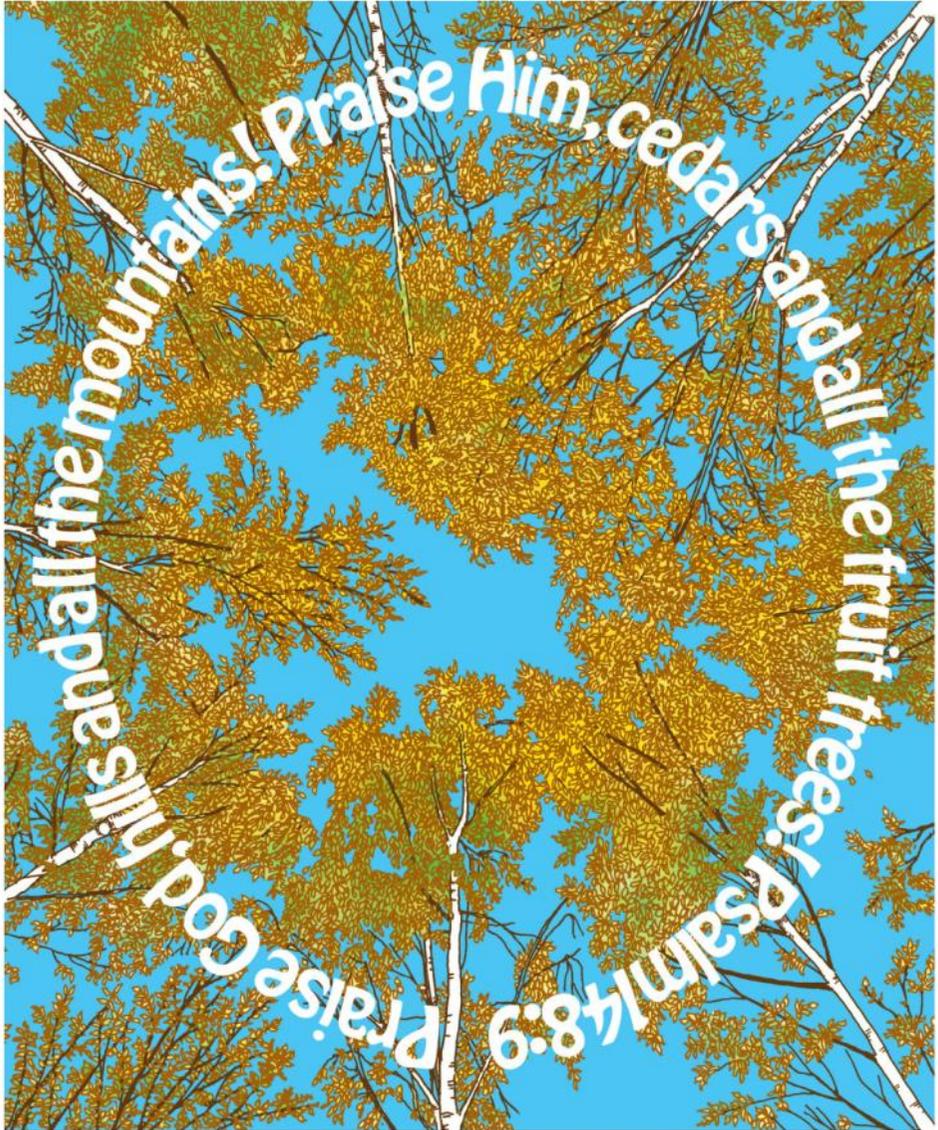


# CROSSROADS

*The Family Magazine of St Hilda's, Ashford, Middlesex*

No. 713 October 2020

*Free - but donations welcome!*



The Parish of **St Hilda, Ashford** in the Diocese of London  
Charity Reg. No. 1134119

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Church Services at St. Hilda's,  
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the church web site:

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Things change too quickly to  
include in a monthly publica-  
tion!

As we acknowledge Bible Sunday on 25th October, it's a good opportunity to ask the question: *why should I read the Bible?*

The Bible is the world's best-selling book of all time. However, it isn't one book, but a library of 66 books, composed by some 44 writers over a period of 1500 years in a range of literature including history, poetry, prophecy, letters and apocalyptic (end times). Despite having a number of different writers, the Bible claims one author: God himself!



This is the basis of the unity of its message and authoritative claim to be the primary way by which God speaks to us: *'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work'* (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible is inspired (*'the word of God in the words of men'*) and presents itself as a **manual for life**, equipping us to live for God in every aspect of our lives. We also have the promise of the Holy Spirit to guide us in applying the words to our lives: *'the Spirit will guide you into all truth'* (John 16:13).

However, the Bible could also be described as a **love letter** from God, as He uses it to deepen our relationship with him. As Jesus said: *'You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me'* (John 5:39,40). Christians follow a person not a book, and the Scriptures are intended to help us to know Jesus better.

At her coronation the Queen was given a Bible with the words ***'the most precious thing this world affords'***. Does this reflect our own attitude to the Bible?



# NOTICES

## MOTHER ABBESS ANNE CLARKE

We send heartfelt congratulations to Ken Clarke's daughter Kathleen (Sister Anne) has been elected Mother Abbess of Malling Abbey.

Sister Anne is the 'Writer' (artist) of our Icon of St Hilda, which can be seen in the quiet corner of the south aisle of the church. It is a wonderfully strong but serene image, and seems to reflect the way of life of Malling Abbey.

## HARVEST FESTIVAL Sunday 4th October at 9.30

This year our gifts will be given to the local Food Bank by from the Salvation Army. Please give gifts suitable for the this: dried or tinned food well within its Best Before date.



ST. HILDA'S  
**ENTERTAINERS**

As we cannot meet physically at the moment, St. Hilda's Entertainers are entertaining ourselves via Zoom.

We would welcome anyone from the congregation who fancies joining us, without the pressure of being physically on stage!

If you would like to try your hand at Shakespeare, we will be doing a "greatest hits of Shakespeare" on November 5: reading some of the most famous scenes, probably including the Macbeth witches, Romeo and Juliet balcony scene and other "good bits".

If you are interested please let us know on [shentertainersmembers@gmail.com](mailto:shentertainersmembers@gmail.com)

Hope you can join us.

*Sue Pinfold*

Heavenly Father,

We bring to you all those struggling with their mental health just now.

We pray:

For everyone who is smiling, when inside they're in pain.

For everyone who is saying they're fine, when inside they feel drained and empty.

For everyone struggling with fear and worry as the easing of the lockdown brings new anxieties.

Be with them in their suffering, as so much of their world has been stripped back and emptied, when loved family and friends have been taken by illness, or made distant by lockdown.

Pour your healing balm into their pain and sadness.

May you walk with them besides still waters

May you speak to them in a still small voice.

May you heal them, and fill them, and bless them with your abundant love and fullness of life.

And may they know that they are loved by you for the beautiful unique person that they are, created in the image of their heavenly creator and loving Lord.

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,

Amen.

*Revd Peter Crumpler*



...I've moved with the times - I've now got  
a solar-powered radio microphone...

### **Litter Virus**

A face mask is a helpful thing –  
It traps those nasty germs!  
An extra message I must bring  
In these poetic terms:  
When you've finished with your  
mask  
A bin is simply found  
So drop it in – an easy task!  
Don't leave it on the ground!

*Nigel Beeton*



Together we **STOP** this climate crisis

Our New Deal for Climate Justice calls on the UK Government, and all those in power, to stop this climate crisis by:

1. Transferring its fair share of finance and technology to poor countries.
2. Curbing the over-consumption that's driving climate breakdown.
3. Stopping fossil fuel expansion and supporting renewable energy.
4. Developing renewable energy without exploiting the environment in the global South.
5. Investing to decarbonise the UK economy in a way that also addresses economic and social inequalities in the UK.

We pledge to play our part in making this happen through action, prayer and solidarity with people around the world facing the worst impacts of the climate crisis.

Join the fight for climate justice: [caid.org.uk/climate](https://caid.org.uk/climate)

---

## **What is climate justice?**

Climate justice is about more than stopping climate breakdown. It's about restoring broken relationships with each other and with creation.

The UK has grown wealthy through fossil fuels, extracting natural resources and cheap labour from the global South. This has deepened social inequalities and exacerbated the climate crisis - a crisis that is itself keeping people locked in poverty.

Many of the world's poorest people live in places vulnerable to worsening droughts, storms and floods. Already poor, they often lack what they need to adapt or survive to such extreme weather events.

The people battling the worst effects of this climate crisis have done the least to cause it. This is deeply unjust. The UK Government must now do all it can to repair that injustice.

We must listen to people at the forefront of the crisis and work towards sustainable solutions so that all can thrive.

The pursuit of climate justice is inextricably linked to the pursuit of equality, economic justice, gender justice and human rights.

That's why we must tackle the climate crisis in a way that includes these ambitions too.

*taken from a Christian Aid poster*

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## DO THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE CONTRADICT EACH OTHER?

For the Christian, the Bible is God’s word to us; it tells us about His character and creative purposes, how He has related to people in the past, and His promises for the future. Science is a specific way of studying the world, exploring the physical properties of things – a wonderful way to explore God’s creation. So, the question to ask if the Bible and Science seem to be contradicting each other is, have we made a mistake in interpreting one or the other?

Science is very good at answering certain types of questions: ‘What size is it?’, ‘How fast does it travel?’, ‘What is it made of?’, and so on. Questions like ‘What’s it for?’, ‘What should I do with it?’, and ‘What’s it worth?’ can’t be answered using scientific methods. Some of the misunderstanding in discussions of science and religion come from not recognising the limits of science.

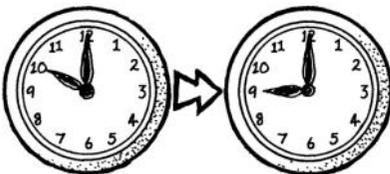
It’s also important to recognise what the Bible is, and what sorts of questions it can answer. The Bible was written well before people began to investigate the world in ways we would recognise as scientific. Of course, people in the Ancient Near East were studying the world around them, observing the movements of the stars, the processes of life and death that happened all around them, the seasons, the behaviour of physical objects, and so on. But they did not study the mechanisms underlying these things systematically using the tools of science, and they did not see or describe the world in scientific terms – not because they weren’t intelligent, but because science as we know it wasn’t happening at that time.

Instead, the biblical writers used words that were commonly used in their own cultures to record events, share truth and wisdom, and tell stories that convey deep truth about God’s character. If we want to understand God’s intention in inspiring these words, we need to do some careful work to connect with those ancient writers and find out what they meant, before we can discover what those words mean to us today.

These principles can help us have far more fruitful conversations about science and Christian faith. If we allow any apparent conflict between Science and the Bible to fuel our search for understanding, not only will we learn as individuals, but we will be able to draw others into a conversation that is relevant to wider society today.

*Dr Ruth M Bancewicz*

*Church Engagement Director, The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion*



***Sunday morning 25th October:  
clocks go back!***

## 1<sup>st</sup> October: ANTHONY ASHLEY-COOPER, 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Shaftesbury - the Poor Man's Earl

Think of Piccadilly Circus, and that small statue of the angel poised with bow and arrow. Most people think it stands for Eros. It does not. It stands for Anteros, his brother, the god of selfless love. It is a memorial to the greatest Christian Victorian philanthropist, politician and social reformer of his generation – Lord Shaftesbury.

Anthony Ashley Cooper, the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Shaftesbury (1801 – 1885) was a devout Christian who spent his life fighting to help ease the plight of lunatics, chimney sweeps, children in factories, women and children in the mines, opium addicts, and children without any education.

His own early life was loveless and bleak – his parents formal and frightening, his early schooldays a “horror” of “cruelty and starvation”. The only love came from the family’s housekeeper, Maria Millis. A biographer wrote: ‘She provided for Ashley a model of Christian love that would form the basis for much of his later social activism and philanthropic work.’ The reality and homely practicality of her Christian love were a beacon for the young Ashley. She told him Bible stories, she taught him a prayer.

After Christ Church Oxford, where he proved an outstanding scholar, Ashley turned to politics. In 1826, aged 25, he was elected as Tory MP for Woodstock. He was eager to serve on parliamentary committees that got things done; his great life’s work had begun.

Lunatics: In 1827 lunatics were kept chained naked in straw, forced to sleep in their excrement. They were washed in freezing cold water, with one towel for 160 people and no soap. There was gross over-crowding and inedible food: asylums were places to die in.

Shaftesbury’s maiden speech in Parliament was in support of a Bill to improve their conditions. He wrote: ‘By God's blessing, my first effort has been for the advance of human happiness.’

It took years: from 1827 to 1884 he fought for a succession of Lunacy Acts, writing later of ‘the years of toil and care that, under God, I have bestowed on this melancholy and awful question.’

Child Labour and Factory Reform. Again, reform took years, with Shaftesbury fighting for the Ten Hours Act from 1833, 1842, 1844, 1846 and 1847 – when it finally got through Parliament. No child under the age of nine should work in the cotton or woollen industries, and no one under 18 must work more than ten hours a day.

Miners. In 1842 he fought to outlaw the employment of women and children in coal mines.

Climbing boys. Thousands of young boys were dying in terrible pain – scorched, blinded and suffocated by soot, or with cancer of the scrotum. Ashley fought for Bills in 1840, 1851, 1853, 1855, and 1864 until finally the Chimney Sweepers Act 1875 closed the practise down.

Education reform: 1844 Ashley became president of the Ragged School Union that promoted education for poor children. He wrote that if it were to fail, ‘I should die of a broken heart’.

Religion. Lord Shaftesbury was a devout Christian who became a leading figure in 19<sup>th</sup> century evangelical Anglicanism. He was President of British and Foreign Bible Society for nearly 30 years. He was very sympathetic to the Jews, and advocated their return to the Holy Land.

Lord Shaftesbury’s funeral service at Westminster Abbey on the morning of 8<sup>th</sup> October 1885 drew thousands of people. The streets along the route were thronged with the poor: costermongers, flower-girls, boot-blacks, crossing sweepers, factory hands and many more. They waited for hours just to see his coffin go by. He was dearly loved by them as the ‘Poor Man’s Earl’.

One biographer wrote: ‘No man has in fact ever done more to lessen the extent of human misery, or to add to the sum total of human happiness.’

The great preacher Charles Spurgeon called him ‘the best man of the age’. He ‘lived for the oppressed’, he was a ‘moral anchor in a drifting generation’, ‘friend of every living thing’, ‘he had a ‘fervent love to God, and hearty love to man.’

---

## **14<sup>th</sup> October: DONATION - North Africa Christian martyr**

Some Christians today have the curious idea that being a Christian guarantees a prosperous life in this world. St Paul was more realistic – throughout his epistles he urges Christians to pray for patience and endurance in this world. Donation (martyred c 484) is a timely reminder that we are called to be witnesses, and that that may not be easy.

When Hunneric, the King of the Vandals, closed all the churches in North Africa in the late fifth century, Donation and his friends were tortured, driven into the desert, and left to die of exposure. Many Christians in Muslim Africa today face similar dangers for Christ. Pray for them, that they find the courage and endurance they need.

## 4<sup>th</sup> October: ST FRANCIS

Just about the only thing most people know about Francis of Assisi is that he talked to the birds. Church-goers also know the popular hymn based on his famous prayer, 'Make me a channel of your Peace', which was sung at the funeral of Princess Diana.

However, Italy's patron saint, whose feast day is this month (the 4<sup>th</sup>) was a more complex, and some would say controversial character. His life spanned the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries.

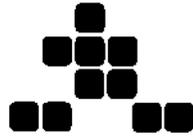
He was born into a very wealthy family, but after what he called his 'conversion' standing before a crucifix. He renounced all his possessions. In fact, he stripped himself of his of his wealthy garments in a public square in his hometown, Assisi. For the rest of his life he and his followers, including his feminine counterpart. St Claire longed, prayed and worked for a life of simplicity – a lifestyle without luxury or privileges. For the Franciscan brothers and the Poor Claires. This meant no private possessions at all. Francis saw that many poor people without these things, actually seemed to live happier and more fulfilling lives than the ambitious rich. He spoke of a simple life not shaped by money or power but by love and mutual concern. As his hymn says, 'it is in giving of ourselves that we receive'.

Of course, poverty; in our modern western world is seldom a matter of blissful simplicity, as present-day Franciscans recognise. For too many it is a matter of poor diet, over-crowded rooms, rough sleeping and unemployment. The call of today's followers of Francis and Claire is that those who are better-off should 'live more simply, so that others can simply live'. Christians follow a Master who said that He came with 'good news for the poor'. They believe that many of us today can be that good news.



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## WHEN OXFORD ACCEPTED WOMEN

A century ago, on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1920, Oxford University allowed women to become full members and study for full degrees for the first time, and the first 100 women were admitted.

Women had been attending lectures, taking examinations and gaining honours since the 1870s. Four women's colleges were established in those years – but no woman had been allowed to graduate and receive a degree although between 1904 and 1907 the so-called “steamboat ladies” travelled to the more liberal University of Dublin to graduate.

The 1920 decision was retrospective, and so at the first ceremony at which women were able to graduate more than 40 women did so. The first was Annie Rogers, who had achieved first class honours in Latin and Greek in 1877, and first class honours in Ancient History in 1879. She graduated on 26<sup>th</sup> October 1920.

Despite this leap forward, a quota limiting the number of female Oxford students to fewer than a quarter of the men was not removed until 1957, when the Warden of Wadham College, Sir Maurice Bowra, described it as “foolish and finicky” and declared that women were a “civilising influence”.

Cambridge University did not give women equal status until 1947.

---

## HONEY, HONEY!

If your grannie gave you honey when you had a cold, she was right.

Research published in The British Medical Journal has found that honey is especially good for treating upper respiratory tract infections (URTIs) such as the common cold.

Honey has anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory properties. These do better at soothing your cough and sniffles than any of the over-the-counter remedies. In fact, URTI sufferers who were given honey suffered their symptoms for up to two days LESS than those who did not use honey.

All good news, especially as honey is cheap, readily available, and has virtually no side effects.



*The Bible that is falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't. - Vance Havner*

## OPPRESSED CHRISTIANS STRUGGLING UNDER COVID-19

Oppression and discrimination against Christians has increased during Covid, says Release International, which has launched an appeal to help Christians suffering during the pandemic.

Many Christians have been denied food and relief aid and excluded from support systems during lockdown. They have been abandoned by families because of their faith and refused relief by governments and NGOs.

“The situation has got much worse for many Christians during lockdown,” says Release International CEO Paul Robinson. “Covid-19 is having a devastating impact on the lives of many poor Christians. In places hostile to the faith Christians are experiencing increased hardship.

“Food is now in short supply. They are unable to work and can’t earn, and support is being withheld because of their faith. Their cries for help are being ignored by local charities who are distributing food packages only to families of other faiths. We can’t afford to delay. These Christians need our help.”

In **Algeria**, many Christians have had to stop work because of the lockdown, and so lost their income. They have been rejected by society and their families as a result of their faith. There is no social security in the country or government support.

**Eritrean Christians** fleeing persecution have been barred from refugee camps and are unable to get support from UNHCR. And they refuse to resort to crime to get the money and supplies they need.

In **Pakistan** the situation is especially hard for converts from a Muslim background. The only form of social security is family support, and Muslim families often withdraw support for family members who change their religion.

In Upper **Egypt**, where Christians face discrimination for their faith, some organisations are allegedly refusing food and support to Christian families. Release partners report: “The authorities are helping Muslims but not Christians. And churches that try to help are being closed by police order.”

In **China**, Release partners say the government is using the pandemic to step up its crackdown against Christians. They have accelerated campaigns such as the forced demolition of crosses. Pastors have been rounded up for sharing the gospel and distributing facemasks on the street. The authorities have “totally prohibited” online church services and prayer meetings, as “nothing constituting a religious service is allowed.”

In **Nigeria**, the lockdown deepened the insecurity facing many Christian villagers, who face attacks by Fulani militia.

Paul Robinson of Release International says: “Right now, it’s up to us in the family of faith to give them our support.” Partners of Release International are providing food parcels to impoverished Christians in Algeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey. If you can help, go to: [www.releaseinternational.org/covid](http://www.releaseinternational.org/covid)

## RSPCA LAUNCHES EMERGENCY APPEAL IN WAKE OF COVID

The RSPCA has been overwhelmed this year by calls for help from people who are ill with Covid-19.

The animal welfare charity was swamped with 442,344 calls, and responded to 106,676 incidents of animals in need just between 24<sup>th</sup> March and 5<sup>th</sup> August. That averaged out at 790 incidents a day.

Such a volume of need was especially a challenge to meet, as the charity was working with fewer officers, due to ‘furlough, shielding and ill health’, a spokesman explained.

He went on: “As well as operating an emergency service, rescuing animals in need, RSPCA officers have also been collecting animals from the homes of people who have been admitted to hospital with Covid-19, who may not have anyone else to care for them while their owners are being treated.”

The charity has now launched an emergency fund-raising appeal, and said that its front-line animal rescue and care teams have been “stretched to their limit”.

With about 6,400 animals in the care of the RSPCA across England and Wales, it is the largest animal welfare charity in the UK.

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## IS YOUR FACE MASK MAKING YOUR SKIN BREAK OUT?

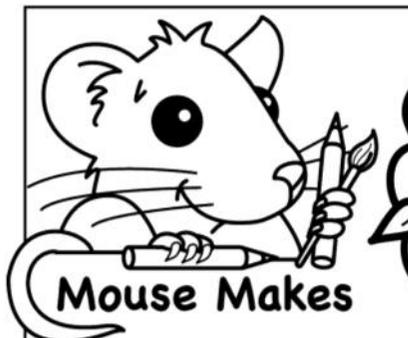
Face masks are giving us skin complaints. In fact, so many of us are now suffering that the complaint has been given its own name: ‘maskne’.

The causes are obvious. Our breath is warm and moist, and every time we exhale into our masks this humid air gets trapped. Masks move, and so we have friction. Added to that is the unpleasant fact that our saliva is actually teeming with bacteria (with more bugs per square inch than even a loo seat!).

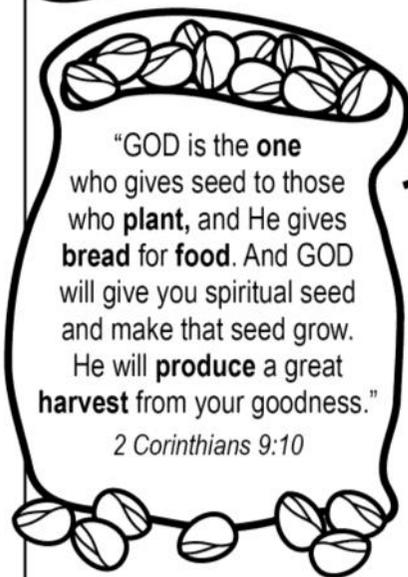
*Acne mechanica* is the medical term for ‘maskne’. With all that bacteria being trapped and rubbed against our nose and chin, no wonder ‘mask breakouts’ are rising dramatically.

Stress is another cause for skin complaints, and the pandemic has given many of us huge stress this year. We may face crippling anxiety over job security, finances, the health of loved ones, social isolation, or even being trapped in an abusive household. No wonder our faces are breaking out in a rash!

- ~ A man's home is his castle, in a manor of speaking.
- ~ A pessimist's blood type is always b-negative.
- ~ A Freudian slip is when you say one thing but mean your mother.
- ~ I used to work in a blanket factory, but it folded.
- ~ Sea captains don't like crew cuts.
- ~ A gossip is someone with a great sense of rumour.



## Mouse Makes



"GOD is the **one** who gives seed to those who **plant**, and He gives **bread** for **food**. And GOD will give you spiritual seed and make that seed grow. He will **produce** a great **harvest** from your goodness."

2 Corinthians 9:10

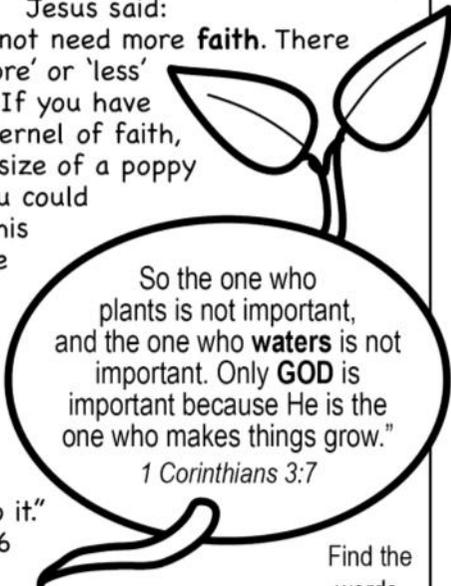


Jesus said:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a \_\_\_\_\_ **seed** that a man took and sowed in his **field**. It is the \_\_\_\_\_ of all the seeds, but when it has grown it becomes a tree, so that the wild \_\_\_\_\_ come and nest in its branches."

Read  
Matthew  
13:31-32

Jesus said:  
"You do not need more **faith**. There is no 'more' or 'less' in faith. If you have a bare kernel of faith, say the size of a poppy seed, you could say to this sycamore tree  
"Go jump into the lake"  
and it would do it."  
Luke 17:6



So the one who plants is not important, and the one who **waters** is not important. Only **GOD** is important because He is the one who makes things grow."

1 Corinthians 3:7

Look out for seeds in the park and garden and in your kitchen store cupboard.



How many different seeds can you find?



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