



Pastor's Page

"Heart of the matter"

Wayne Rooney scored all four goals in Manchester United's emphatic win against Hull City yesterday to take them back to the top of the Premiership. Halleluia! It feels good again to be a Man. Utd supporter! And as for Rooney..... what a hero!

Travel with me as we move seamlessly from sporting hero to 'spiritual hero'

Henry Martyn was born in Cornwall in 1781 he came up to St John's College, Cambridge in 1797 and was Senior Wrangler (first in his year in Mathematics) in 1801 and later winner of a Latin prize. He wrote in his journal "I obtained my highest wishes but was surprised to find I had grasped a shadow." He was elected a Fellow of St. John's, and served as a curate at Holy Trinity before sailing for India in 1805. However he left his heart with Lydia Grenfell in his native Cornwall. His lady-friend never followed him to India and he never made it back to persuade her. In a letter to a friend, John Hensman dated October 3, 1804 he reflects on his time in Cornwall and his feelings on leaving England and his woman behind. He wrote; *'Having occasioned to stop at a friend's house by the seaside, I walked out alone with Lydia G. and listened with no small delight, as you may suppose, to the remarks which the beauty and grandeur of the scene drew from her pious heart. In the afternoon we read together some of Watts, but the gloomy moment arrived when I parted with her perhaps for ever in this life.'* He had hoped that they would marry, but he couldn't persuade her to come with him to India. He expressed his sacrificial decision to go to India alone in his book "My love must wait". But whilst his love waited, Martyn died in 1812 at Tokat in Armenia at the age of 31. He had been a chaplain in the East India Company serving at Dinapore and Cawnpore and had in under five years translated the New Testament into Urdu and Persian, and supervised its translation into Arabic. Ken Curtis a commentator wrote; *"Eager to devote his life to the Lord's work in India, with an incredible determination and unselfish dedication, Martyn compressed a lifetime of service into those six years"*

Agonising as it must have been for him, Henry Martyn decided that being at home with the love of his life was not as important as going away to serve the Lord of his life. What a hero! What a man of God!

Thankfully God doesn't often ask us to choose between him and the human 'love of our lives' but he does call us to make sacrifices as we follow him. To put him first means there has to be surrender of self. We have to put aside that which we may want to do in order to that which he asks us to do. We need to be men and women with open hearts (receiving others into our fellowship), open hands (not holding on to our things but receiving that which the Lord wants to give us) and open homes, welcoming others. As Jonathan Lamb said *'Opening our hearts wide is an essential part of Christian integrity and represents an attractive feature of Christian community which commends the gospel in an age of fractured relationships'*.

Let's open our hearts wide as we love and follow the Lord of our lives.

24th January 2010