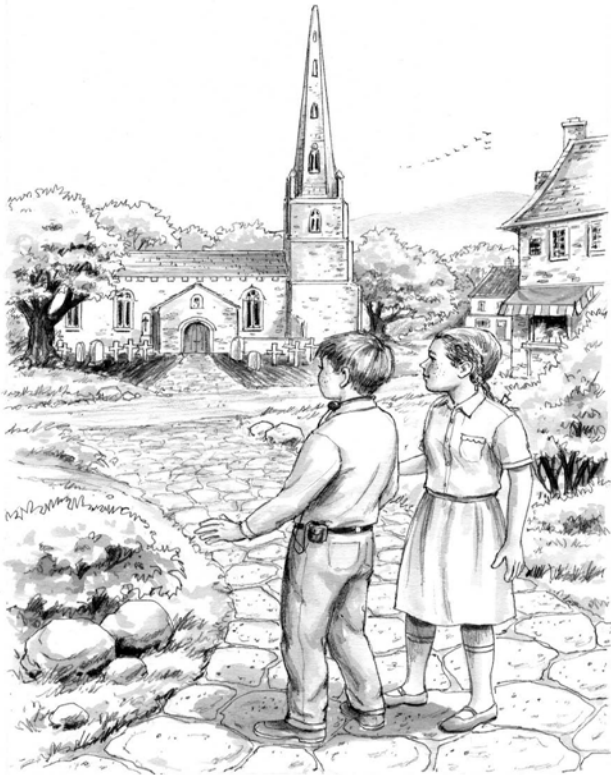


Mr. Pipes

and the

British Hymn Makers



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Douglas Bond

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Preface

Mr. Pipes and the British Hymn Makers contains more than an interesting story about two young Americans on vacation in England. It is a story about the most important subject in the world—the worship of Almighty God.

The worship of God in modern times has too often become shallow and man-centered. Many Christians at the opening of the twenty-first century, including young believers, have never understood the importance of approaching God with awesome reverence and majestic praise. As readers move through *Mr. Pipes and the British Hymn Makers*, however, they will not only learn about the fascinating lives of famous hymn writers but will also be encouraged to cultivate an attitude of humble adoration as they approach their Maker.

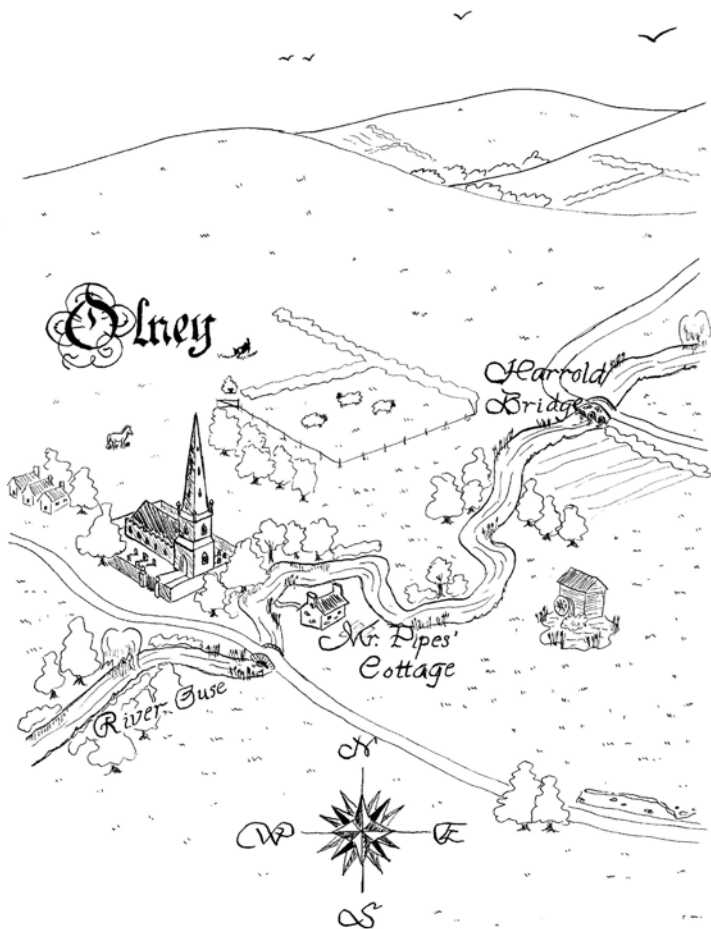
Young Christians who grasp the significance of what they read will come to the wonderful realization that their worship is connected with the Church universal—the followers of Christ throughout the world, both past and present. In other words, young readers will understand that true worship is not isolated from believers of the past but is, rather, built upon their godly traditions.

Perhaps the greatest tradition of true biblical worship, aside from scriptural exposition and prayer, is the holy exercise of hymn singing. It is, therefore, the express purpose of this book to rekindle a genuine interest within the lives of young believers in the traditional hymns of the faith once delivered unto the saints. May God be pleased to use this little volume to revive an interest in and appreciation for that which is true and praiseworthy in the realm of Christian worship.

Michael J. McHugh

For Brittany, Rhodri, Cedric, and Desmond

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Foreword

The characters in this story are fictional. Olney is, of course, a very real place, and parts of the story describe it just as you would find things there today. St. Peter and St. Paul's is very real, as are Newton and Cowper's homes; and the Great Ouse (pronounced "ooze") is much like it is described in the story. But liberties have been taken with the town and surrounding countryside. For example, there is a real Bakehouse wedged into the narrow streets of the town of Olney, but it is no longer a bakery; thus there is no real Mrs. Beccles. And there is a real organist, but he's definitely not Mr. Pipes. The history described by Mr. Pipes in the hymn stories, however, is very real.

In addition, I would like to give special thanks to my wife, Cheryl, for her patience and gentle criticism; to Dick Hannula for his chain saw editing; to my mother, Mary Jane Bond; to Bob Rogland, Mike Pfefferle, and Laurel McCoy for encouragement given; and to Rob Rayburn for inspiration, guidance, and source books, without which this book would never have been written.

Douglas Bond, 1999

Douglas Bond lives in Tacoma, Washington, with his wife Cheryl and their four children. He has traveled several times to the United Kingdom, the setting for this book. He teaches history and English at Covenant High School in Tacoma.

Chapter One

Annie and Drew Meet Mr. Pipes

“Now then, now then,” came the Cabby’s voice.

“I think the best thing we could do to pass the time would be to sing a ’ymn.” And he did.

He had a fine voice and the children joined in.

C. S. Lewis

Drew shuffled along the stone sidewalk following his sister down High Street. He adjusted the volume on his compact disc player hooked on the pocket of his jeans, then pressed the headphones tightly to his ears. Looking like a pigeon strutting for crumbs, he bobbed his head up and down with the rhythm.

“Only you—oo—oo—oo ...” sang Drew, out of tune, his face twisted with emotion. Annie, his sister, rolled her eyes in disgust and embarrassment.

“Please, Drew, you sound like a sick cow,” she said.

Drew cranked the volume higher. As long as he had his tunes maybe he could endure a summer in this dumpy old English town—he looked at the ancient stone buildings crowding the narrow street—*maybe*.

“Will you please stop that ridiculous singing?” shouted Annie.

“You love me, and I love you—oo—oo—oo,” he sang on louder still.

Annie turned in exasperation and stopped at the curb, looking left down Market Street.

A tall man wearing a camel-colored suit and carrying a leather bag overtook them at the intersection and stopped next to Annie. Thrusting out his chin, he narrowed his eyes,

looking sideways back at Drew. With a “Humph!” he turned, looking to the right, and waited, while at the same moment Annie, still looking left, stepped off the curb into the cobbled street.

Suddenly, amidst screeching brakes and a blaring horn, Annie felt a strong hand gripping her arm. “I say, my dear, do watch out!” the man cried, pulling her to safety.

A gray and black Morris wheezed past the startled and now breathless Annie.

“Blighter!” said the tall man, staring after the little car.

“Indeed! A near miss, to be sure,” he went on, stroking his mustache. Then turning, he lifted his hat. “Martin Dudley’s the name. Are you quite unhurt, my dear?”

“Y-yes, thank you,” stammered Annie.

“And whom have I the pleasure of rescuing today?” he went on.

“I’m Annie—Annie Willis. And this is my little brother, Andrew—you can just call him Drew.”

“Well, Annie and Drew,” he said, “clearly, you are not from our side of the pond. In England you must accustom yourselves to looking right before proceeding across the street. Even the traffic in our little village will expect this of you. I dare say, had you been in London, where motor cars are driven with considerably less care, you would have found yourself in need of my profession.”

He then bent at the waist and looked to the right, shielding his eyes with his free hand like a sea captain scanning the horizon for pirates. Still bent over, he glanced back at Annie and Drew and nodded encouragingly. He then straightened and strode into the now quiet street. Turning back, he said, “Do, pray, be careful in the future.” Tipping his hat, he disappeared down High Street.

“What a nut,” said Drew, pulling his headphones off and running his hand over bristles of blond hair. “But good grief, Annie, you’ve got to watch where you’re going.”

“I was!” said Annie, her face flushed. “I looked left, but I forgot they drive on the wrong side of the road. I looked the wrong way—no, the right way—they just drive the wrong way.”

“Yeah,” said Drew. “And there’s another good reason why this is the stupidest place to spend a summer. They can’t even drive on the right side of the road here. And look how old everything is,” he snorted. “And what about breakfast this morning! Who eats fried mushrooms and baked beans for breakfast anyway?”

“The stewed tomatoes,” said Annie with a grimace, “almost did me in; but Mrs. Broadwith is nice—you have to admit that.”

“Maybe, but she talks funny,” said Drew, as they walked aimlessly down the street. “And her house we’ll be staying in sure is old.”

The children’s mother (who will be entirely too busy to take much part in this story) had chosen this place to do her research precisely because it was small, off the beaten path, and old.

But “old” to the children, especially to Drew, meant dull and boring. So the cobbled streets, lined with medieval cottages—some with thatched roofs—and the ancient church, its steeple piercing the summer sky, didn’t look fun at all. Moreover, the rolling green fields stretching beyond the market town and covered with grazing sheep seemed humdrum. Even the old stone bridge bordering the village and crossing the old winding river—where children swam, fished, and sailed—didn’t look very interesting just then. They had no idea new friends and new adventures awaited them at every turn.

All they could think of was the city they left behind—full of new skyscrapers, new and bigger malls, new stadiums for sports and concerts, new theaters, new houses, new freeways, new fast-food restaurants, and all their old friends. By comparison, this looked like a pretty unimpressive place to be stuck—and for a whole summer.

Annie suddenly stopped in front of two steps leading to a green door with a large lion knocker in full roar staring down at them. She read from a brass plate, “‘Martin L. J. Dudley, Family Surgery.’ It’s *him*. This must be where that guy stopped.”

“Huh?” said Drew over the din of his headphones.

“I said,” shouted Annie. “That guy who helped me must be a doctor—Dr. Dudley.”

“I’m going to need one,” said Drew sniffing the air, “if I don’t get a decent meal. It’s been forever since we had any real food. Breakfast didn’t count; that’s for sure. And it’s already way after lunch. What I wouldn’t do for a Big Mac right now!”

Drew turned off his music and pulled the headphones from his ears. Although it didn’t smell like a hamburger drive-in, something sure did smell good.

“Do you smell it?” He pointed across the street at a narrow building wedged between two larger ones. Black and reddish stains streaked the worn, gray stones, and the walls leaned to one side. Drew studied the bulky limestone lintel over the window with “Bakehouse” carved long ago into the stone. Hanging above the oak door, a sign read, “Beccles’s Bakehouse, established 1711.”

“It’s a bakery,” said Drew, “and I don’t care how old it is; I’m starving. Let’s go see what’s cooking.”

BAKEHOUSE



Annie, cautiously looking right, stopped Drew before he crossed in front of a middle-aged lady, wearing a wool skirt and jacket, riding toward them on her bicycle. With her thumb she rang a little mechanical bell on the handlebar and nodded politely at them as she pedaled closer. In a wicker basket hung between the handlebars rode a sand-colored, pug-nosed dog, one ear turned inside out and his tongue lolling in the breeze. He yapped a greeting as he passed.

“What a nice little pooch,” said Annie. “Look, Drew, he’s smiling.”

Leading the way across the street, Drew followed the bicycle with his eyes. “I’ve never seen an old lady in a dress riding a bike,” he said shaking his head. “And that’s the clunkiest excuse for a bike I’ve ever seen; what a piece of junk! Who’d ride one like that, anyway? Yeah, well, I suppose it fits in an old place like this.”



Drew’s mouth watered. Through rippling glass panes they saw an array of freshly baked pastries. Feasting their eyes on swirls of cream, flecks of chocolate topping, flaky golden crusts, and shiny red cherries, the children suddenly saw a large woman dressed in white adding a basket of croissants so fresh and steaming a haze crept up the windowpanes. Her full red cheeks, a smudge of white flour on each, bulged as she smiled. She beckoned at them with a strong, floury hand.

“I’m going in,” said Drew.

Annie followed him through the door.

A cheerful bell tinkled as they stepped down over a worn threshold. They entered a long, narrow room arranged with a counter, tables, and chairs, and filled with the aroma of baking pastries.

The woman bustling to greet them said, “You’ll be the two young ones from America, then?” Little clouds of flour puffed from her apron as she dusted off her hands.

“You know about us?” asked Annie, smiling at the big woman.

“Indeed I do,” she continued. “This here’s just a wee town.”

Drew almost snorted. She had that right.

“Mrs. Broadwith and I have known each other for ever so long; she told me you’d be arriving. I’m Mrs. Beccles and absolutely delighted to be making your acquaintance.” She studied them for a moment. “But I didn’t expect you to be so nearly the same age; you could be twins for the look of you. But what a handsome pair you be.”

Drew didn’t like people commenting about their appearance, though many did. They both had blond hair, blue eyes, and freckles—lots of freckles. Annie’s hair grew well past her shoulders, and she liked braiding it different ways; right then two braids started at her temples and joined in pigtails down her back. Drew kept his hair short, mostly due to an unwieldy cowlick where his hair met his freckled forehead. Annie was almost a year and a half older, but Drew insisted he’d caught up with her in height.

“Nice to meet you, Mrs. Beccles,” said Annie smiling.

There she goes, thought Drew, always “little miss friendly.”

“I’m Annie and this is my little brother, Andrew—Drew for short.”

Drew’s face grew warmer. “Little brother?” he thought, “I’m almost a half an inch taller.”

“You’ll have a hard time convincing the likes of me,” she said, smiling at Drew and squinting back and forth at

the tops of their heads, “that he’s your *little* brother. I’d wager the crown jewels he’s passed you up in the height department.”

Drew smiled smugly at Annie and looked past Mrs. Beccles at plates mounded with fresh pastries.

Mrs. Beccles followed his gaze. “I’ve just baked these little meat pies,” she said with a twinkle in her eye. “And I need someone to try them out—see if I got things right this time. Would you be so kind and taste some goodies for me?”

“Anything we can do to help,” said Drew, licking his lips and rubbing his hands together.

Scurrying about, Mrs. Beccles, juggling a flurry of plates filled with good things to eat, sat the children down at a table. Before they knew what she was doing, she had gripped each of their hands and with head bowed said, “For what we are about to eat, O Lord, make us truly grateful. Amen.”

After some minutes of gorging himself and with mouth full and eyes roving for more, Drew asked, “Has this place really been around since seventeen something?”

“Oh, indeed it has,” she replied. “My ancestors have baked in these walls for the better part of 300 years.”

“No kidding?”



Thanking Mrs. Beccles for their lunch and, at her insistence, promising to return often, they stepped out into the sunshine with a bag of fresh bread rolls and heard the slow chiming of bells echoing against the stone walls crowding the narrow street.

“Four o’clock,” said Drew. “And all is well.” He smiled, rubbing his full stomach with satisfaction.

As they walked along, a black and white sign with “Church Street,” on it marked a narrower cobbled lane to their left.

“This’ll lead somewhere,” said Annie. “Let’s follow it.”

Drew, headphones in place, punching buttons searching for a favorite song, followed Annie wordlessly.

Limestone houses gave way to a low wall with flowering saxifrage forcing its way between the stones. Annie picked a small handful of the tiny, pink flowers and tucked them into her braid.

Church Street wandered past a large, well-kept house reflecting the warm afternoon sunlight. The stone wall to their right was the fence for a small, green pasture bordering the backs of houses facing High Street.

A white pony lay on its back, legs and hooves in the air, rolling with abandon from side to side in the lush grass.

“Oh, I’ll bet that feels good,” said Annie, smiling and leaning over the wall toward the pony. “Come here, girl,” she coaxed.

The pony rolled over and stood staring at the children as if not at all happy to be interrupted in its rolling. Grass and leaves cluttered its mane.

Annie pulled out a piece of bread and held it toward the pony. Drew, still distracted by his music, looked on, wondering why Annie would be interested in a silly old pony. But as it came closer he pulled his headphones off and joined her leaning over the low stone wall.

“Give me a piece of that,” he said, reaching for the bread.

“Quiet! You’ll scare her away.”

“He’s a him,” said Drew. “You saw him rolling. That’s not lady-like behavior. No, he’s got to be a him.”

Annie, knowing Drew was baiting her for a fight, ignored him.

“Aren’t you a friendly girl!” she said, rubbing the pony on its velvety nose as it munched the bread. Annie pulled a twig out of the coarse, white mane. “What’s your name, anyway? I’ll bet you’d let me ride you sometime, wouldn’t you?” She scratched under the pony’s obliging chin.

“You can’t ride a pony that doesn’t belong to you,” said Drew. “And besides, we don’t know whom it does belong to, and if we did, I’ll bet they hate kids and wouldn’t let us near him.”

Just then they heard from the church spire, partly hidden from view by a large yew tree, the deep, penetrating sound of bells ringing the half-hour.

“Let’s go check the old church out,” said Drew. “Can’t be much,” he added, “but there’s nothing else to do around here.”



Surrounding the stone church, its spire reaching high into the afternoon sky, spread a large churchyard filled with grave markers. Sunlight bathed most of the yard, but yew and sycamore trees grew in clusters, casting shadows on some of the faded markers.

Passing through the giant gate pillars guarding the churchyard, Annie admired the white clover lining the rough stones of the pathway. The air was alive with the humming of bees busily gathering nectar from the yellows, reds, and whites of cow parsley, cuckoo flower, and willow herb clustered around the stones. Reaching down, she picked an oxeye daisy growing among the untrimmed meadow grass next to a lichen-covered tombstone. Tucking it into her left braid, she sighed, “I like this place.”

Drew studied the massive spire. Rising higher and higher above them, it seemed to lean away at the top. A swallow flew out of the topmost of the four Gothic windows set in the spire. Swooping down and landing on the wing of an angel statue guarding a small, iron-fenced plot, the bird twiddled happily.

They walked toward the Gothic-arched doorway near the base of the spire. On either side of the entrance the pointed stone arch came to rest on two gargoyles; their rigid faces stared down menacingly at the children.

“I can’t imagine it,” said Annie. “Hundreds of years ago somebody actually carved these faces ... and they’re still here. What do you think, Drew, maybe fifty people, chipping away at boulders every day for who knows how many years, made this old church?”

Drew, who liked figuring out how and why things worked, gazed upward, calculating just how many stones a single arch supported, and then he planned to figure approximately how much each one weighed. After that he’d multiply by the number of stones, then by the total number of arches around the whole church. He did not want to be interrupted.

“One hundred twenty-seven, one hundred twenty-eight,” he said, with a sharpness in his tone of voice, hoping Annie would get the hint and not make him lose count.

“I don’t know,” continued Annie. She stood on tiptoes, studying one of the gargoyle faces. “He’s not smiling, really, but he’s not frowning either. He looks kind of like he’s been doing his duty for hundreds of years—it’s got to be hundreds—holding up all those stones, and it’s given him a pain in the neck.”

“You’re giving me one!” said Drew in exasperation. “Now I’ve lost count.”

He put his headphones on and, cranking up the volume, said, “In the Dark Ages when this old thing was built it took hundreds, probably thousands of years and that many workers to finish a church like this. With advanced technology like we’ve got today, we could whip out a dozen like it in no time flat, only way better.”

Annie, who didn’t really enjoy fighting, and thinking of the modern worship center she and Drew occasionally attended with neighbors back home, replied to herself, “So...why don’t we then?”

Drew, frowning and vaguely troubled by the same thought, began counting again.

Stepping toward the heavy oak door and pushing on it, Annie peeked inside.



It began so quietly that Annie first thought she’d just imagined it. A single melodic line ringing off the walls filled the church. Sunlight shone through enormous windows, and the stone tracery cast a lacelike pattern on the polished stone floor.

Annie searched the nave with her eyes, but the church appeared empty. She walked down the central aisle, looking at the stone vaulting high above. The music grew louder, more thrilling, and seemed to come from everywhere.

Meanwhile, Drew heard something above the noise of his CD player and, seeing the open door, took off his headphones. Where had she gone, and what was that music? Walking cautiously into the church, he soon joined Annie near the altar at the front of the nave.

“Where’s it coming from?” whispered Annie.

“Beats me,” said Drew, gazing around in circles.

“Wait!” said Drew, pointing to a row of pipes to the right of the nave. “The sound’s coming from there.” Following the curve of a Gothic arch, a row of dull silver pipes stood on a wooden mantel like giant tin soldiers. A dark-red curtain hung below the pipes.

“There are twenty-five pipes,” said Drew. “But where’s the guy playing the music?” He shrugged. “Maybe it’s computerized and nobody’s actually playing it at all.”

The music slowed, and the final chord ended with a flourish. Annie and Drew held their breath as the music faded and only stillness remained.

Suddenly the curtain below the pipes flew back. An old man sitting on an oak bench squinted over the top of his glasses at the wide-eyed children. Neither the old man nor the children spoke for several seconds.

“I ... we ... I’m sorry we disturbed you,” stammered Annie, finding her voice. “We really didn’t mean to.”

Taking his gold-rimmed glasses off, the old man seemed to see the children better.

“No, no,” he said. “I’m the one who must apologize. I see I’ve given you a terrible fright. I always keep the curtain pulled for drafts and so as not to distract from worship. Poor dears, you look like you’ve seen a ghost. Well, I am nothing of the sort, I assure you. Do come closer.”

Extending his hand he said, “No doubt you’re the children visiting our village for the summer. I’m simply delighted that you’ve come. My name’s David McCallum, but everyone in the parish calls me Mr. Pipes—have for ages—and you must too.”

“I’m Annie, and this is my—”

“I’m Drew,” said Drew interrupting, not wanting to be called “little brother” three times in one day.

“How does this thing work?” asked Drew, looking over the old man’s shoulder at two rows of keys and an array of stops and foot pedals.

“Do you like music?” asked Mr. Pipes, raising his bushy white eyebrows. Annie studied his face more closely. He had a shiny, balding forehead, but what he lacked in hair on top of his head seemed to be growing, and sticking at odd angles, out of his eyebrows and ears, each white strand thicker than ordinary hair. He wore a brown tweed suit, and a slightly rumpled white shirt and tie.

“Some kinds of music,” said Drew, with reserve. “I used to take lessons, but now I just play.”

“How it works is actually quite simple. I push a key.” With the thumb of his right hand he played middle c. “And a valve opens, letting air into that pipe just there.” Drew followed his finger but couldn’t be sure which pipe he meant.

“A ‘Battleship Binns,’ they call this one, and she’s been here nearly 100 years,” continued Mr. Pipes, patting the oak case and casting his eyes up at the row of pipes. “She’ll fill this wee church till your ears hurt if I give her leave, which I only do twice a year—Christmas and Easter.” Mr. Pipes showed how he controlled the volume and how by pulling stops he selected pipes that sound like trumpets, violins, and woodwind instruments. Drew moved closer.

“So, where does the air come from, anyway?” asked Drew, looking down by the foot pedals.

“In the old days—Christians have used organs in worship for hundreds of years—peasants pumped furiously on large bellows in the crypt below the church; not a very



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satisfying task, I dare say. Today, electric motors oblige us with air.”

Annie, sitting on the end of a nearby pew, took her sketchbook out and, trying not to be noticed, sketched Mr. Pipes’s profile as he talked with Drew. From the side his eyebrows stuck out in comical disarray. “That wouldn’t do,” she mused; full-face would show his cheerful eyes better. After all, his eyes made her want to draw him in the first place. They were deep eyes that sparkled as they looked at you.

“We’ve been neglecting you, my dear,” he said, smiling down at Annie.

“That’s all right,” said Annie. “I’ve been listening.” She paused, studying his solid chin while still moving her pencil.

“What, my dear,” he continued, “are you writing in that little book?”

“I wasn’t writing anything ... this time,” she continued. “I ... I was trying to draw your picture. I hope you don’t mind.”

“Not at all, though I can’t imagine it fetching much of a price. But you do write in your book sometimes?”

“Yes ... but it’s nothing really,” said Annie.

“If I may make so free, my dear, what do you write?”

“Well ... poetry, I guess.” The color came to her cheeks, and she stared hard at her sketchbook. “It’s not very good poetry, though.”

“And it’s certain to remain so if you don’t practice,” said Mr. Pipes smiling. “I’d love to read one of your poems sometime.”

While Mr. Pipes and Annie talked, Drew busied himself looking over the pedals, stops, and keys, with an occasional stretching glance up at the pipes.

“So, what were you playing when we came in?” interrupted Drew. He couldn’t imagine that an old guy like Mr. Pipes could have very good taste in music, but he did want to hear the organ again. There was something ... he couldn’t put his finger on what, but there was something ... well, *big* about the sound the organ had made; not loud—like *his* music—just *big*.

“Ah, my boy,” said Mr. Pipes. “That would be one of my favorites, the Tallis Canon,[†] a lovely old melody, full of grandeur.”

“How old?” asked Drew, wondering what “grandeur” meant.

“Well, by now this immortal canon,” with his right hand he played the first line, “is something over 400 years old.”

After the first two measures, he followed with his left hand on the lower keyboard, playing the notes over again as his right hand continued. Mr. Pipes moved his hands effortlessly over the keys, blending the musical lines without a glance at the hymnal.

Drew, trying to follow the music with his eyes, wondered how just two hands could make music like that. The simple melody, superimposed on itself, and ringing off the stone pillars and walls, surrounded the children with thrilling sounds.

[†] The Tallis Canon is a musical arrangement composed (circa 1562) by Thomas Tallis as one of nine tunes and several anthems for Archbishop Matthew Parker’s *The Whole Psalter translated into English Metre, which containeth an hundred and fifty Psalmes*.

“Does it have words?” asked Annie, in a hushed voice after he finished playing.

“A poet’s question, indeed,” said Mr. Pipes, smiling at her. “It has become connected with perhaps the first, and one of the greatest English hymns, the ‘Evening Hymn’—grand words, to be sure, of the highest rank. Thomas Ken, whose life reads like an adventure story, wrote them. And, Annie, they are most emphatically *good* poetry.”

“Drew likes singing,” said Annie, suppressing a giggle thinking of his moaning earlier in the day. “And so do I. Could we sing it?”

Drew made a face at her.

“The last verse is best known—the Doxology—and with pleasure I’ll introduce you to Mr. Ken’s hymn,” said Mr. Pipes. “With good reason, it has been around for ages.”

The words sounded only vaguely familiar to Annie and Drew, and after they sang it together, Mr. Pipes said, “You would call this a round, and it’s quite enjoyable to sing as such. Annie, you begin with ‘Praise,’ and Drew you come in here, after the word, ‘flow.’ I’ll join after Drew sings the word, ‘below.’ Sing it together in praise to Almighty God.”

The organ seemed to lift their voices with it to the stone vaulting above. Continuing through the hymn three times, Annie and Drew gained more confidence.

For a fleeting moment Drew wondered why he was enjoying himself. Here he was in an old English village, in an old church, singing with an old organ a hymn twice as old as America—he glanced over at Mr. Pipes, whose strong voice made Drew want to sing louder—with a very old man. It didn’t make any sense, but he lifted his head, brow furrowed, and sang on.

The strains of the Tallis Canon, combined with Thomas Ken's poetry, made them feel smaller; then, gradually, they didn't think about themselves at all. They just wondered.

The music resolved in a grand chord that filled the church and made Annie feel like bursting inside. Then, silence returned. Even Annie couldn't think of anything to say.

Suddenly, the great bells rang out, and Mr. Pipes, blinking with each gong, counted the hour. Long beams of light in the shape of stretched-out Gothic windows shone across the nave of the church.

"Oh, my dear me," he said, looking ruffled. "Dr. Dudley'll give me what for for this. He will, indeed. It's six o'clock, and I was to be at Martin's surgery ages ago."

"We've met him," said Annie. "At least I think we have."

"Splendid chap. But he's always coming up with some new idea to give me nine lives—I'm afraid he takes dreadfully good care of me."

Drew's interest faded as the last of the music died away. "What a long summer lies ahead," he thought, "and I'm hungry."

"Now you two begone, and with my blessing," said Mr. Pipes kindly. "Mrs. Broadwith serves tea promptly at half past six. You must hurry or you'll be late; and do extend my sincerest apologies. Run along now, whilst I secure the organ for the night."

Annie thanked him, and turning, they walked down the aisle. Mr. Pipes hummed behind them, clicking switches and pulling stops. At the door Annie paused for a last look at the fading light in the church while Drew fumbled with his CD player.

“One last thing, my dears,” his voice echoed off the stone walls. “There’s so very much to see and do; your summer holiday will be over before you know it. If there’s anything I can do to make your stay more pleasant....”

His voice trailed away. Then, hymnal in hand, he called after them.

“Do you like fishing?”

Chapter Two

Thomas Ken

I would not wake, nor rise again,
Even heaven itself I would disdain,
Wert not Thou there to be enjoyed,
And I in hymns to be employed.

Annie and Drew stopped on the brow of the old stone bridge at the edge of town. Stretching below them, the sparkling river, bordered on one side by rolling green pasture, seemed to beckon as it grew narrower and finally disappeared around a distant bend.

“Where did it go?” Annie wondered to herself with a sigh.

On the left bank, tall river grass waved almost imperceptibly as a light breeze blew away the last morning mist. The spire of the parish church rose above the shimmering leaves of willow trees stretching their protective branches over the river.

“It looks like there’s no town,” said Annie, adjusting her knapsack, “just the church, the river, and us.”

“And Mr. Pipes!” said Drew, pointing to the opposite bank. “There he is putting something—I think they’re fishing poles—in a boat.” Resting an over-sized basket on the edge of the bridge, he cupped his hands and yelled, “Hello there! Mr. Pipes! We’re coming.”

“Sorry to be late,” called Annie.

Mr. Pipes straightened, turned slowly toward the bridge, smiled, and lifted his hat. For a moment the sun glistened on his white hair. Behind him, separated from the tiny pier by an untrimmed grassy yard, stood a stone

cottage. Its main entrance faced the river, and a stone chimney divided the gable visible to the children. A matching chimney extended above the roof on the far end, and together they looked like twin towers guarding the cottage. Yew trees formed a green backdrop, and across the bridge a narrow path led off the main road down to Mr. Pipes's cottage.

Annie and Drew gathered their bundles and ran down the path to the river.



Several times in the last two days the children had spotted Mr. Pipes around the little village. They'd spied him buying bread at Mrs. Beccles's and had stopped for a visit. Later that same day they'd waved at him as he went into Dr. Dudley's office. But just yesterday they'd walked toward the church and were feeding the pony a chocolate bar when Mr. Pipes stopped on his way home and asked if, "tomorrow morning I might have the honor of your company fishing?" Though they'd never been fishing, they eagerly agreed, and Annie said they'd bring lunch. He told them where to meet but cautioned them not to be late. "Fish bite early," he'd said.

On their way to meet Mr. Pipes this morning, Dr. Dudley stopped the children as they passed his surgery. When he heard they were going fishing he said, "Don't let old Pipes overdo it—still thinks he's got his old youthful vigor—never knows when to stop. Fine chap, but a most troublesome patient."



Annie ran to greet Mr. Pipes, and Drew puffed behind with the picnic basket.

“Well now, we’ve a lovely day for fishing,” said Mr. Pipes, “and I’m simply delighted you could join me.”

Drew couldn’t help staring at how Mr. Pipes dressed for a day of fishing. He wore a charcoal gray suit, showing signs of thinning at the elbows and knees. On his head perched a wool hat that looked like he sat on it when not wearing it. And, to Drew’s amazement, he wore a necktie—to go fishing! Mr. Pipes’s trouser legs were tucked into black rubber boots that he’d repaired in several places with tire patches.

“We can’t wait!” said Annie. “I can’t think of a nicer place to go fishing for the first time.” Drew scowled at her. He didn’t like admitting he didn’t know how to fish.

Annie continued, “I’ve never seen such a beautiful cottage tucked in the trees like this, and right on the river.”

“Thank you, my dear,” said Mr. Pipes. Then, looking across the river, he continued. “I’m especially fond of my view of the great spire of St. Peter and St. Paul’s. It reminds me to look to God in heaven from whom all blessings flow.” As if on cue, the bells chimed the quarter hour.

“It also reminds you when you’re late,” said Drew. They all laughed together, and then Mr. Pipes grew serious.

“I was born in this cottage, many years ago. And I grew up playing with my brothers on these banks, climbing those yew trees (they don’t seem to have aged as much as I), gathering bait in that wee garden patch, learning how to handle a boat, and going fishing.”

Walking to the edge of the pier, Drew climbed carefully down several stone steps and studied the tarred planking and sturdy lines of the little boat. He felt a surge of anticipation at the day’s adventure. But he did wish he knew how to bait a hook and row a boat.

“I would love to hear stories about those days,” said Annie.

“And I’d be an old fool to tell them,” said Mr. Pipes. “Whatever are we waiting for? We’ve got fish to catch!” With that, he gathered the last of the fishing gear, handed Annie a covered tin, and had Drew put the oars in the boat.

“But I will, however, tell you a much more important story.”

“About who?” said Drew.

“About whom, you mean, no doubt,” said Mr. Pipes, with a friendly grin and a twinkle in his eye. “Let us be under way first. Which means I’d better help you with that,” said Mr. Pipes, looking doubtfully at the picnic basket. It looked even more enormous next to the little boat. They each carried a side and walked carefully down the steps. The stern lowered as they set the basket on the floorboards. “I believe Mrs. Broadwith misunderstood the duration of our voyage,” said Mr. Pipes with a chuckle, “but we certainly won’t go without, now, will we?”

“Does it have a name?” asked Drew, “the boat, I mean?”

“She is the *Toplady*, and no more seaworthy craft will you find on my river, the Great Ouse,” he said, with mock seriousness.

“I love her already,” said Annie, “and now I won’t be the only girl out fishing today.”

“She’s been fishing many a time over the years, to be sure. A seasoned sailor, she is.”

Then pointing forward and aft he said, “Now, Drew, you take the bow. Annie, you sit in the stern, and I’ll man the oars. But do watch that you don’t upset things;

especially, Annie, that tin of bait you carried. Frogs everywhere; it would be a horrible mess.”

Annie shuddered.

“Careful now; step aboard toward the middle and keep your weight low. I prefer fishing *on* the river to bathing *in* it.”

Mr. Pipes, in spite of his years, stepped confidently aboard and sat down on the rowing thwart, that is, the rowing seat, gripping an oar in each hand. “There we are. Now, when I give the word, cast off both mooring lines. Ready?”

“All set,” said Drew.

“I think so,” said Annie.

“Then cast off, and our adventures begin.”

After a gentle nudge against the little staithe, or stone pier, the current gradually brought the bow around, and Mr. Pipes began rowing toward the middle of the river.

“This is our first time ever in a boat,” said Annie, trailing her fingers in the sparkling water. “Isn’t it wonderful, Drew?”

Drew mumbled a reply. Rowing looked easy enough, he thought, studying Mr. Pipes’s movement backward and forward with each pull of the oars.

Mr. Pipes made efficient strokes, each in harmony with the other, never moving the oars more than necessary. *Toplady*, like an old friend, responded to his slightest directive as they moved smoothly down the river. The water gurgled happily against the little boat’s planking, and the steady slosh of the oars added a kind of music to the trilling songs of wrens along the banks. It was a peaceful morning, the sun warming them, and the shade from yews and willows cooling them as they passed.

“What bird is making that shrill ‘tseep, tseep’ singing?” asked Drew, shielding his eyes from the sun as he studied the tree branches along the bank. “There it is again!”

“Tseep, tseep,” cried the bird.

“Do you hear it?”

“Yes, indeed I do,” said Mr. Pipes. “That’ll be the wee gray-and-black-striped hedge sparrow piping along the riverbank, gathering a breakfast of insects. Watch carefully, and you will see many feathered wonders along the Great Ouse. Just ahead I’ll show you a late coot’s nest. If she’s away you’ll see her eggs, unless they’ve already hatched. Then you’ll see the downy gray young ones themselves. Do you like birds, Drew?”

“Well, they’re all right,” said Drew. Then after a moment he added, “I like some of their songs.” He fingered his headphones resting silently on his neck.

“So do I,” said Mr. Pipes, still taking regular strokes with the oars.

“Just beyond the coot’s nest we’ll bait our hooks and settle in for some fishing in one of my special spots. If there are fish biting on the river, they’ll be biting there.”

Annie took a deep breath and smiled. The splash of water against the boat, the trees, the blue sky, birds, and Mr. Pipes; she couldn’t have been happier—as long as she didn’t actually have to catch a slimy fish.

“You promised us a story, Mr. Pipes,” said Annie, looking past him at the river snaking ahead.

“That I did, and you shall have it,” he said, pleased that Annie had remembered. Then, pausing in his rowing and leaning on his oars, the *Toplady* drifting quietly with the current, he began. “Do you remember Mr. Ken’s Doxology,

his hymn of praise to God? We sang it with such pleasure the other evening.”

Drew did remember, and without thinking began humming the tune. There was something about it—“grandeur,” Mr. Pipes had called it. Drew wasn’t sure what the word meant and decided it must be a British word. Still there was something about that simple tune, and he’d not gotten it out of his head. Annie joined in reciting the words aloud. “Praise God from whom all blessings flow....”

“That is it, indeed!” said Mr. Pipes. He moved his starboard oar with half a glance forward over his shoulder at the gradual bend in the river.

“Shortly after the Pilgrims fled our troubled England,” he began, “and arrived on your shores in America, Thomas Ken, as a toddler, lost his mother, and then his father died, too. His half sister and her husband, Izaak Walton, looked after Thomas, treating him as their own, giving him a godly home in which to grow up. He spent these years nurtured in Holy Scripture and the Christian faith and worshipping at the local parish church. Mr. Walton was known as a great lover of Christ’s church, but he also loved fishing—even wrote a book about it, *The Compleat Angler*. And I suspect he took young Thomas fishing. You see, they lived in a wee cottage west of here on the Dove River. In all likelihood he learned fishing and how to navigate a little boat on the waters of a gentle river very much like this one.”

Resting on his oars, he let the current carry them along. “I don’t know much about those early years, but judging by their effects on Thomas’s later life and work, they laid the foundation for a faith in God that made him fearless of pirates, prelates, princes, or prisons.” The children smiled. “Oh, and by the way, Drew, he loved music, too. He no doubt learned to love music from Mr. Walton who, marveling at the singing of birds, once said, ‘Lord, what

music hast Thou provided for saints in heaven, when Thou affordest bad men such music on earth?”

Here Drew, studying Mr. Pipes's rowing, asked, “Could I give you a break at the oars?” Then, afraid he couldn't fool the old man, he admitted, “I've never rowed a boat in my life—I want to hear more of the story, but Thomas probably had to learn to row when he first came to live with ... what were their names?”

“Walton, Izaak and Anne Walton,” said Mr. Pipes. “Never rowed? That we must correct, my boy.” He pulled each oar inboard until the blades stopped at the oarlocks. Then, after asking Annie to move to one side of the stern thwart, he lifted himself up—a hand on each gunwale, or upper edge of the boat, for support—made a steady, crouching turn, and settled next to her facing forward. Drew, without any of Mr. Pipes's care, stood straight up and stepped eagerly toward the rowing thwart. With his first step *Toplady* tipped dangerously to her port, that is, her left-hand side. Drew's arms flailed as he tried balancing on the rocking boat, and his next step sent the little craft to her starboard rail.

“Drew! You're going to sink us!” cried Annie, gripping the gunwale.

“We'll be bathing—not fishing—if you keep that up, Drew,” said Mr. Pipes. “Remember, keep your body weight low and to the middle. I dearly love the river, mind you, but I prefer our relationship to remain as it is—me dry and on top, the river wet and underneath. It is entirely in the prepositions, my boy. ‘On’ not ‘in’ the water; do try to observe this rule.”

“Sorry,” mumbled Drew, his cheeks flushing as he dropped onto the seat. Stealing a glance at the old man's face, a wave of self pity swept over Drew: he'd never known his real father, and his stepfather was entirely too

busy with mega bites, zip drives, 2HDs, IDCs, and PCs to ever take Drew fishing or boating. He looked at the oars and the boat. “Humph, it can’t be that hard,” he said to himself, “not if an old guy like Mr. Pipes can do it.”

“Now then, my dear boy,” said Mr. Pipes, breaking in on Drew’s thoughts, “as Mr. Walton might have instructed young Thomas 350 years ago, grasp firmly the gripping ends, here, and using the leverage of your entire body—no, no, not just your arms, Drew; backs and legs are much stronger than arms—dip the oars together into the water—no! I say, gently and together!” After watching Drew’s lurching and splashing, the boat now heading straight for one bank then the other, Mr. Pipes said generously, “There, that’s ... somewhat improved. But do try keeping equal pressure on each oar so as not tending toward rowing so nearly in circles, and don’t dip the oars so deeply into the river; you’ll get nothing but a sore back.” After several more minutes of Drew’s efforts, Mr. Pipes said, “Here! here! my boy, much better!”

“How come Mr. Pipes made it look so much easier?” asked Annie. Drew scooped an oar upward at the finish of his stroke directing his splashing toward Annie.

“Hey!” cried Annie. “Stop splashing me!”

“Not so deep with the oars,” said Mr. Pipes. “You’ll wear yourself down, be an old man before your time,” he chuckled. “Dip them just far enough in; then pull gently. Don’t try rowing so fast, Drew.”

Drew rested on the oars and wiped the perspiration off his forehead, his face blotched from his efforts. “I think I’m getting it.” He began again, dipping and pulling viciously at every stroke.

“Course you are, my boy,” said Mr. Pipes, “but do remember, not too deep with the blades.”

Trying not to dip the oars so deeply, Drew suddenly gave a yelp of surprise. After a skimming splash, *Toplady* lurched and lost power. Drew flipped off the rowing thwart and lay flat on his back, his legs and feet sticking nearly straight into the air. Annie began laughing so hard she nearly fell backward into the river.

Mr. Pipes, a large grin on his face, said, "It's called 'catching a crab.' You pulled too hard on the oars without dipping them sufficiently into the water. Nearly every boy does it when he's learning. You just happened to do it somewhat better than most." Clambering back on the seat, Drew joined in the laughter.

"May I try just a little bit longer?" asked Drew. He couldn't bear to finish his first rowing lesson on such a bad note.

"Of course, Drew," said Mr. Pipes, wiping his eyes.

After several more minutes of now-cautious rowing, Drew moved back to the bow, and under Mr. Pipes's practiced stroke, *Toplady* carried her crew gently down the river.

"Will there be any fish left in this part of England after Drew's churning up all the water?" said Annie.

"If there are, we'll do our best to find them."

"You said something about Mr. Ken and pirates," said Drew, changing the subject.

"That I did," said Mr. Pipes, easing the boat into a broad bend in the river. "We will pick up the story as soon as hooks are safely in the water. Just there," he pointed to the south shore, "is the coot's nest, but she seems to be away right this moment."

"No wonder," said Annie, grinning at Drew.

“Just ahead we will moor to the bank and fish.” Mr. Pipes gestured with his hand toward the outer edge of the bend, where a large willow tree extended over this smoother part of the river.

“We will try for barbel—one of my favorite catches. They like feeding where the river loses her pace. I have often caught them in just this spot.”

“Were barbel around in Mr. Ken’s day?” said Annie.

“Be sure of it, my dear, and he might have fished for them in just such a spot.”

Mr. Pipes eased *Toplady*’s bow close to the bank. “Drew, grab the anchor; it’s under your thwart. Now jam its fluke into the mud. Up closer to the grass—try again. That’s better, now pay out the line ... easy does it. Watch yourself, lad! You’ve got the line wrapped round your ankle—that won’t do.”

Toplady slowly drifted around with the current and an occasional dip from an oar by Mr. Pipes until her bow, now held by the anchor line, faced the way they had come, and her stern drifted near a large willow branch extending over the shaded water.

“Let out just a bit more.” Drew eased on the anchor line. “Good! Now take a wrap on your bow cleat while Annie and I secure the stern line to the thick arm of this obliging tree.” After taking two wraps around the branch, Mr. Pipes had Drew take in the bow line while he eased off the stern line. “That’s it; now secure your line on the cleat.” *Toplady* was moored, suspended neatly between bank and tree branch.

Mr. Pipes, eager to be fishing, shipped the oars, readied the three simple poles, and showed Drew how to bait a hook with a frog “the Izaak Walton way,” he explained, then asked Annie if she would like to learn.

“Mr. Pipes, I’m very sorry, but I just couldn’t do that to a frog,” said Annie, feeling a little lightheaded.

“Turn your face, my dear, I’ll only be a minute.” He baited her hook, put it in the river, and said, “If that won’t yield a fat barbel, I don’t know the palate of a fish!” And then to Drew, “Only let out four feet of line; that’s where you’ll find them.” He readied his own pole and settled himself comfortably amidships. “Now we wait and enjoy the best part of fishing,” he said, smiling and crossing his legs on the gunwale.

“I thought catching fish was the best part of fishing,” said Drew, looking anxiously from his pole to where the line entered the water.

“That’s because you’ve never been before. Mr. Walton, the ‘compleat angler’ himself, said, ‘Good company and good discourse are the very sinews of virtue.’ He clearly provided both for young Thomas, while fishing no doubt, for few have achieved so near a complete mastery of their sinful hearts, as it would appear Mr. Ken did. Their discourse must often have been about the Holy Scriptures, and these seeds of love for God, for His Word, and for His Church found good soil in young Thomas’s heart.

“He not only went fishing as a boy, he also went to school,” continued Mr. Pipes. Drew groaned. “And he worked very hard and became an able and distinguished student at the village grammar school. But what a time it was for Thomas to be growing up and trying to study.”

“What was wrong?” asked Drew.

“Civil war. England was torn with strife. Parliament (that would be roughly like your American Congress), made up of many godly Puritans anxious for a more biblical doctrine and order of worship, were literally at war with the irreligious monarch, Charles I, and his royalist troops. Many battles were fought, one nearby in 1643 on

the Olney Bridge. But the Parliamentary Army led by Oliver Cromwell finally defeated the Royalists at the Battle of Naseby, eventually captured the king, tried him for treason, chopped his head off, and dissolved the British monarchy. Heady days, those were!”

“Did it have to come to that?” asked Annie, with a shudder.

“Those were violent days, my dear,” said Mr. Pipes, jiggling his pole. “Well, in a day when it was not popular to remain an Anglican and monarchist, young Thomas did. Not for any love of the irreligious court of the Stuart kings but because he refused to willy-nilly change loyalties as readily as some men change ... change their fishing bait.” He lifted his line out of the water, then dropped the still-baited hook back in the river. “This fearless loyalty to his commitments, regardless of the cost to himself, would be a distinguishing characteristic of Thomas all his days, but it also got him in considerable trouble.

“So, there was fourteen-year-old Thomas, small for his age, an Anglican, sent off to Winchester School in a time of deep piety on the one hand, but a time of great uncertainty and change in church government and worship, on the other. Thomas loved the order and beauty of Anglican worship as prescribed in the *Book of Common Prayer*, and some of the changes must have sorely grieved him.

“Winchester was a magnificent Gothic cathedral with a preparatory school nigh on 300 years old when Thomas arrived, and it was known as a place where a rigorous education, for an earnest student, could be gained. Discipline was strict, and students were expected to ‘*disci, discedi, aut devincitur*—’”

“Huh?” said Drew.

“Latin for ‘Learn, leave, or be licked,’” went on Mr. Pipes. “Quite a school motto! But this axiom, inscribed

above the great chair of the master of the school, served as a constant reminder to any reluctant school boy of the school's highest expectations."

Mr. Pipes adjusted his reclining position and, half sitting, said, "All right, my fishing companions, up poles. Check your bait." Annie hesitated, afraid of what she would see at the end of her line. But Drew's line and Mr. Pipes's were free of fish, so she slowly raised her own and lowered it back into the quiet river, smiling with relief. "Patience, my dears, patience. It is one of those virtues nurtured by fishing. But I return to Thomas.

"As in all schools in those days, the boys rose very early and sang Psalms in worship and private devotions. Beyond that, we know very little about Thomas's time at Winchester. Though one rather humorous evidence of his presence is the inscription 'THO. KEN, 1656,' carved, perhaps by his own fishing knife, in a buttress of the cloister where he studied. Immaturity in boys hasn't changed much in 300 years!

"Thomas made good use of his privileges at Winchester and learned the rudiments of preaching the gospel. Later he joined the first rank of English preachers.

"Boys who studied successfully at Winchester, as Thomas did, were sent off to New College, Oxford, for their university years."

"How new a college?" asked Drew.

Mr. Pipes calculated for a moment. "Today New College is about 600 years old, but no doubt it was the 'new' college in the 1300s when it was founded, and it is still called 'New College' today! When Thomas arrived, the brilliant and godly Puritan, John Owen, was the vice-chancellor of the college, but enormous changes were afoot. You remember the king who lost his head? Well, in 1660, his son, Charles II, by deceit, duplicity, and the

downfall of the Commonwealth, had been restored to the throne of England. Oxford, now devoid of Puritan piety and scholarship, became a place of wickedness and disorder. By the king's command, pastors refusing to conform to the Church of England lost their pulpits, and some were thrown in prison—later, I'll tell you about one of the greatest. Soon after the Restoration, first the Plague and then a terrible fire swept through London, destroying much of the city. Many believed this was God's judgment on a country whose immoral king persecuted Christians.

“Thomas Ken remained faithful both to God and to the Anglican Church, and after completing his studies at Oxford, he became an Anglican priest. One of his first duties as a minister of the Church was to go to Holland as chaplain to Princess Mary, the wife of William of Orange.

“Later, the Bishop of Winchester invited Mr. Ken to return as a teacher in his old school. There, in 1674, Mr. Ken, concerned for the souls of his students, wrote his *Manual of Prayers*, and to this book he later added the morning, evening, and midnight hymns, all ending with the immortal Doxology, ‘Praise God from whom all blessings flow.’ But he never intended the Doxology to be sung in church. Anglicans sang exclusively Psalms in corporate worship. These hymns were for boys studying in school and for his and their private devotions. Ken often played the lute or his little organ when singing his hymns.

“Izaak Walton retired to Winchester, perhaps to be near Mr. Ken, his adopted son. But we know Mr. Walton often fished in the nearby Itchen River, and he may have taken Mr. Ken along when Ken's busy schedule allowed.”

Drew, pulling up his line, studied the undisturbed bait. Not even a nibble. Mr. Walton must have had better luck in his river, Drew mused.

“Here, Drew, is where Ken encounters pirates. Lord Dartmouth had been appointed by the king to lead an important naval expedition against a fortress of the Tangier pirates in Northern Africa. For years these rascals had crippled English shipping, and the king was finally sufficiently annoyed to do something about it. In 1683 Lord Dartmouth called on Mr. Ken to be the chaplain for the entire fleet. He wanted Ken precisely because of the strictness and order of his own religious life. He knew Ken wouldn’t put up with any foolishness—never a shortage of that among sailors.”

“Going to sea!” said Annie. “That sounds exciting.”

“I am certain it was, and it may have been the first time back in a boat for Mr. Ken. He preached to coarse sailors on board ship and conducted worship services regularly throughout the five-week voyage to the Barbary Coast. And I suspect he brought his lute and sang hymns in his devotions whilst on the voyage.

“Upon his return to England, Ken became royal chaplain to loose-living Charles II. Not a man to accommodate his message to the hearer, Ken stood boldly before the king, calling him to repent and give up his immoral life. He must have preached winsomely, however, for on one occasion the king halted frivolities with his courtiers and said, ‘I must go and hear little Ken tell me of my faults.’ Those were no doubt long sermons, for this king had many faults!

“Ken continued living at Winchester, and the king with his court often visited this much-loved city. One day the king, in preparation for a visit, sent a messenger ahead to find a lodging for his favorite mistress, Mrs. Nell Gwynn. Whose house do you suppose the harbinger chose?”

“Not Mr. Ken’s?” said Annie.

“Mr. Ken’s house it was, and what do you think Ken told the very messenger of the king?”

“Take a hike, buster!” said Drew.

“Something like,” laughed Mr. Pipes. “Bold Mr. Ken said, ‘Not for his kingdom will I comply with the king’s command.’ For him it was a matter of loyalty to the King of kings, and there was no inducement that would make Ken violate that loyalty. Many had lost their heads for less. To back up his refusal, Ken turned his house over to a builder for repairs (needed or otherwise) and had him promptly take the roof off! No king would want his girlfriend lodged in a roofless house.”

“What did the king do?” asked Drew. “I’ll bet he was hopping mad at Mr. Ken.”

“He was angry at first, I am certain, but the king respected Ken for his fearless adherence to God’s law. Some time later, when his advisors were arguing over whom the king should appoint to the valuable bishoprics of Bath and Wells, the king astonished them by declaring, ‘Odds fish! Who shall have Bath and Wells but little Ken, who would not give poor Nelly a lodging.’ So instead of punishing Ken, that evil king rewarded him by making him bishop. Holy Scripture says, ‘When a man’s ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies live at peace with him.’

“Bishop Ken gave so much of his considerable wealth away to the poor that some people considered him as needy as the poor, and tried giving charity to him! He hosted a weekly dinner just for local peasants in want and gave a huge sum for the relief of French Christians fleeing persecution in their homeland. Mr. Ken’s whole life shows much more concern for heavenly treasures than for earthly ones.

“Speaking of dinner, we have a great deal of work to do if we are to make any kind of dent in Mrs. Broadwith’s generous luncheon. I suggest we engage ourselves in that work. Annie, would you be so kind as to serve our lunch?”

Annie opened the basket and arranged the triangular-shaped sandwiches filled with roast beef, fresh tomatoes, and cucumber. She poured out cold lemonade in mugs, opened a container of sliced apples, and another filled with three large pickles. “I’ll wait to serve the ginger cookies, chocolate bars, and jelly pastries,” said Annie. “Drew would eat dessert first. He always does that.”

“I’ll ask God’s blessing and offer our thanks for this feast,” said Mr. Pipes, taking his hat off and resting it on his knee. “O, Almighty God ...” Mr. Pipes’s voice quavered slightly.

“It’s just lunch,” Drew thought to himself. But it was clear that Mr. Pipes took praying seriously.

The prayer ended, and the three fishermen enjoyed Mrs. Broadwith’s lunch while Mr. Pipes continued the story.

“Sometimes I wonder about kings,” he began, after finishing a chocolate bar. “Your Mark Twain said kings, taken all around, were a pretty ornery lot, ‘Rapsallions’ I think he called them. Well, on his deathbed, Charles II returned to the Roman Catholic fold, and his brother, James, was crowned king. Bishop Ken swore allegiance to James II, only to find out later that James planned to return England to the Roman Church. Though Ken hated controversy and often said, ‘not dispute, but devotion,’ he found his devotion to God demanded he stand against James’s plans.

“Things now became very awkward for Mr. Ken. James issued a Declaration of Indulgence providing religious toleration—especially for Catholics. Ken refused to read the king’s Declaration in church and petitioned the king to

stop making England Roman Catholic. James threw Ken in the Tower of London for treason.

“Public opinion shifted away from James, and, after a few months, Ken was acquitted. The king ran out of supporters, and in 1688 Parliament sent a request to Princess Mary and her husband, William, to come and rule England instead of James.

“This ‘Glorious Revolution’ ensured that England would remain Protestant and secured many religious freedoms. But Ken had a new problem. By an act of Parliament, James was no longer king, but Ken had sworn allegiance to him and refused to break his oath by swearing loyalty to William. Ken reminds me of the Psalmist who tells us that he who dwells in God’s holy temple, ‘keeps his oath even when it hurts.’ This hurt!

“William defrocked Ken and gave his bishoprics to another, and Ken retired to a small village where Queen Mary showed her regard for Ken, providing for all his needs in his exile. Ken continued ministering to the needs of others, and he might even have gone fishing. But he no doubt continued singing his longing for heaven:

O when shall I, in endless day,
Forever chase dark sleep away,
And hymns with the supernal choir
Incessant sing and never tire!

“After a prolonged and painful illness, he died March 19, 1711. Imagine his joy at singing in God’s presence forever!

“Another verse in his evening hymn seems especially appropriate to Mr. Ken’s life of peace and holiness in a world of trouble and unholiness. After praying for the forgiveness of his sins, the concluding lines of the second verse perfectly express the breadth of peace gained by God’s forgiveness:

That with the world, myself, and Thee,
I ere I sleep at peace may be.

“Drew and Annie, you can be at peace with yourself and others only if your heart is right with God. Mr. Ken, at peace with God through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, had a clear conscience before the world and his own soul, and now enjoys peace and rest, singing eternal praises.”

“What is heaven like,” wondered Annie, balancing her pole between her knees.

Plopping his line on the other side of the boat, Mr. Pipes asked, “Do you ever wake up in the dead of night because you’ve had a frightful dream?”

“I sure do,” said Annie. “I cover my head with a blanket.”

Drew snorted but said nothing.

“Well, you’re not alone, Annie,” said Mr. Pipes. “Whether the child fearing a dragon under his bed or the Christian martyr the night before his death, everyone knows what Ken meant in the following lines.

When in the night I sleepless lie,
My soul with heavenly thoughts supply;
Let no ill dreams disturb my rest,
No power of darkness me molest.

“Many hymns are prayers that express our desire after God better than we can ourselves. It is a glorious thing to worship God, and hymns will give you words with which to worship Him.”

Annie and Drew sat quietly thinking about Thomas Ken’s life and hymns. A breeze swayed the drooping leaves of the willow, and the river grass rustled gently on the bank. Mr. Pipes raised his pole, scowling at the hook.

“Well, children, we’ve enjoyed only the best part of fishing—good company and good discourse—but the fish have eluded us. For your sakes—first fishing excursion, and all—I’m most dreadfully sorry. Not even a bite.”

Disappointed, Drew agreed that he’d not felt so much as a tug on his line all day. He wondered about fishing.

Annie looked uneasy but didn’t speak. For the last few minutes, she felt first nibbles, then frantic tugs on her pole, but had tried to ignore them. Surely she couldn’t have caught a real fish. She bit nervously on her lower lip. Her idea of fishing had included the peaceful river, the sunshine, grassy banks, willow trees, a first boat trip, and a day spent with their new friend. But not this. If only the others didn’t notice, then maybe somehow she could let it go. Her pole suddenly gave a bigger jerk as the fish tried desperately to get away.

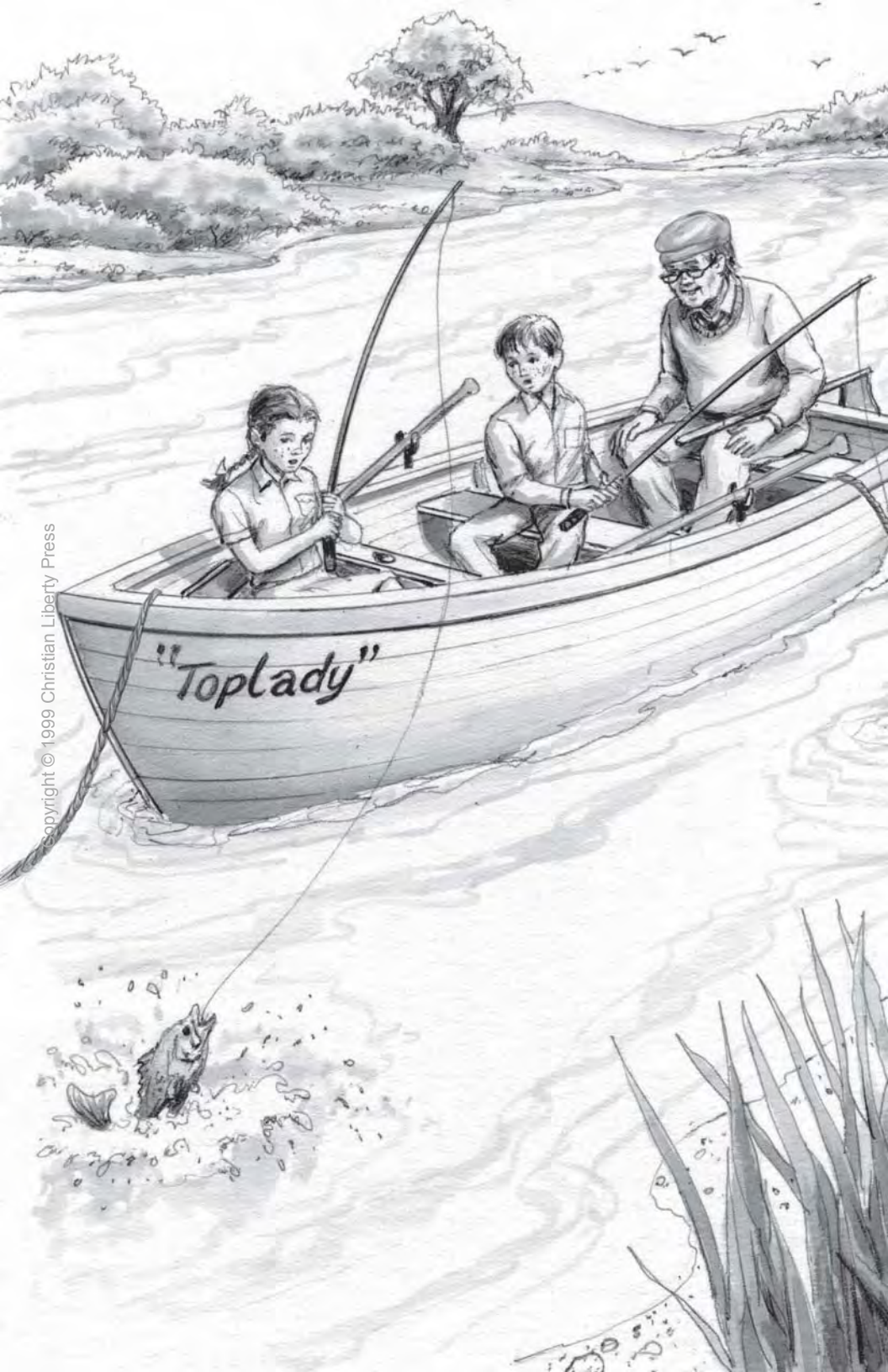
“Your pole! Look at your pole!” said Drew, almost dropping his own with excitement. “You’ve got one! Pull up your pole before he gets away.”

“She does, indeed!” said Mr. Pipes.

“I know, I know,” moaned Annie, her eyes brimming with tears. “I’ve been hoping it would get away for some time.”

With stringy whiskers, the barbel, assisted by Mr. Pipes, came flopping and thudding onto the floorboards. Annie changed places with Drew and became very interested in the flight of a dragonfly on the other side of the boat. Drew watched Mr. Pipes remove the hook, then helped put the fish in a basket suspended just below water at the stern, “To keep it fresh,” Mr. Pipes explained.

“Mrs. Broadwith will be delighted with your catch, Annie, but we must be getting back so you can have it



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home in time for her to prepare it for your dinner.” He admired the fish once more before closing the basket lid. “Lovely catch.”

They cast off *Toplady*’s stern line and retrieved her anchor. Drew, eager to practice, rowed against the current. The wind astern helped them along. Why hadn’t he caught the fish? After all, he wanted to catch one; he couldn’t understand Annie’s silly attitude. He hoped that Mr. Pipes would invite him to go again.

As if reading Drew’s thoughts, Mr. Pipes said, “There are certainly more fish to be caught. I trust you will consent to go fishing with me again. Though, Annie, my dear, you needn’t actually fish; but do come and bring your sketchbook—we enjoy your company. And Drew, though today all you have caught is patience, we will go again soon. Fish won’t elude you forever.”

“Thank you,” said Annie, feeling relieved. “I know it sounds silly, but fishing would be great if it weren’t for the fish.”

With a determined set to his face, Drew continued his much needed rowing practice. Fishing without fish? He would never understand girls.

“Ah, there you are; I see our coot has returned,” said Mr. Pipes, pointing at a shimmering black bird, with a white beak extending into something like a shield on its forehead. Disturbed by Drew’s noisy rowing, it swam nervously near its nest just visible among the reeds. Drew paused mid-stroke, watching the coot duck and bob in the water.

The sunlight turned golden, and trees on the southern bank cast occasional shadows across the river. Annie felt better sitting at the opposite end of the boat from her fish. She watched tiny waves darken the water.

“Where does the river go?” asked Annie, looking wistfully astern.

“It snakes its way through the most exquisite countryside in England, past the ancient homes of dukes and lords. But more importantly, it washes the banks of humble Bedford, the home of one of England’s greatest Christians.” Then, stroking his chin as if an idea were forming in his head, he added, “He also wrote a charming hymn. And *Toplady* could take us there.”

Mr. Pipes took his hat off and turned his face from side to side feeling the wind.

“If I had brought along *Toplady*’s sailing rigging we could be having a delightful sail home.”

“Oh, please!” said Annie. “Let’s go on a voyage—like Mr. Ken and the pirates.”

“She can sail?” asked Drew.

“Yes, indeed she can; but it’s best you learn one lesson at a time. After you’ve mastered rowing—you too, Annie—if you would like, I’ll take you both for a sailing voyage down river—to Bedford. That is, of course, if my friend Dr. Dudley will allow it.”

“I can’t imagine why he wouldn’t,” said Annie. “It’d be wonderful to see where the river goes. Wouldn’t it Drew?”

“Yeah, it probably would,” he replied, then added, “I didn’t think I’d have any fun in this—”

“—Wonderful village,” interrupted Annie. “And now we’re having more fun than we ever did at home, right Drew?”

“Well ... yeah, I guess.”

“Today’s enjoyment has been entirely mine,” said Mr. Pipes, “but I’m glad you were here to share it with me. We’ll be at the cottage in a few minutes,” he continued.

“Let us help Drew keep a steadier stroke by singing together as he rows. And what better way to end the day than with Mr. Ken’s evening hymn. I’ll teach you the words as we go.”

The moment Drew thought of rowing as a cadence for the music his stroke became more regular. Mr. Pipes led out with his firm voice, then Annie; and last Drew, keeping the rhythm with his oars, joined in. Their voices, ringing brightly off the river, rose above the stillness of the evening. “All praise to Thee, my God this night, For all the blessings...”

“Just ahead is the staithe. Slow the rhythm down a wee bit, Drew; that makes it even more grand. Now the last verse, all together from your minds and hearts, sing to God.” As little *Toplady* and her crew made their approach to the moorage in front of the cottage, the immortal words of Thomas Ken, though imperfectly sung, gave clarity to praises Annie and Drew had never before so perfectly expressed.

“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him, all creatures here below,
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night

I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety. Ps. 4:8

♩ G D Em D G 7 Am

1. All praise to thee, my God, this night, for all the
 2. For - give me, Lord, for thy dear Son, the ills that
 3. O may my soul on thee re - pose, and with sweet
 4. When in the night I sleep - less lie, my soul with

G D G Am G

bless - ings of the light; keep me, O keep me,
 I this day have done; that with the world, my -
 sleep mine eye - lids close; sleep that may me more
 heav'n - ly thoughts sup - ply; let no ill dreams dis -

D G 7 Am G D G 7

King of kings, be - neath thine own al - might - y wings.
 self, and thee, I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.
 vig - 'rous make to serve my God when I a - wake.
 turb my rest, no pow'rs of dark - ness me mo - lest.

5. O when shall I in endless day
 forever chase dark sleep away,
 and hymns with the supernal choir
 incessant sing, and never tire!

6. Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
 praise him, all creatures here below;
 praise him above, ye heav'nly host:
 praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.