

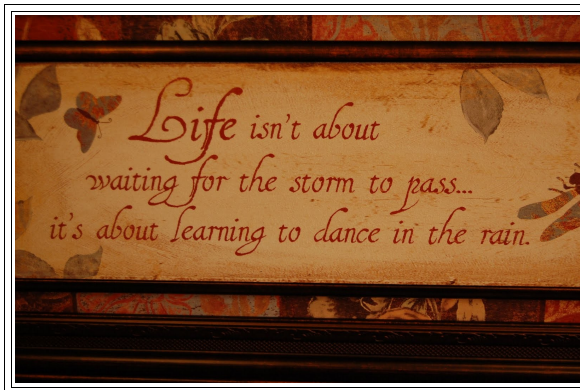
minister where he died the following day.

The importance and value of Henry's "Commentary" was so evident to his fellow ministers that steps were soon taken to collect the notes he had prepared on the remaining books from Romans to Revelation, so that the whole of the Bible might be included in the final work. Henry's "Commentary" quickly became an indispensable work of reference for Christians — Whitfield read it regularly and thoroughly as part of his devotional reading — and Doddridge's opinion is as relevant for us today as it was in his own day, "Henry is, perhaps, the only commentator, so large, that deserves to be entirely and attentively read through."

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ACORN	FALL	OCTOBER
APPLE	FESTIVAL	PUMPKIN
AUTUMN	GOURD	SCARECROW
CARMEL APPLE	HARVEST	SQUASH
CARNIVAL	HAY RIDE	STRAW
CORN	LEAVES	



Fall Quotes

“Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.”

“A man who stands for nothing will fall for anything.”

“The revolution is not an apple that falls when it is ripe. You have to make it fall.”

“Even if you fall on your face, you're still moving forward.”

BIRTHDAYS & SPECIAL EVENTS IN:

October

8th - Columbus Day!

11th - 15th / Pastor In Rome, Italy

16th - Boss's Day!

20th - The Sweetest Day!

28th - Mother-in-law Day!

28th - Dalton Smith

NCO Kids

Monthly News



Matthew Henry

For many Christians the name Matthew Henry is immediately associated with his "Commentary" on the Bible which has deservedly gained a reputation as the best and most widely used work of its kind. It is in every sense a massive exposition of scripture and has been of enormous benefit to Christians from Henry's contemporaries such as Watts and Doddridge down to our present time nearly three centuries later. It was the product of many years of scholarship and industry by Henry who lived through a period of great turmoil in the religious life of the Country [England].

Marks of Grace

Matthew was born in 1662 at a farm named Broadoak about three miles from Whitchurch in Shropshire and was the second son of Philip and Katherine Henry. His father had been an ordained clergyman in the parish of Worthenbury but because his conscience would not allow him to use the new forms of liturgy

introduced by the Act of Uniformity in 1662, he had been ejected from his church.

Matthew was brought up with all the advantages of a Christian home and family, and he showed such an aptitude for learning that he was able to read the Bible by the age of three. Each day his parents gathered the children for morning and evening devotions, and after prayers and scripture readings, it was customary for his father to give a brief exposition of a passage from the Bible on which the children were encouraged to write their own accounts. The value of this practice was shown when Matthew later recognised that it was hearing his father speaking on the text, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise," (Psalm 51:17) which melted his heart and caused him "to enquire after Christ."

Matthew's fondness for learning thrived rapidly under this routine and he spent several hours each day in private study even though his health was not very robust. After surviving a serious attack of fever at the age of ten, his thoughts were drawn to his own spiritual condition and on 7 December 1673 he was deeply moved by a sermon on the subject of judgment. He wrote, "I was under great fear of hell, till the Lord comforted me. I, having engaged in serious examination — what hopes I have that when I die and leave this earthly tabernacle I shall be received into heaven — I have found several marks that I am a Child of God."

Vanity of the World

Because of the exclusion of nonconformists from Oxford and Cambridge and the low moral tone of university life during the

Restoration period, Matthew's father secured a place for him in 1680 in a "dissenting academy" at Islington in London, but his stay there was short-lived because the master Thomas Doolittle was compelled by laws to live elsewhere and the scholars were dispersed.

As a result, Matthew continued his studies at home for several more years and then in 1685 he went to London again, this time to study law at Grays Inn. However, he found no satisfaction in this pursuit and soon he wrote a letter to his father stating, "The more I see of the world and the various affairs of the children of men in it, the more I see of the vanity of it, and the more I would fain have my heart taken off from it, and fixed upon the invisible realities of the other world."

After barely a year he abandoned his legal studies and returned to Broadoak where a friend named George Illidge prevailed upon him to preach at local meetings. Typically Henry prepared himself with great thoroughness, and his zeal for the work of the gospel was so evident that he quickly began to receive invitations to preach in towns such as Chester and Nantwich. Henry knew without a doubt that this was the work God had been preparing him for and in May 1687 he agreed to become the pastor of a congregation in Chester.

Laboring in the Word

For twenty-five years Henry devoted himself to proclaiming the gospel in Chester at every possible opportunity. In addition to two services on Sunday and two meetings during the week, he frequently preached in the neighbouring villages and to the prisoners

in Chester Castle. His faithful exposition of the scriptures was richly blessed during these years as God opened a wider region for Henry's ministry. He was invited to hold monthly meetings at Wrexham and Beeston, and to preach in many towns including London, while at the same time the congregation attending his meeting house in Chester grew so large that a new building had to be erected in 1699.

It is perhaps significant to note that Henry maintained this intensive preaching and pastoral ministry through a period when his personal life was afflicted by tragedy. His first wife Katherine died in child-birth in 1689 after only two years of marriage, and although he remarried in 1690, he and his second wife, Mary, lost three children in infancy in the following seven years. Henry refused to blame God for these losses, for he accepted that, "the Lord is righteous, He takes and gives, and gives and takes again." Nor did he allow his sorrows to hinder his work since he believed, "weeping must not prevent sowing," and so he went on with perseverance and assurance.

Faithful unto Death

Towards the end of 1704, when Henry was forty two years old, he began to collect together the vast amount of notes and writings which he had made on the Bible during his ministry. He had learned Latin, Greek and Hebrew as a child, and he also had a good knowledge of French, so that his reading had covered a wide field over many years. To this was added a keen spirit of inquiry, a profound knowledge and an ability to convey doctrinal matters in a simple yet clear form. From this emerged his "Commentary" as he gradually completed the books of the Old and New

Testament over the following ten years.

In 1712, after twenty-five years in the ministry at Chester, Henry accepted a call to a dissenting Chapel at Hackney in London. He had never anticipated leaving Chester, but he trusted God's purposes in leading him to London and faithfully obeyed. His preaching was blessed with much fruit and he made preparations to complete his "Commentary," having reached Acts by 1714. Henry often returned to Chester to conduct services amongst his former congregation and in June 1714, while honoring a promise to preach at Chester and Nantwich, he was taken ill. As he rode back to London the next day, he fell from his horse at Tarporley and was taken to the house of a neighboring

