

**WE'LL UNDERSTAND IT BETTER BY AND BY**  
Charles Albert Tindley

Charles Albert Tindley was a hymn writer, who lived from 1851 to 1933. His father was a negro slave, his mother was free but she died when he was very young. On account of his mother, he was considered to be free, yet he lived and grew up among slaves. He never went to school. He described how his father ‘hired him out’ as a boy labourer, “wherever father could place me”. He married when he was only seventeen, and he and his wife had eight children.

To say he had a hard life is an understatement. He struggled ... however, he persisted and eventually became a member of a Methodist church. He learned Hebrew at a local synagogue, he also learned Greek, he sought the help of people to teach him, and he became a Methodist minister.

He wrote Gospel hymns. In fact, one of his hymns was the basis for the civil rights anthem, “We shall overcome”. Another of his more familiar hymns is ...

If the world from you withhold of its silver and its gold,  
And you have to get along with meagre fare,  
Just remember, in God’s Word, how He feeds the little bird—  
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.

If your body suffers pain and your health you can’t regain,  
And your soul is almost sinking in despair,  
Jesus knows the pain you feel, He can save and He can  
heal—  
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.

Leave it there, leave it there,  
 Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there;  
 If you trust and never doubt, He will surely bring you out—  
 Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.

Another well-known hymn he wrote was ...

Trials dark on every hand,  
 and we cannot understand  
 all the ways of God would lead us  
 to that blessed promised land;  
 but he guides us with his eye,  
 and we'll follow till we die,  
 for we'll understand it better by and by.

... Where do we look when things go wrong? ... I'm a child of God, and I know He loves me, but why does He permit heartache and pain in my life? ...

We are not sure who the writer to the Hebrews was, - some commentators suggest Paul, or maybe Barnabas, or Apollos ... we do not know for certain, but whoever it was, he was a Jew. In chapter eleven he described what faith is, **Heb. 11:1** *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* The Jewish New Testament translates the same verse, "Trusting is being confident of what we hope for, convinced about things we do not see". ... Charles Albert Tindley is an illustration of that verse for he trusted in God, even, - for example, - as he and his wife, and their eight children often sat around an empty table at mealtime ... for that was when a knock came to the door, and someone arrived with provisions for his family. It

was written about him, “What motivated him was faith. It was the kind of faith that can face a bare table with confidence”.

The great chapter in the Epistle to the Hebrews relates to examples of the faithful in the Old Testament. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses are all mentioned ... as you would expect ... but look closely at verse twenty-three and you will see two people referred to, without their names being mentioned. ... They are not ‘nameless’ for we know who they are, **Heb. 11:23** By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of *his parents*, because they saw he was a proper [*ἄστειος, beautiful, ... Vulgate, elegantem infantem*] child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. ... The king's commandment was to exterminate all Hebrew baby boys, **Ex. 1:15** And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah [*‘fair’*], and the name of the other Puah [*‘splendid’*]: **16** And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live.

Pharaoh's hopes did not work as he had planned for the Hebrew boys were being born before the midwives arrived (v.19), **20** Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. ... Desperate, Pharaoh further declared, **22** Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river [*i.e. drown him*], and every daughter ye shall save alive. ... It did not stop baby boys being born though, **Ex. 2:1** And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. **2** And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. **3** And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark [*tebah, the same word used for Noah's ark*] of bulrushes, and daubed [*treated*] it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags [*reeds*] by the river's brink [*bank,*

*edge].* <sup>4</sup> And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. ... The man of the house of Levi was Amram, and his wife was Jochebed (Ex. 6:20), the 'sister' was Miriam (Ex. 15:20), and the little baby was Moses. (Aaron had not been born yet).

This is the story about two people who trusted God implicitly and did everything possible to work within His plan for their son. They lived in a time of great national danger when the future of the Hebrews was under threat, - that is how it had been for four hundred years. It was a long period during which the nation of Abraham had lost all hope for the future. They had given up.

They had hope in nothing more any longer. They had long-since forgotten the ancient covenant God had made with Abraham, **Gen. 12:2** I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: <sup>3</sup> ... and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed ... It was a long-lost dream that happened shortly after Lot had departed from Abram, **13:14** And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: **15** For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. **16** And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. **17** Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee ... Those times had gone *forever*, as far as they were concerned, **15:13** And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; **14** And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance ... It would never happen now for God has abandoned us ... the God Who

promised, **17:7** I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. **8** And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. ... That sounded such an unbreakable covenant, though, because it was wholly dependent upon Jehovah ... but the Hebrews in Egypt had forgotten it!

God had not forgotten it though, **Ex. 3:7** And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; **8** And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey ... **15** And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations. ... God had not forgotten! Neither had He cast them off, as Paul was later to explain, **Rom. 11:28** as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes [*i.e. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's sake*]. ... God never forgets His promises, and neither does He change them, or cancel them!

However, the people in Moses' day did not believe they had a future ... but God sent Moses to remind them, **Ex. 3:16** Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt: **17** And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. ... This is the promise from the God who says, **Ezek. 12:25** I am the LORD: I will speak, and the word

that I shall speak shall come to pass. ... It doesn't matter what the world says, and it doesn't matter the obstacles, as the Psalmist wrote, **Ps. 33:9** For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. **10** The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. **11** The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

... No matter what goes on around us, or in our own circumstances that is His promise ... And so, here is what happened to baby Moses ... His parents, - Amram and Jochebed, - placed him in a waterproofed basket along the banks of the Nile River near the place where they knew Pharaoh's daughter bathed, and they hid him there for three months. ... What a 'chance' to take! ... Three months in a basket among the reeds in the River Nile! ... Also, when she found him, she could have thrown him out of the basket and drowned him, or she could have brought him back to her father, and he would have killed him ... What a 'chance' to take! ... No 'chance' at all, for God does not believe in 'chance', - He works to a plan ... Instead, by placing their little baby boy into a basket and setting him among the bulrushes, Amram and Jochebed had entrusted their child to the Lord's care. ... How do we know that? We know it because Heb. 11:23 specifically explains, *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents* ... All other options were set to the one side ... and it wasn't Moses' faith that had him in the basket in the bulrushes, it was *his parent's* faith in God. *They* believed, and *they* trusted in God to keep their little baby boy safe. They could not be sure of what would happen, but they placed him into the arms of God.

And by God's providence, Pharaoh's daughter found the baby, fell in love with him ... pitied him, and adopted him into her family ... the same family of the Pharaoh who wanted Moses and all the male babies slaughtered, Ex. 2:5 And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. 6 And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion [*chamal, pity, compassion*] on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.

... Also, by a further act of God's providence, the Lord had Moses' sister, Miriam, in the right place at the right time. She saw what the princess was doing, and she volunteered the Hebrew woman Jochebed, - the little baby's mother, - to nurse and care for her own son (v.7)! ... That little baby was in his *real* mother's care, and the enemy did not even know it! ... That is how God was working out His plan, - *despite* the enemy. ... In fact, the princess *paid* Jochebed to look after her own son, and every privilege of an Egyptian prince belonged to Moses. ... That is how God had planned it ... Every little piece fitted into perfect shape, so that God installed the 'saviour' of His people (Acts 7:25) for that time in the palace of the man who wanted him dead! ... God demolished the enemy's plans!

However, look at how the daughter of Pharaoh presented it ... Ex. 2:10 And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water. ... Notice, "she said [*boasted, claimed*], Because I drew him out of the water" ... *She* was claiming the credit for saving Moses' life, - I'm calling him Moses because I saved his life". *However*, the Hebrew words place the credit

somewhere else, for it reads, “she named him *Moshe* (משה), saying, out of the water *Meshi* him (משיתיהו)” ... The two words sound similar, but they are different ... their tense is different. Pharaoh’s daughter was boasting, “I’m calling him Moses [*Moshe*] because *I drew him* [*Meshi*] out of the water”, - *Meshi* is the first person feminine singular, - relating to the Pharaoh’s daughter, - whereas the name *Moshe* comes from the first person *masculine* singular in the active form which means “*He* draws out”, and places the credit elsewhere. ... Who is the “He”? The “He” is none other than God Whose will it was for the Egyptian princess to walk along the banks of the river that day and find the baby Moses. Jehovah led her that day to that exact spot, - where she would discover the little baby He would use to lead His people, the Hebrews, out of Egypt, and eventually to the border of the land of Canaan. ... It was all in God’s sovereign plan. ... The princess boastfully took the credit, but it was God Who made it happen according to His purpose.

It looked a hopeless situation ... but in the Pharaoh’s palace, God gave the family of Moses the opportunity to teach him all about the promises for Israel to inherit the Promised Land, become a mighty nation, and be a blessing to all nations. His real mother instilled within him true faith in God.

Of course, all the plans did not happen at once, but they occurred as God had prepared, over many years. In fact, hundreds of years elapsed between when the promise was first given to Abraham until it was fulfilled ... but all the time, God was working according to His own plan, and He would see that plan fulfilled. ... The Hebrews had given up believing, all but



a few of them ... but that few continued to live by faith, as Heb. 11:23 indicates, *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents.*

Many would tell us we are working in almost impossible circumstances today. The ‘tide has gone out’ ... and we are on an unstoppable spiritual decline ... The situation was far worse in Egypt, and yet the Lord reserved men and women like Amram and Jochebed ... two ordinary people with an extraordinary vision ... not of their own importance or ability, but by faith their confidence was in God. ... Amram means ‘friend of the Most High’ and Jochebed means ‘YHWH is glory’ ... The vision of God’s authority inspired them, - as William Carey was to write, “Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God”.

God has a plan He is working out. That plan has its ‘highs and lows’, and since we are in this world, we have to expect them ... Sometimes it feels as if it has stopped or been hindered, but be assured God is working out His plan with meticulous precision. Nothing can prevent His will! What He promises in His Word *must* come to pass. It does not matter how ridiculous or far-fetched it seems to an unbelieving world, or even doubtful Christians ... He is able to do abundantly more than we can ask or think (Eph. 3:20). ... And whether we can only see ‘little bits here and little bits there’ ... it might even sometimes seem disjointed ... and yet, the Lord has proved Himself to us so many times in the past, we continue to be confident He perfectly fits all things together for His glory, and for the benefit of His beloved people. As Charles Albert Tindley explains, ...

Temptations, hidden snares  
often take us unawares,  
and our hearts are made to bleed ...  
and we wonder why the test  
when we try to do our best,  
but we'll understand it better by and by.

May God encourage us through the example of Amram and Jochebed, the faithful parents of Moses! Amen.