



Stockport Sunday School

March 2022 Newsletter 25



'One is nearer God's heart in a garden than anywhere else on earth.'

Well known words penned by the English poet, Dorothy Gurney, and I know they will strike a chord for many, especially the gardening enthusiasts. Speaking personally, I enjoy working in a garden, but I cannot claim to be the possessor of gardening skills. Both my parents had such talents, as do my two sisters. My wife, Rosie, also has a way with plants, but for my part, I am better at digging up or chopping down, rather than planting and nurturing.

Nevertheless, the other morning, when I drew back the curtains - and to my surprise, saw a clear, blue sky, brilliant sunshine and early signs of spring growth appearing - I did react with a feeling of pleasure, of delight in the world of nature. Of course, being in Manchester in winter, the sunshine was short-lived, but the uplift remained.



It caused me to think whether God's heaven is like that all the time. Perhaps the thought was prompted by the fact that the Bible notes I was reading - written by the Bishop of Bangor, Andy John - were on the subject of 'Heaven'.

It is probably not a subject we think about very often, except possibly at funerals. But perhaps we should. 'Heaven' is mentioned in the first verse of the Bible, and many other times throughout, up to the penultimate chapter of the Book of Revelation. The dictionary interpretation is that it denotes the abode of God, and also of 'the good' after death.

In secular terms, it is often used to mean 'a place of supreme bliss' or happiness.



Bishop
John

A friend of mine memorably defined heaven as 'a place where everything is good'; the place, the people, life in general. A place where all are at peace, enjoying each other's company, celebrating being in God's presence. It is something to look forward to.

However, Bishop John looked at it from a different angle, based on the words of John the Baptist, in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 3, referring to the coming of Jesus, the Messiah -

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near. This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah - 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight'"

Jesus' ministry is to show us the way God brings heaven to earth. It is shown in his healing of the sick, the hungry being fed, those suffering mentally being released from their torment.

But such a kingdom is not always welcome. Many of the rich and powerful saw it, and still do, as a threat to their security and wellbeing; the way the world works; their right to live their lives in accordance with their own ideas, regardless of the needs of others.

So the Bishop is pointing out that heaven should not be just a destination we aspire to - God willing. It is a state of being, which we are called to simulate here on earth.

Talking to his disciples about Judgement day, Jesus said:-

*"The king will say to those on his right,
'Come take your inheritance,
For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat.
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,
I was a stranger and you invited me in ..."*



And when his disciples ask him

"When did we do this?",

Jesus says,

*"Whatever you did for the least of these brothers of mine,
you did for me."*

In other words, God's kingdom of heaven begins here and now on earth, in the lives we live.

We are now at the beginning of the church's season of Lent; a time when we are asked to examine how well we, as Christians, are living up to our commitment to Jesus. We may decide in the process to give something up - as a continuing daily reminder of the season. Maybe we will do something positive - regular Bible reading, or read a book that will help us develop our understanding of our faith.

Whichever ways we may choose, it is meant to be a time when we look at ourselves and ask whether our actions and our attitudes are in keeping with the kind of person who will be 'at home' in the heaven our Lord describes. To ask ourselves whether our Christian beliefs and practices make us better people in God's eyes, and also in the eyes of the people who know us.

Lent IS A TIME TO
GROW
CLOSER TO JESUS

Hopefully, the answer will be yes - while acknowledging there is always scope to do more!

And a final thought from Bishop Andy. When we say in the Lord's Prayer -

'Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,'

- it does so through us!

May we all have a fruitful Lent.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

We send Happy Birthday wishes to Judith Curry who celebrates her birthday on 5th March.

CHRISTINE MOORE'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

A note from Christine Moore (née Jackson) to thank everyone who sent her lovely flowers, gifts and birthday cards on the occasion of her 90th birthday in December. She was quite overwhelmed and very appreciative.

My best wishes to you all.



Thank You!

THANK YOU

Thank you to Mrs O. Gosling for the donation in memory of her husband, James (our late Senior General Inspector) and also for the cheque for the 2022 newsletter.

Olive says how much she enjoys the newsletter and we are pleased to hear she is back home again from her stay in hospital after a fall and is grateful for all the help she received - but there's no place like home!

Joyce Sellers



** CHANGE OF SERVICE TIME **

As it begins to stay light longer it was decided at the AGM on January 30th, that ON MARCH 6TH WE WOULD AGAIN BEGIN SERVICES AT 2.30PM.

KNIT AND NATTER TENTH ANNIVERSARY



The Knit and Natter group are preparing a display for April 5th when they will be celebrating their tenth Anniversary (a year late because of Covid). Their chosen charity for the year is Kidney Research. Please come along to join them to celebrate and support their charity.



QUEEN ELIZABETH II JUBILEE CELEBRATION

As there will be a lot of celebrations being held both locally and nationally from June 2nd until June 5th, it has been suggested that we celebrate the following week, June 12th, by having a special jubilee tea after our own Founders' Day Service.





SERVICES



BIBLE SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6TH 2022

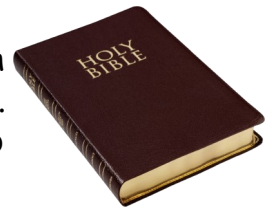
The speaker was Peter Hall from St Georges. He opened by reading Psalm 113 verse 7.

"He raises up the poor out of the dust."

His second reading was 2 Chronicles chapter 4 verses 1 - 8 and 14 - 21. King Josiah read the book of law given to Moses found in the temple. He worshipped the God of David and destroyed the temples and idols of the old Gods.

Peter took as his topic for the afternoon 'The Power of the Bible'.

He told us about the recycle Christian Charity shop, Renewal North West, that sells almost anything - clothes, furniture, toys, books etc. The one thing they do not sell is Bibles, these are given away free to anyone who wants one.



Peter told us the story of Alan, one of many people helped by the charity.

Alan



He was born in 1959 in Glasgow but later the family moved to Manchester. His father was often drunk and beat his wife and later Alan. Alan had a Children's Bible which he read at night.

He joined the army and served in the Falklands and Northern Ireland. He began to drink heavily and one night was too drunk to lead his platoon. His best friend took his place and was killed.

Alan returned to Manchester when he left the army but got into bad company, committing many robberies, eventually ending up in Strangeways prison where he took part in the riots and was one of the last prisoners to come down from the roof. After release from prison his life took a downward spiral, he was feared by the public and eventually his health suffered.

One day he walked into a Christian drop-in centre in Wythenshawe and spent hours talking and eventually confessed all his sins. He left with a Bible which he promised to read and he was supported by the group.

Alan became a changed man. At 46 he was 'born again', no longer the local thug but helping others.

When he died he had few possessions, one was a tablet, the first entry in it was the verse from the psalm 113 that Peter had read at the beginning of the service. With the help of the Christian Charity, Alan had turned his life around and God had forgiven his sins.

When he was young, he had read in the Children's Bible about a better life than the one he lived.

As an adult the Bible from the drop-in centre had helped him change his life.

A chance discovery can change a nation. When King Josiah had read the old scroll found in the temple he made a covenant between God and his people. His story is in Chronicles.

Rev. Elaine Chegwin Hall led us in prayer. At the end of the service, Walter thanked Peter and Elaine for the excellent service.



SUNDAY FEBRUARY 13TH 2022

Walter began his service by looking at the different ways Christians worship God. Different denominations have different set orders of service. At Stockport Sunday School we are more flexible. In a way this is one of our strengths. People attending for the first time need not worry that they do not know the order of service.

We can visit other churches and compare our form of worship with theirs. This can help us to see our own strengths and weaknesses. In the end we all choose the form of service which we feel comfortable with, but must not get too comfortable so that worship becomes ordinary.

Walter went on to discuss prayers, an important component of our worship when we talk to God and hopefully listen when God speaks to us.

Walter's reading was Matthew chapter 6 beginning at verse 5, Jesus teaches his disciples the 'Lord's Prayer'.



There are many types of prayer - prayers of Thanksgiving, Confession, Intercession and Prayers for others.

In his prayers, Walter asked God to guide us in the way He wants us to continue the work of our School.

At present we have a good range of services given by visiting speakers from different churches and many led by our own members. Society has changed a great deal since the School was started to educate poor children. Throughout the years the work of the School has changed with the times.



In Paul's letter to the Romans he wrote

'All things work together for good for those who love God and who are called according to His purpose.'

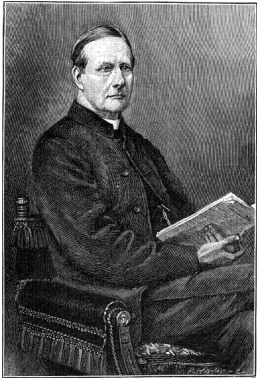
Walter asked us all to consider how the work of the School might progress in the future and gave us some points to think and pray about to be discussed at the service on March 6th.

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 20TH 2022

On February 20th, Judith Higgins took as her topic music in worship. Her first reading was Psalm 150 in which the psalmist encourages the people to praise God with music. Her second reading, 1 Chronicles chapter 25 verses 5 - 7 tells how King David appointed three men to oversee the music for the House of the Lord.



She reminded us of the competition we used to have at SSS to compose a hymn to be sung on Founders' Day and we sang one of the hymns written by Ida Lomas.



Another hymn, 'Onward Christian Soldiers' had been written by the Rev Sabine Baring-Gould in 1865 for the children of his Sunday School to sing as they walked in procession to take part in Whit celebrations. Judith said Rev Baring-Gould must have had similar ideals to Matthew Mayer as he started an evening class to teach poor children and their parents.

Other hymn writers wrote hymns to praise God, or to thank Him. Some were written as prayers, some to teach about the Bible and the word of God.

During the service we heard about how some popular hymns came to be written.

The singing of hymns adds much to the quality of our worship and we thank those men and women who wrote the words and composed the tune. Judith also thanked Ken for playing the organ each week which makes a big difference to our singing and increases the quality of our praise.

We closed the service by singing 'The Day Thou Gavest' which was chosen by Queen Victoria to be sung in every church as she celebrated 60 years on the throne as we look forward to Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee in June.



COMING SERVICES

ALL SERVICES BEGIN AT 2.30PM FROM MARCH.

March 6 th	Walter Stead
March 13 th	Cath Brown
March 20 th	Judith Higgins
March 27 th	Mothering Sunday
April 3 rd	Garth Higgins followed By Committee Meeting 3.15pm



LANCASHIRE HILL SUNDAY SCHOOL



Recipe

Banana & cinnamon Muffins

Makes 12 muffins

300g self-raising flour

1 tsp baking powder

½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

½ tsp ground cinnamon

200g demerara sugar

300ml milk

125g butter, melted

2 eggs

200g peeled bananas (about 2), finely chopped



Heat the oven to 200C/fan 180°C/Gas 6 and line a 12-hole muffin tin with paper cases. Sift together all the dry ingredients, except the sugar, into a bowl and lightly mix together. Then add the sugar and mix into flour.

Whisk together the milk, melted butter and eggs in a jug. Stir in the chopped banana. Gently fold the liquid into the dry ingredients, taking care not to overmix.

Divide the batter between the muffin cases and bake for 15-20 minutes until well risen and golden. Serve warm or cold.

If you don't have bananas try with the same weight of frozen raspberries or blueberries - don't let them thaw.



Happy Birthday

14 March - Eileen Harrington



'A FEBRUARY BABY'

Yes! I was a February baby and, probably, that is why February has always been special to me. When I was a little girl, I had an aunt, who lived in a little village in North Wales. Each year, on my birthday, she sent me a special little parcel of snowdrops, freshly picked from the woods near to her cottage and carefully wrapped in damp cotton wool. I loved them and snowdrops are still some of my favourite flowers, along with freesia and daffodils.



Quickly following my birthday, on February 14th, comes Valentine's Day, named after a 3rd century Roman Saint. As an incurable romantic, I still look forward to receiving a Valentine card each year and I compose a little poem to be included in the one(s) I send!

I associate February with the early signs of Spring and have noticed that, although the snowdrops have been and gone, there are signs of daffodils and tulips in various places in my garden and the winter jasmine is flourishing.

Here is a little February poem that I love. It was written by Cicely Mary Barker, who illustrated the flower fairy poems, to accompany her imaginative and beautiful illustrations in her 'flower fairy' books.

She was born in 1895 and was a devout Christian, using art to express her spiritual beliefs. As a child, I read and admired all of her flower fairy books and still find them fascinating. Cecily is able to re-create the beauty of nature in her illustrations and short verses. Her watercolours have a perfect balance of naturalism and fantasy.



'THE SONG OF THE SNOWDROP FAIRY'

Deep sleeps the Winter,
Cold, wet and grey,
Surely all the world is dead;
Spring is far away?
Wait! The world shall waken,
It is not dead, for lo!
The fair maids of February
Stand in the snow.

Cicely Mary Barker

(PS I'm sorry that I can't do an illustration of a snowdrop, but I know that Kirsty can!!)

Margaret Morris-Jones



MOTHERS

A few months ago, when I was picking up the children at school, another mother I knew well rushed up to me. Emily was fuming with indignation.

"Do you know what you and I are?" she demanded. Before I could answer and I didn't really have one handy, she blurted out the reason for her question. It seemed she had just returned from renewing her driver's license at the County Clerk's office. Asked by the woman recorder to state her 'occupation', Emily had hesitated, uncertain how to classify herself.

"What I mean is," explained the recorder, "do you have a job, or are you just a ...?"

"Of course I have a job," snapped Emily. "I'm a mother."

"We don't list 'mother' as an occupation ...'housewife' covers it," said the recorder emphatically.

I forgot all about her story until one day I found myself in the same situation, this time at our own Town Hall. The clerk was obviously a career woman, poised, efficient, and possessed of a high-sounding title, like 'Official Interrogator' or 'Town Registrar'.

"And what is your occupation?" she probed.

What made me say it, I do not know. The words simply popped out. "I'm ... a Research Associate in the field of Child Development and Human Relations."

The clerk paused, ball-point pen frozen in midair, and looked up as though she had not heard right, I repeated the title slowly, emphasizing the most significant words. Then I stared with wonder as my pompous pronouncement was written in bold, black ink on the official questionnaire.

"Might I ask," said the clerk with new interest, "just what you do in your field?"

Coolly, without any trace of fluster in my voice, I heard myself reply, "I have a continuing program of research (what mother doesn't) in the laboratory and in the field (normally I would have said indoors and out), I'm working for my Masters (the whole darned family) and already have four credits (all daughters). Of course, the job is one of the most demanding in the humanities (any mother care to disagree?) and I often work fourteen hours a day (twenty-four is more like it). But the job is more challenging than most run-of-the-mill careers and the rewards are on satisfaction rather than just money."

There was an increasing note of respect in the clerk's voice as she completed the form, stood up, and personally ushered me to the door. As I drove into our driveway buoyed up by my glamorous new career, I was greeted by my lab assistants - ages thirteen, seven, and three. And upstairs, I could hear our new experimental model (six months) in the child-development program, testing out a new vocal pattern.

I felt triumphant. I had scored a beat on bureaucracy. And I had gone down on the official records as someone more distinguished and indispensable to mankind than 'just another ...'

Home ... what a glorious career. Especially when there's a title on the door.



*Taken from 'A Box of Delights' compiled by J. John
and Mark Stibbe*

As our thoughts and prayers are with those affected in the Ukraine, and we don't know how best to help and support those affected, a list of Christian charities working in Ukraine has been compiled. We must also remember in our prayers too the Russian citizens who have not asked for this situation and who are also suffering in many ways.

HOW YOU COULD HELP SOMEONE IN UKRAINE

Ukraine is in crisis. Only God knows how the situation will unfold in the coming days and weeks. Meanwhile, there is a need for food and other basic humanitarian aid.

The following Christian charities are at work in the country, and would welcome your immediate support:

Barnabas Fund. <https://www.barnabasfund.org/gb/>

Christian Aid. <https://www.christianaid.org.uk>

Methodist Church UK. <https://www.allwecan.org.uk>

Operation Mobilisation <https://www.uk.om.org/Appeal/ukraine-in-crisis>

Samaritan's Purse <https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk>

Transform Europe Network: <https://www.ten-uk.org>

World Vision <https://www.worldvision.org.uk>



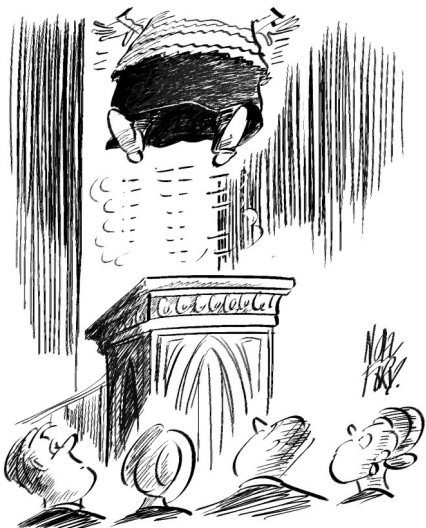
TREE PLANTED AT LAMBETH PALACE AS PART OF THE QUEEN'S GREEN CANOPY

The Archbishop of Canterbury has planted a fig tree in the garden at Lambeth Palace as part of The Queen's Green Canopy to celebrate Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee.

The Archbishop of Canterbury said: "The beauty of trees reminds us of our responsibility to care for God's creation, for each other and for generations to come. It's a fitting tribute to Her Majesty The Queen's seven decades of service, and the trees we plant this year will be a sign of our gratitude and celebration of this remarkable occasion for many decades to come. I encourage everyone to get involved in The Queen's Green Canopy, and plant a tree to celebrate Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee."



JUST FOR SMILES



The fan-heater under the cassock idea proved not to be such a good one

BEST

The reporter was interviewing the town's oldest woman. "And what do you find is the best thing about being 104?" he asked.

"That's easy," she said. "No peer pressure."

SERMON

When a minister rehearses his sermon, is he practising what he preaches?

FINDING THE RIGHT SOLUTION

A manager, an engineer, and a programmer were driving down a steep mountain road when the brakes failed. After a terrifying few seconds they managed to stop the car by running it against the embankment. Shaken by their narrow escape from death, they got out. The manager said, "We need to organise a committee, have meetings, exchange ideas, and then develop a solution." The engineer disagreed, "No that never works. I will take apart the brake system, isolate the problem and correct it."

Then the programmer said, "You are both wrong. First, we need to push the car back up the hill, get back in, and see if it happens again."

YOUNG AND OLD

A baby-sitter is a teenager acting like an adult, while the adults are out acting like teenagers.

HEREAFTER

The minister came to see me the other day. He said that at my age I should be thinking of the hereafter. I told him, "Oh, I do it all the time. No matter where I am - in the bedroom, upstairs, in the kitchen, or down in the basement - I ask myself, 'Now, what am I here after?'"



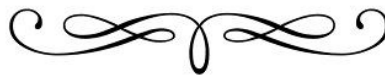
Steve put the finishing touches to Peter's Lent array

PUZZLES

		6		8				
		1						9
4					2		3	
		5	7					
	8						1	
					4	2		
	3		9					7
2						4		
				5		6		



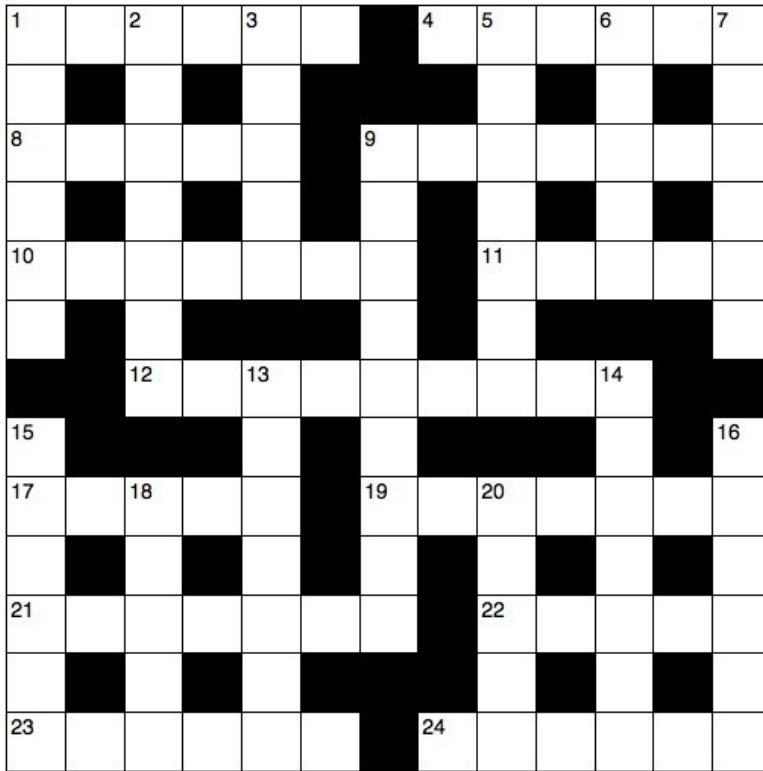
Sudoku



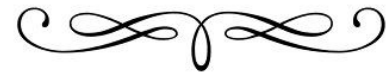
March brings us Lent and Mothering Sunday. Lent is a time of spiritual self-assessment as we prepare for Easter. It is a time to turn to God, and grow closer to Him. Mothering Sunday reminds us of not only the mothers that have loved and raised us, but of Mother Church, who has spiritually loved and nurtured us throughout our Christian pilgrimage. Can you find the following words in the word search?

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| care | mothers |
| desert | nursing |
| disciples | nurture |
| easter | prayer |
| family | preparation |
| fasting | repentance |
| finding | seeking |
| flowers | self denial |
| growing | spiritual |
| learning | teaching |
| lent | thank you |
| love | worldwide |

e e f e p d n t l y r l g p i
l c r t r r y f a m i l y n u
a a n e e i a g i e t e n u h
c g u a d s h y n n e i i r e
u s n t t i o r e i d w r s i
o t n i i n w l d r n i t i t
y r n r h r e d f w n r n n t
k g d i s c i p l e s g a g u
n o i t a r a p e r p r k e f
a g g n i k e e s r o o r r l
h l n t k t a h t i e w t u o
t a h r i y s e t h l i n t w
a o e l e l t i a o c n a r e
t i i p t r e e v l m g d u r
p i l d e t r e s e d m f n s



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Arouse (Song of Songs 2:7) (6)
 4 Extinguish (Isaiah 1:31) (6)
 8 "They — — , " you will say, "but I'm not hurt!" (Proverbs 23:35) (3,2)
 9 Unhappiness (Nehemiah 2:2) (7)
 10 Jewish (7)
 11 Dirge (anag.) (5)
 12 'A truthful witness gives honest — , but a false witness tells lies' (Proverbs 12:17) (9)
 17 Paul quoted from the second one in his address in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:33) (5)
 19 'Do not use your freedom to — the sinful nature' (Galatians 5:13) (7)
 21 'As you can see, he has done nothing to — death' (Luke 23:15) (7)
 22 Name applied by Isaiah to Jerusalem (Isaiah 29:1) (5)
 23 'All the people — — one man, saying, "None of us will go home"' (Judges 20:8) (4,2)
 24 Lazarus, who was carried by angels to Abraham's side when he died, was one (Luke 16:20) (6)

DOWN

- 1 Appalled (Job 26:11) (6)
 2 'In an — to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea' (Acts 27:30) (7)
 3 Expel (Acts 18:16) (5)
 5 'But I have a baptism to — , and how distressed I am until it is completed!' (Luke 12:50) (7)
 6 'Of the increase of his government and peace there will be — — ' (Isaiah 9:7) (2,3)
 7 Hurry (Psalm 119:60) (6)
 9 'For I desire mercy, not — , and acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings' (Hosea 6:6) (9)
 13 One of its towns was Sychar, where Jesus met a woman at Jacob's well (John 4:5) (7)
 14 Shouting (Acts 7:57) (7)
 15 Arachnid (Isaiah 59:5) (6)
 16 One of Paul's first converts in Philippi was Lydia, a — in purple cloth (Acts 16:14) (6)
 18 Donkeys (5)
 20 Raked (anag.) (5)

ANSWER FROM LAST NEWSLETTER

8	9	5	7	4	2	3	6	1
1	2	7	3	8	6	9	4	5
3	6	4	9	5	1	7	2	8
2	3	6	8	9	5	4	1	7
5	7	1	6	3	4	2	8	9
9	4	8	2	1	7	5	3	6
4	8	2	5	6	9	1	7	3
6	1	9	4	7	3	8	5	2
7	5	3	1	2	8	6	9	4



SUDOKU ANSWERS



When things go wrong, as they sometimes will
 When the road you're trudging seems all up hill
 When the funds are low, and the debts are high
 And you want to smile, but you have to sigh
 When care is pressing you down a bit
 Rest if you must, but don't you quit.

Success is failure turned inside out
 The silver tint of clouds of doubt
 And you never can tell how close you are
 It may be near when it seems so far
 So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit
 It's when things seem worse
 That you must not quit.

Anon



...I haven't the heart to tell her the bishop went home 20minutes ago!