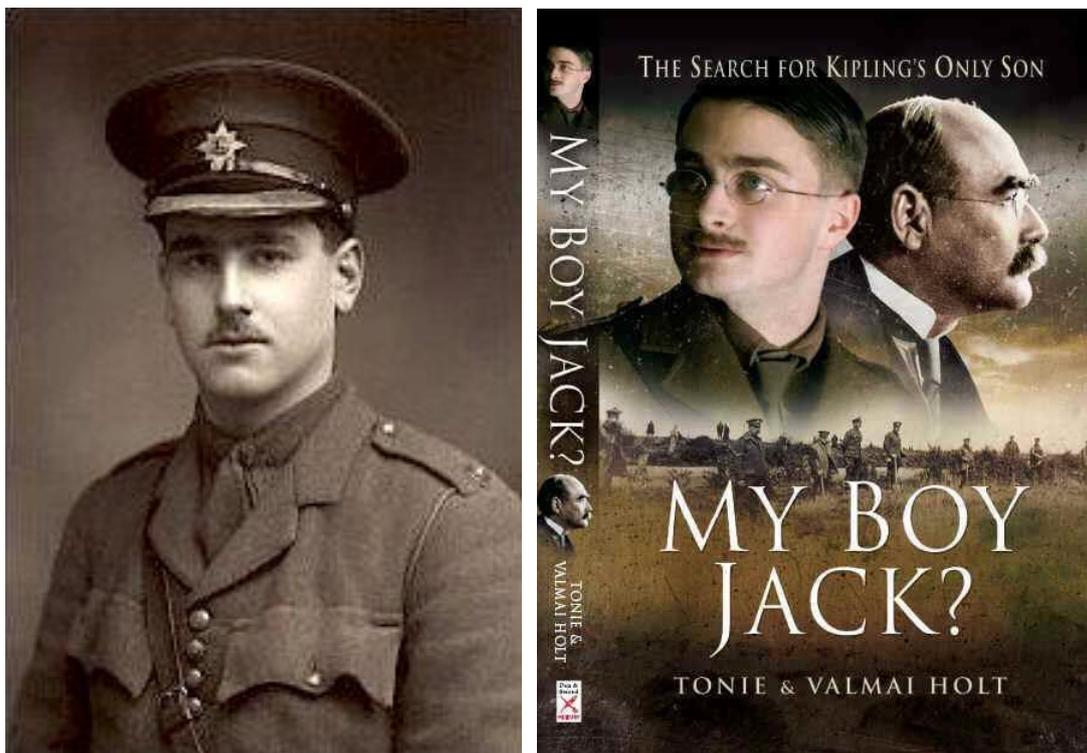
And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house 2 Chronicles 24:16



The Second Battle of Ypres April 24th 1915
by Richard Jack, Canadian War Museum¹⁷



Australians in the trenches at Fromelles July 19th 1916¹⁸
Only three of the men pictured survived the battle; all three were wounded¹⁹



Lieutenant John Kipling 1897-1915²⁰ *Thine only son...whom thou lovest* Genesis 22:2²¹

The Lord – The Unknown Warrior

2 Chronicles 23:9, 11, 16, 24:2, 14-16

23:9. Moreover Jehoiada the priest delivered to the captains of hundreds spears, and bucklers, and shields, that had been king David's, which were in the house of God...

23:11. Then they brought out the king's son [Joash], and put upon him the crown, and gave him the testimony, and made him king. And Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, God save the king...

23:16. And Jehoiada made a covenant between him, and between all the people, and between the king, that they should be the LORD'S people...

24:2. And Joash [the king] did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest...

24:14. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada.

24:15. But Jehoiada waxed old, and was full of days when he died; an hundred and thirty years old was he when he died.

24:16. And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house.

Acknowledgement

This message is based largely on a message by Dr. Peter S. Ruckman²² specifically the aspects that address the Lord Jesus Christ as the greatest Warrior and yet The Unknown Warrior. Dr. Ruckman's thoughts on this topic are gratefully acknowledged.

Introduction

2 Chronicles 23, 24 show that Jehoiada the priest was a great warrior against evil, a leader of warriors and a godly leader.

A nation can owe a lot to its warriors, if they have godly leadership.

It's one Warrior in particular that we'll be looking at and what we all owe Him. Exodus 15:3 says of Him ***The LORD is a man of war*** [a Warrior]: ***the LORD is his name***.

So it may seem strange that I refer to the Lord Jesus Christ as The Unknown Warrior. That is the term used for the unidentified casualty buried in Westminster Abbey, whereas Christians would say that the Lord Jesus Christ is not only identified but well-known.

However, the term The Unknown Warrior does apply to the Lord Jesus Christ as I will explain later.

For now, we should think first about the term Remembrance. When writing to the Philippian Church, Paul said ***I thank my God upon every remembrance of you*** Philippians 1:3.

Remembrance as it applies to our warriors should encourage thankfulness to God, for what was endured on our behalf in the world wars of the last century.

Remembrance

It is right therefore to remember those like The Unknown Warrior, who was buried in Westminster Abbey on Remembrance Day, November 11th, 1920, with full military honours, in the presence of King George V.

I believe further that The Unknown Warrior has a special significance for the child of God, in two respects.

The first of these is the privilege of possessing and reading the scriptures. The second is with respect to the Lord Jesus Christ, as I've indicated.

The Unknown Warrior and The Scripture of Truth Daniel 10:21

The Unknown Warrior is closely associated with this Book, the Holy Bible. Portions of five Texts of scripture from this Book are inscribed on the black marble gravestone covering the tomb.

Four New Testament Texts are arranged around the top, base and sides of the gravestone²³. They are as follows:

John 15:13 ***Greater love hath no man than this.***

1 Corinthians 15:22 ***In Christ shall all be made alive.***

2 Corinthians 6:9 ***Unknown and yet well known, dying and behold we live.***

2 Timothy 2:19 ***The Lord knoweth them that are his.***

The fifth Text is from the Old Testament and it is located on the lower face of the gravestone. The words are from 2 Chronicles 24:16, the verse that was read out earlier.

They buried him...among the kings, because he had done good...toward God, and toward his house.

It is strange to think of any good that was done in the world wars ***toward God, and toward his house*** but the inscribed scriptures show that some good was done and you and I are the beneficiaries.

The Allied victories meant that the Holy Bible could continue to be readily obtained, read, studied, memorized, believed and preached in the English-speaking nations. Historian Edmond Paris²⁴ shows how the Jesuit Order set up the world wars. Paris' work is an impeccable source.

Rome's strategy was *overt*, in WW1 and 2. Vatican victories in either of those conflicts would have spelt the abrupt end of the possession and circulation of any Protestant Bibles, such as Luther's or the Authorized King James.

It should be noted how much the Jesuits²⁵ hated the 1611 Holy Bible. The following quotation is from an exposé of the Jesuit conspiracy written by The Abbate Leone²⁶ and published in 1848. This is what the Jesuits had to say about the Authorized King James Bible of 1611.

*Then the Bible, that serpent which with head erect and eyes flashing threatens us with its venom while it trails along the ground, shall be changed into a rod as soon as we are able to seize it [1881, Revised Version, Westcott and Hort, Cambridge University; 1881, 'Originals-onlyism,' Hodge and Warfield, Princeton Theological Seminary, **Traitors, heady, highminded** 2 Timothy 3:4]...for three centuries past this cruel asp has left us no repose. You well know with what folds it entwines us and with what fangs it gnaws us.*

American Baptist Eric Jon Phelps is a long-term researcher of Vatican strategy. His comment on that Jesuit statement is that *As The Authorized Version is the bulwark for the very Reformation the [Jesuit] Order is oath-bound to destroy it*²⁷.

Rome lost WW1, 2. Thank God we still have *the scripture of truth* Daniel 10:21.



Aside: Not long ago, a Christian fundamentalist told me that he did not want to get involved in the Bible version debate. Of course, there is no Bible version debate. There's the facts and the falsehoods, *the scripture of truth* Daniel 10:21 and the Catholic satanic counterfeits²⁸. I like what Winston Churchill²⁹ said about the enemy in 1941. It applies in principle to the enemies of this Book *the scripture of truth* Daniel 10:21, whoever they are, whether they be saved or lost.

"We ask no favours of the enemy. We seek from them no compunction...Where you have been the least resisted there you have been the most brutal..." [Note what they did to Sister Riplinger³⁰] *We will have no truce or parley with you, or the grisly gang who work your wicked will* [Bible critics have a Bible verse. Mark 5:9 *...My name is Legion: for we are many*]. *You do your worst - and we will do our best. Perhaps it may be our turn soon; perhaps it may be our turn now..."* It is³¹:



**"They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away."
Job 21:18**

*For they have sown the wind,
and they shall reap the whirlwind...* Hosea 8:7

As mentioned, 2 Chronicles 23, 24 show that Jehoiada the priest was a great warrior against evil. Joshua, David and David's mighty men were great warriors and others could be cited. The history of warfare reveals many great warriors but I think some of the greatest of them served in WW1.



The Unknown Warrior and the Lord Jesus Christ

The Greatest Warrior

Turning to The Unknown Warrior and the Lord Jesus Christ, it's important to understand that as well as being The Unknown Warrior, the Lord Jesus Christ was and is the greatest Warrior that ever lived. That's quite an achievement because the scripture reveals some great warriors.

I draw attention to an incident from April 1915 that shows what great warriors fought in WW1 because in some respects they illustrated how the Lord fought at Calvary. I'm referring to men of the Canadian Army who underwent a great ordeal at that time and helped secure an essential victory.

Extracts from summary reports³² explain what happened.

In the first week of April 1915, the Canadian troops were moved...to a bulge in the Allied line in front of the City of Ypres. This was the famed — or notorious — Ypres Salient, where the British and Allied line pushed into the German line in a concave bend. The Germans held the higher ground and were able to fire into the Allied trenches from the north, the south and the east. On the Canadian right were two British divisions, and on their left a French division, the 45th (Algerian)...

Across No-Man's-Land, the Germans had achieved a local superiority of seven and a half divisions to the Allied forces' six and were far stronger in artillery support...

Here on April 22, the Germans sought to remove the Salient by introducing a new weapon, poison gas. Following an intensive artillery bombardment, they released 160 tons of chlorine gas from cylinders... As thick clouds of yellow-green chlorine drifted over their trenches the French defences crumbled, and the troops, completely bemused by this terrible weapon, died or broke and fled...

The fierce battle of St. Julien lay ahead. On April 24, the Germans attacked in an attempt to obliterate the Salient once and for all. Another violent bombardment was followed by another gas attack in the same pattern as before. This time the target was the Canadian line. Here, through terrible fighting, withered with shrapnel and machine-gun fire...violently sick and gasping for air through soaked and muddy handkerchiefs, they held on until reinforcements arrived...

So even under the horrible surprise of gas the Canadians in their first major battle held the line against many times their numbers.

The Canadians were withdrawn from the battle on May 3, being relieved by the British. Losses had been heavy. Of a maximum divisional strength of 18,000 that had started the battle, 5975 had become casualties, of whom over 1000 were fatal...

[Yet] the Canadians to a man seemed obsessed with the idea that this was their particular battle and that they would perish where they stood rather than give way...

Aside: The Canadian military historian Norm Christie³³ has said that in the world wars, Canada was not threatened, the Canadians fought for others. That is like Matthew 27:42 **He saved others; himself he cannot save...**

It is noteworthy that just before WW1 the Canadian Prime Minister said³⁴ "*When Britain is at war, Canada is at war. There is no distinction.*" The Australian Federal Treasurer³⁵ said "*If Britain goes to her Armageddon, [Australia] will go with her.*" Never forget that *one* Book, the Book that still governs the English-speaking nations constitutionally³⁶, creates and sustains that family unity as Paul states **And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it...** 1 Corinthians 12:26.

Ypres never fell to the Germans.

Three observations can be made about the Canadian resistance at Ypres:

- It was *against many times their numbers*
- It was *against this terrible new weapon, poison gas*

- [T]hey would perish where they stood rather than give way.

That was like what happened to the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary. Note the parallels.

against many times their numbers

The Lord fought against *overwhelming numbers* and won. This is one reason why the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest Warrior that ever lived.

He had ***all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes...and all the council*** against Him Mark 14:53, 55.

He had many that ***bare false witness against him*** Mark 14:56.

He had the king against Him and the king's men of war because ***Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him*** Luke 23:11.

He had the Roman governor against Him because ***Pilate...delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified*** Mark 15:15.

He had ***the soldiers of the governor...the whole band of soldiers*** against him. Of them Matthew states ***they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head...and led him away to crucify him*** Matthew 27:27, 30-31.

In addition, besides the enemies you could have seen, the Lord had ***the princes of this world*** against Him, as Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 2:8. That's the ***principalities...powers...the rulers of the darkness of this world...spiritual wickedness in high places*** Ephesians 6:12 and especially ***the prince of this world*** John 12:31, 14:30. He was the Lord's old adversary from the wilderness battle Matthew 4:1-11.

No other soldier ever had to face all the adversaries *at one time* that the Lord Jesus Christ did but the Lord trusted in Isaiah 50:7.

For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. And He wasn't.

The Lord won the battle at Calvary as He had won the battle in the wilderness, as Paul said in Colossians 2:15:

And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it [the cross].

They couldn't force Him to quit. They couldn't force Him to call down ***more than twelve legions of angels*** Matthew 26:53 to deliver Him. The Lord went the whole distance until as John says in John 19:30 ***he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.***

That's one reason why the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest Warrior that ever lived, the superior enemy force He defeated, both natural and supernatural.

this terrible new weapon

The Lord had to face *this terrible new weapon* and all His earthly life, He *knew* He had to face it. Along with victory, He saw His suffering and death. This is another reason that He is the greatest Warrior of all time.

The Lord's method of execution that He commanded for Israel was stoning. In Numbers 15:32-36, when a man of Israel broke the Sabbath, ***the LORD commanded Moses...The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.***

But the Romans used *this terrible new weapon* of crucifixion. Death by stoning was brutal but fairly quick. Death by crucifixion was slow, like the worst effects of chlorine gas. Major Matthews³⁷ was a Canadian officer who experienced the gas attack of April 24th 1915. No gas masks were available. All the Canadians had to resist the gas were hastily improvised wet cloths to try to absorb the chlorine.

Major Matthews said this.

This wall of vapour appeared to me to be at least fifteen feet in height, white on top, the remainder being of a greenish yellow colour...When the fumes were fully on us, breathing became most difficult. It was hard to resist the temptation to tear away the damp rags from our mouths in the struggle for air...I don't suppose the worst of it lasted more than ten minutes but we could not have stood it much longer...The lungs [seemed] to refuse to do their duty...the worst cases...were just as bad twelve hours after and it was very difficult to get them back from the trench, the least exertion bringing on choking fits almost like convulsions.

Major Matthews was a brave man, hope he's with the Lord now. However as Major Matthews indicated, death by chlorine gas would be slow and painful.

Death by crucifixion was the same.

Mark 15:25-37 record that the Lord and the two thieves hung on their crosses for 6 hours, from ***the third hour...until the ninth hour***. John records that the thieves were still alive after that time interval. That is why ***the soldiers...brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him*** John 19:32.

Clearly other men besides the Lord endured crucifixion but what is remarkable about the Lord's ordeal is that as a man, along with His victory, He saw it ahead of time for the best part of 30 years.

Because He *knew* about the *exact* nature of the fate that awaited Him from the prophecy of Psalm 22, especially Psalm 22:14-15.

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels [the term signifies both the upper and lower viscera]. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

That was the Lord's personal account of His death in action ahead of time. He lived with that vision every waking moment of His earthly life for the best part of 30 years until He actually went to Calvary.

As the Lord told His disciples in Matthew 20:18-19 ***the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him.***

No soldier lives with that kind of expectation *for that amount of time*.

That's a second reason why the Lord is the greatest Warrior that ever lived, the certain knowledge of the terrible fate that awaited Him, *for almost His entire earthly life*. Yet He set his face like a flint and went on.

[T]hey would perish where they stood rather than give way

Then the Lord *would perish rather than give way*. As the Lord Himself declared ***Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?*** Matthew 26:53-54.

The Lord *would perish rather than give way* so that ***the scriptures be fulfilled*** to achieve an outstanding victory, the greatest victory of all time.

That's a third reason why the Lord is the greatest Warrior of all time, because the Lord defeated ***the last enemy*** 1 Corinthians 15:26, namely death.

The Lord died on the cross John 19:30 but death could not *hold* the Lord Jesus Christ because He ***did no sin*** 1 Peter 2:22 and so ***it was not possible that he should be holden of it*** Acts 2:24 i.e. death.

So Paul could write in Romans 6:9 ***Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.***

And death has no dominion over the child of God because as John explains in John 1:12 ***But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.***

That power is ***the power of an endless life*** Hebrews 7:16. That is why the Lord said to Martha in John 11:25-26 ***I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.*** If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your sin-bearer and death-conqueror, you too will live forever according to ***the power of an endless life.***

So the Lord is the greatest Warrior because He won the greatest victory in that He alone defeated the strongest enemy and enabled ***whosoever will*** Revelation 22:17 to enjoy that victory as the Lord Himself said in Hebrews 2:13 ***Behold I and the children which God hath given me.***

Yet the Lord Jesus Christ is The Unknown Warrior. Why?

The Unknown Warrior – No Record

One reason why a warrior may be unknown is that there's no record of his death, or only a partial record.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission oversees over one million war burials from the world wars³⁸. Over 200,000 are unknown, well over 10 times the population of Guisborough³⁹ where this writer lives.

For British and Commonwealth unknown graves of war dead, the inscription on the headstone reads *A Soldier of The Great War, Known Unto God* or *A Soldier of The 1939-1945 War, Known Unto God*. The expression ***known unto God*** is from the 1611 Authorized King James Bible, Acts 15:18, Philipians 4:6 and the words were chosen by the famous author Rudyard Kipling⁴⁰.

In that way the grave is marked but it's only a partial record. The soldier buried there is unknown, except to God.

You may know that Rudyard Kipling lost his only son, John Lockwood Kipling, in the Great War. John was killed, aged 18, at the battle of Loos in France that was fought during September 25th-26th 1915.

John Kipling was serving as an officer in the Irish Guards and the tragedy was commemorated in the film⁴¹ *My Boy Jack*, where the part of John Kipling was played by Daniel Radcliffe aka Harry Potter. Lieutenant Kipling is one of the more honourable roles that Mr Radcliffe has performed to date.

Aside: Sir Michael Redgrave narrated the epic BBC series *The Great War*. Sir Michael⁴² said that *“Loos was a dismal region...a shattered mining village...slag heaps, derelict machinery, ruined cottages...Loos, there was something chilling even about the name.”* The ordinary soldier does not choose the battlefield. He simply tries to survive it. Thankfully we have 2 Corinthians 2:14 ***Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.***

Rudyard Kipling travelled 1500 miles visiting war cemeteries in 1920 trying to find his son's grave but he was unsuccessful. All that exists of John Kipling's death is a partial record.

By contrast, you may say that we have a record of the Lord's death because we have the Holy Bible, as I pointed out. Thank God for Bible-based churches and groups and Bible conferences but by and large, the scripture is rejected in this country today, even though it is available.

In the 19th century the Roman Catholic writer F. W. Faber⁴³ said this. *“The [English] Protestant Bible...is part of the national mind, and the anchor of national seriousness.”*

It isn't any more. Rev M. J. Roberts⁴⁴ was editor of *The Banner of Truth Magazine* and minister of Greyfriars Free Church in Inverness. He said this in December 1994.

The Bible is a lost book in Britain today.

Over 20 years later, that is how it is for most folk today *who go right on their ways* Proverbs 9:15. Any open-air witness will confirm that.

For most folk, therefore, the Lord is The Unknown Warrior because they've rejected the Holy Bible and there's no other official record of His death. For most folk, the Lord remains unknown.

Anyone who doesn't know about the Lord Jesus Christ through the scripture will most likely never come to know Him personally as the Saviour. That's a tragedy.

The Unknown Warrior – Unrecognizable

Another reason why a soldier may be unknown is that he may be unrecognizable. After His Calvary sufferings, the Lord was unrecognizable like The Unknown Warrior buried in Westminster Abbey.

Isaiah 52:14 says of the Lord in prophecy that *As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.*

Yet Isaiah 53:5 says of the Lord again in prophecy even with respect to the injuries that made Him unrecognisable *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

Paul says in Romans 5:1 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

That is why *the chastisement of our peace was upon him.* Your peace with God is *the wrath of God* John 3:36 that abode on Jesus Christ that made Him unrecognisable and we should never forget that.

The Unknown Warrior – An Enemy

A third reason that a soldier may be unknown is that he's an enemy.

Neither side in a war is really interested in who the other side's dead are. They don't bother recording them.

You may know of an investigation to identify by DNA analyses the remains of 250 British and Australian soldiers who were killed in the battle of Fromelles⁴⁵ in France on July 19th-20th 1916. The Germans buried these men in mass graves that were recently excavated.

The DNA analyses had identified 166 Australians by 2019 but without it all those men would have remained unknown.

The Lord Jesus Christ is unknown personally to most folk because He's an Enemy. If they're faced with Him through *the gospel of Christ* Romans 1:16, usually they don't want to know Him.

John 3:19, 20 explain why.

And this is the condemnation, that light [the Lord Jesus Christ] is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

In other words, the Lord can pass perfect and precise judgement on your personal life regardless of your opinion on the matter one way or the other. That's why He's hated. That's why the world doesn't want to know Him. A man has to say with the Psalmist in Psalm 73:22 *So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee* in order to come to know Jesus Christ. That's hard, especially for *all the proud men* Jeremiah 43:2, which is most of them.

It can be done, of course and that's not hard to prove.

Remember that every Christian believer was once one of those *that...hateth the light* as Paul describes in Philippians 3:18 *the enemies of the cross of Christ* and of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

It is God's mercy that overcomes the enmity.

As Paul says in Titus 3:3-6 *For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But*

after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

That is also *the gospel of Christ* Romans 1:16. Salvation by the grace and mercy of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ brings with it reconciliation as Paul says in Romans 5:10 *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

Reconciliation is the bringing together of two parties, God and man that had been at enmity. That is what the Lord achieved at Calvary. Note especially therefore that phrase *we shall be saved by his life*. That is our final point, because reconciliation is about life, not death.

Conclusion – The Empty Tomb

The Lord Jesus Christ differs from The Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey in at least one vital respect. The Lord's tomb is empty⁴⁶. As the angel said to the women *upon the first day of the week* Luke 24:1, *Why seek ye the living among the dead. He is not here, but is risen* Luke 24:5, 6.

Many years later, the Lord Himself said in Revelation 1:18 *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen;*

You too can be *alive for evermore, Amen;* you too can have an empty tomb or indeed no tomb if you're alive when the Lord comes back because you can have *the power of an endless life* Hebrews 7:16. John 1:12 is still on offer.

If you have accepted the Lord's offer of *an endless life*, then you're no longer *far off* but you're *made nigh by the blood of Christ* with the Lord *by the cross having slain the enmity thereby* between the Lord and yourself so that you are now *accepted in the beloved* Ephesians 1:6, 2:13, 16.

It has been said⁴⁷ that the loneliest people in the world are senior secondary school girls. That is an amazing statement considering how much in the way of friends, fun and excitement these girls are supposed to have but maybe that doesn't match how you are on the inside. It doesn't have to be that way. You can be *accepted in the beloved*, you can be *in Christ...a new creature* 2 Corinthians 5:17 and you can say with Paul *Christ liveth in me* Galatians 2:20.

Remember though that if you are already *in Christ* and know Him personally, then by searching the scriptures you will come to know Him further.

Rudyard Kipling spent a year searching for his son John after WW1 and travelled 1500 miles but never found him. Yet the Lord said in Jeremiah 29:13 *Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.* The Lord Jesus Christ explained that statement in John 5:39 *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.* That's a command, by the way, *Search the scriptures.*

Obedience to that command so that you can know the Lord further makes the Lord's great victory at Calvary even greater.

That fact too should always be part of our remembrance. Amen.

Finally, to other Bible believers who have been an encouragement to this writer, I am reminded of the book *Band of Brothers* by Stephen E. Ambrose about American paratroopers in Europe in WW2. One part of the book refers to Sergeant Mike Ranney⁴⁸, who said this. *"I cherish the memories of a question my grandson asked me the other day when he said, 'Grandpa, were you a hero in the war?' Grandpa said 'No...but I served in a company of heroes'."* Thank you for your company. It means a lot.

Captain Siegfried Sassoon at the Somme

Introduction

July 2016 marked the 100th anniversary of the opening of the battle of the Somme in northern France in WW1 on July 1st 1916⁴⁹. Lieutenant later Captain Siegfried Sassoon⁵⁰ was a British Army officer who served in that battle and survived. This work aims to both help commemorate the centenary of the battle and to draw lessons from the life and experiences of Captain Sassoon as a testimony to Lamentations 3:22-23 **“It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.”**

Besetting Sin

It should be understood that Sassoon was caught in a besetting sin for much of his life. The Wikipedia and this site⁵¹ reveal it. Paul therefore admonishes today’s believer **“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin”** Hebrews 12:1-4.

It was the Lord Jesus Christ that **“resisted unto blood, striving against sin.”** Therefore today’s believer can plead **“the blood of Christ”** against any sin and overcome it⁵² insofar as **“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”** Hebrews 9:14 **“and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”** 1 John 1:7.

Biography

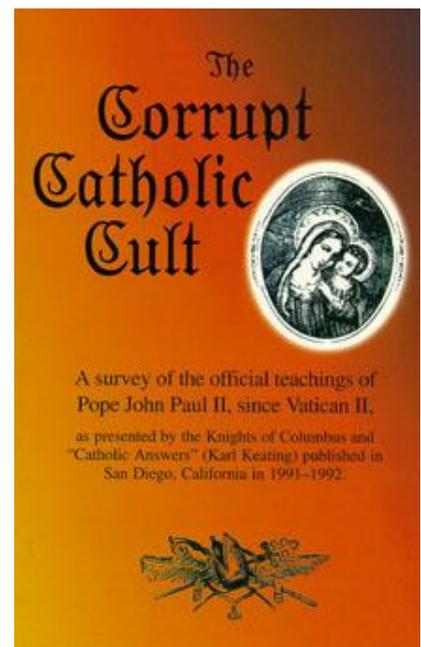
Captain Siegfried Sassoon, 1886-1967, served in France in WW1 with the Royal Welch Fusiliers at the Somme and at Arras and later in Palestine, after which he returned to France, where he was wounded and sent home to convalesce some months before the armistice. He is well known as one of the most forthright and articulate writers of the war – and against the war. He lodged a written protest against the war with his commanding officer in July 1917, as a result of which he was committed to a hospital for war neuroses cases in Craiglockhart, Edinburgh.

Sassoon describes his early life and his war experiences in his semi-autobiographical work *The Complete Memoirs of George Sherston*⁵³. Catholic nun Dame Felicitas Corrigan describes his later life and eventual conversion to Christianity, though in a Catholic environment, in 1957⁵⁴ in her book *Siegfried Sassoon: Poet’s Pilgrimage*⁵⁵.

Dame Felicitas was instrumental in Sassoon getting saved but this work is not an endorsement of the corrupt cult of Catholicism⁵⁶. It is an account of how one man got saved and what may be learned from his salvation and before it. Sassoon became a member of the Catholic Church after his conversion but he is not misled by the



Siegfried Sassoon (May 1915)



corrupt Catholic cult any longer *nor by his besetting sin* in that he now stands among “...*the spirits of just men made perfect*” Hebrews 12:23.

The Poem Hunter site⁵⁷ lists Sassoon’s poems⁵⁸ with these biographical details.

Siegfried Sassoon was perhaps the most innocent of the war poets. John Hildebidle has called Sassoon the “accidental hero.” Born into a wealthy Jewish family in 1886, Sassoon lived the pastoral life of a young squire: fox-hunting, playing cricket, golfing and writing romantic verses.

Being an innocent, Sassoon’s reaction to the realities of the war were all the more bitter and violent - both his reaction through his poetry and his reaction on the battlefield (where, after the death of fellow officer David Thomas and his brother Hamo at Gallipoli, Sassoon earned the nickname “Mad Jack” for his near-suicidal exploits against the German lines - in the early manifestation of his grief, when he still believed that the Germans were entirely to blame)...Sassoon also showed his innocence by going public with his protest against the war (as he grew to see that insensitive political leadership was the greater enemy than the Germans). Luckily, his friend and fellow poet Robert Graves convinced the review board that Sassoon was suffering from shell-shock and he was sent instead to the military hospital at Craiglockhart where he met and influenced Wilfred Owen.

Sassoon is a key figure in the study of the poetry of the Great War: he brought with him to the war the idyllic pastoral background; he began by writing war poetry reminiscent of Rupert Brooke; he mingled with such war poets as Robert Graves and Edmund Blunden; he spoke out publicly against the war (and yet returned to it); he influenced and mentored the then unknown Wilfred Owen; he spent thirty years reflecting on the war through his memoirs; and at last he found peace in his religious faith...“my development has been entirely consistent and in character” [Sassoon said], “...I am a religious poet.”

This was true of him even as an unsaved man as these poems reveal. See the following citations together with the attached study **The Redeemer**.

Religious Poetry

Sassoon had a sense of Paul's testimony *in principle* according to "my...manner of life" 2 Timothy 3:10. Today's believer should have an equivalent testimony to have "plentifully declared the thing as it is..." Job 26:3 and "Provide things honest in the sight of all men" Romans 12:17. "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost" Romans 9:1.

Table Testimony to Sassoon's testimony "...I am a religious poet"⁵⁹

<i>Villon</i> Pre-War	<i>At Carnoy</i> July 3 rd , 1916	<i>Autumn</i> circa 1917
<i>They threw me from the gates: my matted hair</i>	<i>Down in the hollow there's the whole Brigade</i>	<i>October's bellowing anger breaks and cleaves</i>
<i>Was dank with dungeon wetness; my spent frame</i>	<i>Camped in four groups: through twilight falling slow</i>	<i>The bronzed battalions of the stricken wood</i>
<i>O'erlaid with marish agues: everywhere</i>	<i>I hear a sound of mouth-organs, ill-played,</i>	<i>In whose lament I hear a voice that grieves</i>
<i>Tortured by leaping pangs of frost and flame,</i>	<i>And murmur of voices, gruff, confused, and low.</i>	<i>For battle's fruitless harvest, and the feud</i>
<i>So hideous was I that even Lazarus there</i>	<i>Crouched among thistle-tufts I've watched the glow</i>	<i>Of outraged men. Their lives are like the leaves</i>
<i>In noisome rags arrayed and leprous shame,</i>	<i>Of a blurred orange sunset flare and fade;</i>	<i>Scattered in flocks of ruin, tossed and blown</i>
<i>Beside me set had seemed full sweet and fair,</i>	<i>And I'm content.</i>	<i>Along the westerling furnace flaring red.</i>
<i>And looked on me with loathing.</i>	<i>To-morrow we must go</i>	<i>O martyred youth and manhood overthrown,</i>
<i>But one came</i>	<i>To take some cursèd Wood ... O world God made!</i>	<i>The burden of your wrongs is on my head.</i>
<i>Who laid a cloak on me and brought me in</i>		
<i>Tenderly to an hostel quiet and clean;</i>		
<i>Used me with healing hands for all my needs.</i>		
<i>The mortal stain of my reputed sin,</i>		
<i>My state despised, and my defiled weeds,</i>		
<i>He hath put by as though they had not been.</i>		

In sum "...if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" 1 John 2:1-2. The overview of Sassoon at the Somme follows.

Sassoon's Somme Ordeal

Based on Extracts from a Talk Transcript

Writer's note: Prepared for and delivered during a magnificent Holts Tour⁶⁰ of the Somme in about 1984, courtesy of Major and Mrs Holt's invitation. I seem to recall it went down fairly well. A few up-to-date annotations are inserted in **blue text** in **blue braces** [] or as numbered endnotes. A final section has been added.

Sassoon – Introduction

Many here may be familiar with Siegfried Sassoon's writings. For those not familiar with his writings, I trust I can whet some appetites [and prepare the ground for further scriptural lessons that may be drawn from Sassoon's life and experiences].

Sassoon – the Man

- In many ways he was a typical young English sportsman and gentleman, like multitudes who flocked enthusiastically to the colours in 1914.
- But being part-Jewish, he was endowed with great gifts (like most Jews) including the ability to express himself vividly and forcibly.

- To visualise Sassoon, consider the characterisation of the athlete Harold Abrahams [by actor Ben Cross⁶¹] in the film *Chariots of Fire*⁶². To me, they seem very similar, physically and mentally.

Sassoon – the Soldier

- He served with the 1st Battalion, the Royal Welch Fusiliers, opposite [the village of] Fricourt on July 1st 1916. [His battalion was part of the elite 7th Infantry Division, a Regular division which had seen service in France since 1914⁶³.]
- Before the battle, he had earned the nickname MAD JACK for his daring exploits, for which he was awarded the MC, Military Cross⁶⁴. [The Wikipedia article on Sassoon states On 27 July 1916 he was awarded the [Military Cross](#); the citation read:

2nd Lt. Siegfried Lorraine [*sic*] [Lorraine] Sassoon, 3rd (attd. 1st) Bn., R. W. Fus.

For conspicuous gallantry during a raid on the enemy's trenches. He remained for 1½ hours under rifle and bomb fire collecting and bringing in our wounded. Owing to his courage and determination all the killed and wounded were brought in]

- He saw the battle from a support trench that he termed *our opera box* and recorded the day's events in a diary that he transcribed into his memoirs⁶⁵ with the comments *A small shiny black notebook contains my pencilled particulars. It will do no good embellishing them with after-thoughts. I cannot turn my field glasses on the past...Fricourt half-hidden by clouds of drifting smoke, blue, pinkish and grey. Shrapnel bursting in bluish-white puffs with tiny flashes. The birds seem bewildered; a lark begins to go up and then flies feebly along, thinking better of it. Others flutter above the trench with querulous cries, weak on the wing...There were about forty casualties on the left (from the machine-gun in Fricourt). Through my glasses I could see one man moving his left arm up and down as he lay on his side; his face is a crimson patch. Others lay still in the sunlight...*
- [Sassoon could clearly bring the reader up sharp with the horror of the war but he possessed extraordinary sensitivity to the tragedy of the war.] We visited the Devon and Gordon Cemetery. Sassoon was in that area in July 1916 as his battalion moved into an area known as The Quadrilateral. This is what he wrote⁶⁶.

[At]...the first of many halts...I saw, arranged by the roadside, about fifty of the British dead. Many of them were Gordon Highlanders. There were Devons and South Staffordshires among them, but they were beyond regimental rivalry now – their fingers mingled in blood-stained bunches, as though acknowledging the companionship of death. There was much battle gear lying about, and some dead horses. There were rags and shreds of clothing, boots riddled and torn, and when we came to the old German front-line, a sour pervasive stench which differed from anything my nostrils had known before...I wanted to say that I had seen “the horrors of war;” and here they were, nearly three days old...

Sassoon penned his earliest anti-war poem from this experience [thinking of those at home].

*The Road*⁶⁷

(from *Collected Poems, The Old Huntsman*)

*The road is thronged with women; soldiers pass
And halt, but never see them; yet they're here –
A patient crowd along the sodden grass,
Silent, worn out with waiting, sick with fear.
The road goes crawling up a long hillside,
All ruts and stones and sludge, and the emptied dregs
Of battle thrown in heaps. Here where they died
Are stretched big-bellied horses with stiff legs,
And dead men, bloody-fingered from the fight,
Stare up at caverned darkness winking white...*

- During the Somme battle he captured a German trench single-handed in broad daylight. The Germans in it had beaten off a surprise attack by an entire battalion the previous night. A single lunatic named Sassoon was too much for them!
- That same day, Sassoon led a successful bombing i.e. grenade-throwing counter attack against the Prussian Guard, Germany's elite⁶⁸. [Sassoon's cricketing background obviously stood him in good stead with respect to grenade-throwing.]
- Later that day, he was reprimanded by his commanding officer, Colonel Stockwell, for not informing Stockwell of his whereabouts and activities. One day in the [then precarious] life of 'Mad Jack' Sassoon. Robert Graves⁶⁹ writes *Siegfried distinguished himself by taking, single-handed, a battalion frontage which the Royal Irish Regiment had failed to take the day before. He went over with bombs in daylight, under covering fire from a couple of rifles, and scared away the occupants [but] instead of signalling for reinforcements, he sat down in the German trench and began reading a book of poems which he had brought with him. When he finally went back he did not even report. Colonel Stockwell, then in command, raged at him. The attack on Mametz Wood had been delayed two hours because British patrols were still reported to be out. 'British patrols' were Siegfried and his book of poems.*

Dame Felicitas adds⁷⁰ *He dwelt alone...among throngs of men in the Gehenna of the Somme. When 'Mad Jack' captured a German trench with little more than a wave of his hand, his immediate reaction was to sit down somewhere, fish in his pocket, bring out a book of poems, and forget all about the Germans on the run. The gas and flames of diabolical warfare could not blast or consume his tree of life. "I'd have got you a D.S.O. if you'd only shown more sense," the CO said⁷¹.*

[Sassoon's ordeal on the Somme ended abruptly on July 23rd 1916 when he was evacuated suffering severe trench fever and remained in England convalescing for the rest of the year⁷².]

Sassoon – the Protester

[Sassoon returned to France in February 1917 but was evacuated to England a second time in April after having been wounded in the battle of Arras⁷³. Soon afterwards, he wrote his protest against the war that he forwarded to his CO⁷⁴, the outcome of which action was that he was sent to Craiglockart War Hospital in Edinburgh. See **Biography**. Though post-Somme this aspect of Sassoon's life and experiences together with those alluded to in remarks on Sassoon's survival and salvation, see below, are directly connected to Sassoon's Somme ordeal and the scriptural lessons prompted by his life and experiences. Sassoon had this to say of his time at Craiglockhart War Hospital⁷⁵, no doubt drawing upon what he had seen and endured during all his time at the front. He thereby gives another example for today's believer to have **"plentifully declared the thing as it is..."** Job 26:3 and **"Provide things honest in the sight of all men"** Romans 12:17.]

By night...the hospital became sepulchral and oppressive with saturation of war experience. One lay awake and listened to feet padding along passages which smelt of stale cigarette-smoke; for nurses couldn't prevent insomnia-ridden officers from smoking half the night in their bedrooms, though the locks had been removed from all doors. One became conscious that the place was full of men whose slumbers were morbid and terrifying – men muttering uneasily or suddenly crying out in their sleep. Around me was that underworld of dreams haunted by submerged memories of warfare and its intolerable shocks and self-lacerating failures to achieve the impossible...

By night each man was back in his own horror-stricken Front Line, where the panic and stampede of some ghastly experience was re-enacted among the livid faces of the dead. No doctor could save him then, when he became the lonely victim of his dream disasters and delusions.

Shell-shock. How many a brief bombardment had its long-delayed after-effect in the minds of these survivors, many of whom had looked at their companions and laughed while inferno did its best to destroy them. Not then was their evil hour, but now; now, in the sweating suffocation of nightmare, in paralysis of limbs, in the stammering of disconnected speech...they, who in the name of

righteousness had been sent out to maim and slaughter their fellow-man. In the name of civilization, these soldiers had been martyred, and it remained for civilization to prove that their martyrdom wasn't a dirty swindle.

Sassoon – the Survivor

- His protest availed nothing, so he went back to fight. He described his decision to do so as follows⁷⁶. *I visualized an endless column of marching soldiers, singing “Tipperary” on their way up from the back areas; I saw them filing silently along ruined roads, and lugging their bad boots through mud until they came to some shell-hole and pillar-box line in a landscape where the trees were all stumps and skeletons and no Quartermaster on earth could be certain of getting the rations up... “From sunlight to the sunless land” ...The idea of going back there was indeed like death...[but] going back to the War as soon as possible was my only chance of peace.*
- In July 1918, he was shot in the head but survived and was sent to hospital, to be repatriated to England. (Three successive Julys of the war were significant for Sassoon; July 1916, at the Somme, July 1917, his Declaration against the war, July 1918, wounded and sent home.) He described his repatriation as follows⁷⁷, mostly peaceful, though it included some parting horror from the war [and a sense of what is now called Survivor Guilt⁷⁸].

‘We’ll be sending you across to England in a few days,’ murmurs the nurse while she is dabbing at my head. She says it quite naturally, as if it were the only possible thing that could happen...Then I listen to the chatter of the other wounded officers in this room, talking about people being blown to bits. And I remember a man at the C.C.S. [Casualty Clearing Station]...He lay with one hand groping at the bandages which covered his whole head and face, gurgling every time he breathed...The War had gagged him – smashed him – and other people looked at him and tried to forget what they’d seen...All this I remember, while the desirable things of life, like living phantoms, steal quietly into my brain... ‘to England in a few days’ ...And though it’s wrong, I know I shall go there, because it is made so easy for me.

Sassoon in Sum – Man, Soldier, Protester

His besetting sin notwithstanding, see *Besetting Sin*, Siegfried Sassoon the carefree, rustic young man tempered to steely soldierliness by *the Gehenna of the Somme* that provoked him to protest for peace according to Psalm 120:7 **“I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war”** against those that **“had the power of death”** Hebrews 2:14 over him thereby furnishes *even as an unsaved man* a challenging role model for today’s believer according to 2 Samuel 10:12 **“Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the LORD do that which seemeth him good.”**

Sassoon – the Saved Man [section added to the original talk]

Dame Felicitas discusses Sassoon’s conversion to Christianity in some detail in her book. But the following references⁷⁹ are for me among the most significant.

S.S.’s Diary 6 March 1954: ‘Stayed in bed and read Part 1 of The Pilgrim’s Progress. It is for all time, I think, in spite of its similitudes being outmoded. Its humanity will survive its being condemned by modern psychologists. It remains alive.’ Note: Re-reading it in 1964, I found that in ’54 I had understood nothing at all of the Gospel doctrine which pervades it. I read it with new eyes.

From the last stanza of *A Prayer in Old Age* 23 September 1964

*I ask one world of everlasting loss
In all I am, that other world to win.
My nothingness must kneel below Thy Cross.
There let new life begin.*

That stanza stands well with Paul’s doctrinal statement on *new life* that brings to a head the major lessons to be drawn from the life and experiences of Captain Siegfried Loraine Sassoon *who even as*

an unsaved man “plentifully declared the thing as it is...” Job 26:3 and did “Provide things honest in the sight of all men” Romans 12:17 after the manner of Paul himself according to Romans 9:1 “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost” fulfilling in principle 2 Samuel 10:12 “Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the LORD do that which seemeth him good.”

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” 2 Corinthians 5:17.

In spite of his Catholicism Sassoon always did rejoice in that transformation as today’s believer should because Sassoon had assurance of salvation as today’s believer should in accordance with Paul’s testimony.

“...for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” 2 Timothy 1:12 “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” Romans 2:16.

In those things therefore and as an admonition to today’s believer, the life and experiences of Captain Siegfried Sassoon are as indicated, see *Introduction*, a vivid testimony to Lamentations 3:22-23 “It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.”

The Redeemer⁸⁰
by Siegfried Sassoon

Darkness: the rain sluiced down; the mire was deep;
It was past twelve on a mid-winter night,
When peaceful folk in beds lay snug asleep;
There, with much work to do before the light,
We lugged our clay-sucked boots as best we might
Along the trench; sometimes a bullet sang,
And droning shells burst with a hollow bang;
We were soaked, chilled and wretched, every one;
Darkness; the distant wink of a huge gun.

I turned in the black ditch, loathing the storm;
A rocket fizzed and burned with blanching flare,
And lit the face of what had been a form
Floundering in murk. He stood before me there;
I say that He was Christ; stiff in the glare,
And leaning forward from His burdening task,
Both arms supporting it; His eyes on mine
Stared from the woeful head that seemed a mask
Of mortal pain in Hell's unholy shine.

No thorny crown, only a woollen cap
He wore — an English soldier, white and strong,
Who loved his time like any simple chap,
Good days of work and sport and homely song;
Now he has learned that nights are very long,
And dawn a watching of the windowed sky.
But to the end, unjudging, he'll endure
Horror and pain, not uncontent to die
That Lancaster on Lune may stand secure.

He faced me, reeling in his weariness,
Shouldering his load of planks, so hard to bear.
I say that He was Christ, who wrought to bless
All groping things with freedom bright as air,
And with His mercy washed and made them fair.
Then the flame sank, and all grew black as pitch,
While we began to struggle along the ditch...

The Redeemer – Explanatory Note

The enclosed WW1 poem depicts how men are in this life. Occasionally they may get a glimpse of the Redeemer when a faithful follower of His bears witness to Him. Unlike the men in the poem lit briefly by *Hell's unholy shine* they can turn to ***“the light of the glorious gospel of Christ”*** 2 Corinthians 4:4 but all too often they don't and continue to flounder in pitch black darkness until they go to ***“A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness”*** Job 10:22.

The last two lines of the poem have been omitted because they take the Lord's name in vain.

Nevertheless the imagery of the poem makes clear that today's believer is himself to be ***“as unto a light that shineth in a dark place...”*** 2 Peter 1:19 steadfastly making known the Lord Jesus Christ ***“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins”*** Colossians 1:14⁸¹.



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"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

Isaiah 53:5 KJV

Flanders Fields 1917 and God's Son



**Flanders
Poppy**

**Harry Patch
1898-2009**

“Narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life” Matthew 7:14

Flanders Fields and God's Son

What is termed Flanders Fields⁸² is part of the northwest corner of Belgium that borders on the North Sea. It is a roughly semi-circular area of gradually rising ground of 5-6 miles radius east of the town of Ypres, the main town in the area. Flanders was fought over for most of WW1 but it is the major battle fought between July and November 1917 that is best known. That battle is called Passchendaele, named after a village on the easternmost edge of Flanders Fields and on the crest of the rising ground called Passchendaele Ridge. Passchendaele was the final objective of the battle and it was captured in early November 1917. Each yard of ground gained during the battle cost Britain and her Allies 30 men.

Just as the Flanders poppy is a reminder of that battle and of the Great War, it should be noted that God's Son, our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, endured experiences that the Passchendaele battle grimly illustrates. That should always be part of our Remembrance.

Last Survivor

Mr Harry Patch was Britain's last surviving WW1 trench veteran⁸³. The book *The Last Fighting Tommy* is his biography. He died in 2009 aged 111. He served in Flanders Fields from June to September 1917 in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry⁸⁴. Mr Patch said that he never forgot his three comrades-in-arms who were killed on September 22nd 1917, in the same shell burst by which he was wounded and knocked out of the war. Mr Patch said therefore that September 22nd was his Remembrance Day. The Lord's words ***“in***

remembrance of me” occur 3 times in scripture; Luke 22:19, 1 Corinthians 11:24, 25 with respect to *His* wounds and death. Each and every day should be a remembrance of that.

“Known unto God” Acts 15:18, Philippians 4:6

Because they were unidentified, many men who died in WW1 are only remembered by their headstone that reads *A Soldier of the Great War, Known Unto God*. The words *Known Unto God* are from a 1611 Authorised King James Holy Bible. That Book shows that Jesus was never unidentified but always **“known unto God.”** **“As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father”** John 10:15. Be sure the Father knoweth you.

A Terrible Enemy

Remember that the Lord faced a terrible enemy. The Flanders battle showed just how terrible an enemy can be. At dawn on October 9th 1917⁸⁵, 85 Australians under the command of 22 year-old Lieutenant Frank Scott raided German positions in a sector called Celtic Wood. Lieutenant Scott and his men were severely shelled, outnumbered, cut off from support, dogged by knee-deep mud and engaged in fierce hand-to-hand fighting. 48 men were listed as unwounded, wounded or killed in action including Lieutenant Scott. Heavy shelling removed all trace of the remaining 37 men. The survivors had been through a horrific ordeal, face-to-face with a terrible enemy on all sides. So it was with the Lord. **“The assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet...thou hast brought me into the dust of death”** Psalm 22:15-16. **“Thou”** is God. Never forget that Jesus said **“not my will but thine, be done”** Luke 22:42 for you and I.

Personal Recollections and God’s Promise

Like Harry Patch, many other Flanders survivors^{86, 87} endured things like those Jesus went through.

Corporal Joseph Pincombe, on a place like hell:

*Everywhere, as far as you could see, there were spurts of earth from shells bursting ...going off like geysers shooting up in the air. As far as you could see...there was nothing but mud, mud, mud for miles and just a few stumps of trees here and there and all hell let loose around you. The Lord went to hell for you and I. **“Out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice”** Jonah 2:2 but **“when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared”** Hebrews 5:7, now **“he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him”** Hebrews 7:25. Never forget that.*

Private Richard Mercer, on the means of movement, vital but exposed, see figure:

*“We used to walk along these wooden duckboards...The Germans would concentrate on these things [but] You just did not want to go off the duckboards.” So true. **“Narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life”** Matthew 7:14 but **“the fiery darts of the wicked”** Ephesians 6:16 will fall yet Jesus said **“I am the way”** John 14:6 so don’t stray off the way.*

Private Reginald Le Brun, a Canadian machine gunner, on being alone:

*They pushed the machine guns right out in front. There was nothing between us and the Germans across the swamp. Three times during the night they shelled us heavily...By morning, of our team of six, only my buddy Private Tombes and I were left. Then came the burst that got Tombes...It was a terrible feeling to be the only one left. Jesus knew that. **“And they all forsook him, and fled”** Mark 14:50. Yet the Lord said **“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”** Hebrews 13:5. **That promise is the best part of remembrance.***

1918 and God's Deliverance

“When the enemy shall come in like a flood” Isaiah 59:19



Poison Gas Casualties, April 1918⁸⁸

The Enemy in Flood

In early 1918, the Western Front was grim. ***“The enemy...in...flood”*** would make it worse. On March 21st 1918, the German Army attacked the British Army near the town of Amiens in northern France. The Germans fired over a million shells, broke through the British first and second lines and caused massive casualties. Many men were gassed. See figure.

The Standard of the LORD

But some units were able to fight back, including the 2nd Battalion the Green Howards, the Yorkshire Regiment, near the town of St Quentin. They resisted seven separate attacks on March 21st. Their CO was 25 year-old Captain Herbert Read⁸⁹, a yeoman farmer's son from Kirbymoorside in the then North Riding of Yorkshire. He described what happened.

We fired like maniacs. Every round of ammunition had been distributed. The [machine] guns jammed; rifle bolts grew stiff and unworkable with the expansion of heat...In the height of this attack, while my heart was heavy with anxiety, I received a message from brigade. Surely reinforcements were coming to our aid? Or was I at length given permission to withdraw? Neither. [We were] to hold on to the last man.

Provisionally, the Green Howards were later ordered to fall back, which they did. Events in July 1918 showed that they had benefitted from Isaiah 59:19. ***“When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.”*** God enabled the Green Howards to stand hard, literally. He was to do so with other defenders.

The Germans' advance in March stalled and was halted but in April 1918 they attacked again, in Flanders, with many veteran units transferred to the Western Front after the collapse of Russia. They got a surprise, as military historian Captain Cyril Falls⁹⁰ explains.

[The German] assault was smashed with heavy loss...At times the Germans fought brilliantly, but...the majority of the divisions from Russia had never faced the British, and found them unexpectedly tough. Yet the majority of the British troops were only shadows of the old army;

[reinforcement] drafts largely consisting of lads between 18½ and 19 years of age, half-trained, immature, weakly led at the lowest level...[but] it must be said that these lads, many of them none too well fed before enlistment, gave a good account of themselves. That was God's doing. **"God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty"** 1 Corinthians 1:27. The Germans attacked yet again in July against the British Army near Béthune and God intervened again as this eye-witness account reveals about the incident of *The White Cavalry*⁹¹.

The White Cavalry

The following account of what occurred [in July], 1918, I (Captain Cecil...Hayward) can personally vouch for it as being true...I was responsible for the intelligence on this sector of the battle area...The whole British nation was called to prayer. The President of the United States summoned the American people to do likewise...

God was already at work as the earlier repulses of the enemy showed. **"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear"** Isaiah 65:24. God answered prayer in July 1918. **"The Spirit of the LORD"** Isaiah 59:19 again stemmed **"the enemy...in...flood."** Captain Hayward observed the following.

Enemy shell fire, which had been largely directed against the shattered town of Béthune, suddenly lifted and began to burst on a slight rise beyond its outskirts. This open ground was absolutely bare...yet the enemy gunfire broke on it with increasing fury, and was augmented by heavy bursts of masses of machine guns...We stood looking in astonishment. "Fritz has gone balmy, Sir," said [my] Sergeant, "what in the world is he peppering the naked ground for?" Suddenly, the Germans fled. Captain Hayward states That...seemingly victorious army broke up into groups of frightened [fleeing] men...It was not long before my Sergeant arrived with two German officer prisoners...

Captain Hayward took the following statement from the senior of the two German officers.

"The order had been given to advance...when Friedrich my lieutenant here said "Herr, Kapitan, just look at that open ground behind Béthune, there is a brigade of cavalry coming up through the smoke drifting across it...[but] they are all in white uniform and are mounted on white horses"...

"We saw the shells bursting amongst the horses and their riders...our machine guns opened a heavy fire...But they came quietly forward...not a single man or horse fell...Then a great fear fell on me, and I turned to flee, yes I, an officer of the Prussian Guard fled, panic-stricken, and around me were hundreds of terrified men...all running...That is all I have to tell you...The German Army is broken...We are beaten, by the White Cavalry."

On November 11th 1918, a little over 3 months later, the Great War ended. For Britain, the USA and their allies **"the LORD saved them by a great deliverance"** 1 Chronicles 11:14.

A Solemn Warning

Note again the wording of Isaiah 59:19 **"When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him."** Most of the new versions change both the wording and the meaning. That kind of desecration will turn deliverance into damnation. This is God speaking. **"For ye have perverted the words of the living God...Therefore, behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you...and cast you out of my presence"** Jeremiah 23:36, 39. Note well that **"The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times"** Psalm 12:6. They are not to be trifled with. **"Take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore"** Deuteronomy 2:4.

Conclusion⁹²**Isaiah 26:8 KJV**

Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.



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