



The following tribute to Dr Trumper was delivered by Norman Rees, a native of Pembrokeshire and a founder-elder of Bethany Free Church, Clarbeston Road, near Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, Wales. He was dearly loved by Peter Trumper, who considered him and his friendship “a rock” in forging a breakthrough for the gospel in the locality and in the county.

Where do I start, and what do I include or bypass? Fifty three years is a long time in anyone’s life to know and be acquainted with someone, but that is the length of time which has passed since I, among others, first met our young minister, only 28 years of age, “fresh out of his polythene wrapper” as he used to say! There are so many memories and especially so much for which to give thanks to our great God and Saviour. It all, of course, began with HIM, Almighty God! He works all things after the counsel of his will. Were it not for his divine providence, there would be nothing of worth to record.

THE EARLY YEARS

Peter Trumper, along with his wife, Margaret, and baby son, Andrew, arrived in Pembrokeshire in 1962. Peter had preached here before on “Beware of False Prophets”—a sign of things to come! The record of his first eight years or so of his ministry among us can be read of in his book *As Far as to Bethany*—a personal view of the work up to that point. Speaking from my personal experience, I encountered a man of deep love for, and faith in, the Lord Jesus Christ. He was friendly and approachable, but fearlessly preached the true gospel of our Lord and Saviour. This was something which was sadly lacking in the circles in which I, among other young people, moved at that time.

This “new” preaching soon became a talking point, and, as the preaching of the gospel always does, it divided opinions, people, and even families. God had begun to work, and people were being faced with the stark fact that they were, in his sight, sinners who needed saving. The first time I was really convicted of my sin and felt the need for a Saviour was when Peter preached a sermon on Romans 2:1–3. This was the beginning of God’s work in me and indeed in many others at that time, too.

During the coming years, opposition to the gospel grew, as God worked. In April 1968, a group of like-minded people left the two pastorates of Wiston and Goshen to begin a work for the Lord in Clarbeston Road. This was a huge step of faith. Peter’s encouragement kept our eyes fixed on the Lord and His directions for us. A little Sunday School was started along with services on the Lord’s Day in the Village Institute (once used, apparently, for Home Guard rifle practice).

Whilst Margaret, along with John and Beatrice, “manned” the Sunday School, I appeared to be surplus to requirements. Peter, however, turned this to good use, giving me one-to-one Bible studies on the Gospel of Mark in his Morris Minor whilst the Sunday School was in progress. Talk about having your own personal tutor and trainer! I trust the benefit received has shown over the years!

Those “small beginnings” blossomed to the work here today, along with the buildings and grounds. Our prayer is that the work will continue faithful to the Word until Jesus Himself comes again in glory. What a resurrection will take place in our little graveyard, as in so many others also.

THE APPROACH TO MINISTRY

From the beginning of his ministry, Peter sought to get alongside people in order to bring them the Good News. In those early days, many village people spoke Welsh. Such was Peter’s desire to be able to speak to them even a phrase or two in Welsh, he suggested that we attend Welsh evening classes together in the local secondary school. We went, but problems occurred during the lessons. Peter wasn’t able to pronounce many of the Welsh words, because he wasn’t able to get his tongue around the letter “R”. This is, to say the least, quite important if one is going to speak Welsh! His memory was good; he could remember the words but couldn’t pronounce them. I, on the other hand, could pronounce the words, but couldn’t remember them! In the end, “a damp squib” comes to mind! Yet I have to say, even in our brief attendance, Peter was able to witness to our teacher (apparently a “vicar”) about the Lord, but after the lessons, of course!

On another occasion, being keen to know how others experienced life “on the other side”—that is to say, in the day to day living of mainly country folk—he came across me during one of his pastoral visits. I was ploughing in a field through which he had to pass. Seeing me on the tractor, he



waved, dropped his bike in the hedge (since these were the days before he owned a car), and strode over the field to me. After chatting a while, he looked at the ploughing, the tractor, then at me, and indicated, to my consternation, that he would like to try his hand. He wanted to experience it, as, in some small way, Ezekiel had “sat where they sat”—although I trust, not for quite the same reason! He needed no encouragement to heave his 6’ 3” frame onto the tractor. After receiving some directions, we proceeded slowly down the field. Having accomplished his desired aim, he uttered triumphantly words to the effect: “I’ve done it! I’ve ploughed a field!” Well, not quite! But he was like a dog with two tails, even if it meant retrieving his bicycle from the top of the field!

Peter had a wonderful sense of humour and we “young people” loved him. He was also asthmatic, and often his laughter would result in him reaching for his inhalers. I remember on one occasion, after finishing a Bible study in the “upper room” in Wiston Chapel, he and I were walking up the church path together when he slowed down, began to cough, which resulted in him on his knees with an asthma attack. I asked him what I could do, for I hadn’t experienced anything like this before. He simply signaled that he would be alright after taking his medication. Soon he was upright again, heading off cheerfully towards home! That is the sort of man he was.

THE CONVICTIONS OF MINISTRY

Peter was a man of the Word—the inerrant, infallible Word of God—the Holy Bible. He was steeped in it. It was part of him. This reminded me of one Mr Valiant for Truth, found in John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. Mr Valiant for Truth was found by Great Heart and other pilgrims on the road leading to the Celestial City. He was wounded and bleeding with his sword drawn in his hand. When questioned, he told them he’d been in a deadly conflict with three enemies, Mr Wildhead, Mr Inconsiderate, and Mr Pragmatic. He said the “Jerusalem Blade” in his hand would never get blunt and would cut through flesh and bone and soul and spirit. It cleaved to his hand and seemed to become an extension of his arm. Like Mr Valiant for Truth, the Sword of the Spirit became a part of Peter with which he courageously fought the enemies of the gospel and the error they propounded.

Preaching engagements took him away from his beloved family, sometimes to great distances. Yet, such was his love for them, he always attempted to get back to them before dawn! He told me that he was so late coming home sometimes that as he ascended the stairs to bed after a long drive home, he half expected to meet himself coming down the stairs to start a new day! He and Margaret were good rôle models for any parents, Christian or otherwise.

Peter loved the truth and denounced error wherever necessary because he loved the God of Truth who had first loved him. Peter looked to Christ who is The Truth, for Christ had sacrificed his life for Peter and for all calling on Him to be saved (Romans 5:8). What love this is! Peter would be the first to admit he had NOTHING with which to commend himself to God. Born a lost sinner, he could but say with Augustus Toplady,

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked come to Thee for dress,
Helpless, look to Thee for grace
Foul I to the fountain fly
Wash me Saviour, or I die!

We, too, echo those words and flee to Christ Jesus for life—eternal life! Why Jesus? Because “there is no other Name, under heaven, given amongst men, whereby we must be saved” Acts 4:12.

PARTICULAR MEMORIES

Peter’s memory was legendary. His retention of Scripture was second to none. When we mentioned it on times, he’d say, “It’s all in there, it’s just a matter of opening one of the little ‘drawers!’” Herein lay the problem with those of us not so blessed with such a retentive memory: which “drawer” to open, especially given they seemed stuck so fast!

Not only could he remember the Scriptures so well, but also anniversaries and birthdays, and did so with cards and/or phone calls. On answering the telephone on my birthday, I’d be greeted with that familiar voice, “Happy Birthday Norm!” To be reminded another year had passed was bad enough, but he also remembered our exact ages! His familiar laugh would follow, yet at the same time he would be very cagey about giving away too much about his own state of health. His concern was to inquire about ours. When pressed, he would say, “Well, I’m going down the drain slowly and gracefully!”



Throughout his life, Peter was a man of prayer. This seemed to increase in intensity as his other faculties lessened. Whenever I would speak to him on the phone, he'd go through the people in Bethany, asking after their welfare and urging me to remind them he prayed for them—for my family, as doubtless for countless others. Daily, he brought them before the Lord's throne of grace.

He was also a man of great patience. Through all his trials of suffering and ill-health—and they lasted many years—never once did I, and I suspect anybody else either, hear a word of complaint, impatience, or grudge from his lips. He was “patient in tribulation and continued instant in prayer”—an example to all who are called to follow similar or lesser paths of hardship.

As age and sicknesses advanced, Peter could no longer preach as once he did. Undeterred, he turned his time and talents to writing. His old typewriter had long been retired after printing such materials as *The Hope Letter*, *Rallying Point*, the *Penuel* and *Bethany* Magazines, etc., but his computers became the work-horses as *1521* came into print along with booklets, pamphlets and hardbacks, not to mention the volumes of questions for Bible students found in Bethany Library. It has to be said, of course, that all these were written to encourage and challenge God's people, and, more importantly still, for the glory of his God and Saviour. In a very real way, it can be said of Peter, that “He, being dead, yet speaketh.”

Peter would be the first to say that, for all this, he wasn't a perfect man. He, like all Christians, was a sinner saved only by the grace of God. He had his faults of course and made some wrong decisions. He said and did wrong things on times, but always, when realizing his mistakes, he'd be the first to apologize and to seek forgiveness. We, in like manner, who say and do many things to grieve our fellow believers and much more, our dear Lord, can take example and seek to walk more in the ways of the Lord rather than point the finger!

However, in another sense, Peter, like all those born again by God's Spirit, was perfect—perfect that is in the sight of the Holy God: “made perfect in Christ Jesus” (Colossians 1:28; Ephesians 5:27 Hebrews 12:23). Our dear Saviour has taken the sins of his people onto Himself, having suffered and bled in their places and given them His righteousness as a covering (2

Corinthians 5:21). Praise Him! As one wrote, “With my Saviour's garments on, Holy as the holy One!”

THE DEATH OF A PILGRIM

Peter's family has been greatly blessed over the years, many of whom have embraced the same loving Saviour. Would that we all will be found in Christ when we come to die and stand before God. “When I stand before his throne,” wrote Robert Murray Mc'Cheyne, “dressed in beauty not my own.”

Unless Jesus returns first, death is inevitable. It is a serious matter. Peter once said, “When we come to die, there will doubtless be a yellow streak in all of us!” Apart from treading the unknown, we have to stand before the Judge of the whole world. He is without sin, and is holy and just, yet He is also full of mercy to those who trust Him and is ready to forgive the repenting sinner.

In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Bunyan graphically records the deaths of the pilgrims, from Christian, Faithful and Hopeful, who were strong in faith, to those who, like many of us, struggle in the Christian life, such as Mr Ready-to-halt, Mr Fearing, Mr Feeblemind, Mr Despondency and his daughter Much-Afraid. It wasn't their great faith that finally got them over the river of death to the Celestial City, but their Great God! When Mr Valiant for Truth came to die, many we are told accompanied him to the river, and as he went down into the waters, he was heard to cry: “Death, where is your sting?” As he went down further, he cried out again: “Grave, where is your victory?” And so, he went over. Bunyan records, “the trumpets sounded for him on the other side!” Peter has likewise, by his Saviour's power, gone through the “river of death,” and the trumpets have sounded for him on the other side!

When the Apostle Paul came to die, he wrote, “I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand, I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me on that day, and not for me only, but also for all those who love His appearing.” (2 Timothy 4:6–8). Are we also looking forward to, and longing for the appearing of our great God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ? Are we ready for that glorious event, and living so as not to be ashamed when He appears?



CONCLUSION

Fifty-three years is a long time, but it soon disappears, and those passing years prove beyond all doubt that the “outward man is perishing.” Silver hair, bald heads, walking aids, *etc.* are testimony to the fact! However, “the inward man is renewed day by day.” The soul lives on and returns to the One who gave it. Peter’s voice is now silent, but his soul is safe, and his body awaits the glorious resurrection. Yet, the message he preached lives on. He warned of the dangers of hell to the soul dead in sin and called to them to escape the wrath to come: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you *shall* be saved!”

There is hope for those who do. Whenever Peter took the funeral of one who had died “in Christ”, he used to say “This is a coronation day.” And so, it is! Death is the last enemy, but Christ, through His death and resurrection, has conquered it and done so as the one who has the power of death, the devil, that enemy of souls—Satan himself. “Thanks be to God Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”!

Peter has now gone to be with Christ, which, says Paul, is far better! An acrostic formed from his name sums up his life:

P reaching	T o
E very	R escue
T ruth	U s
E agerly	M ortals
R everently	P raying
	E arnestly
	R egularly

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