

you with that glazed expression. Underneath they're probably wondering what's on the box tonight. Do you see them Lord. Doesn't it bother you at all?

God: Of course I see them Trevor. You seem to forget I see a great deal more than you* And I see beneath the surface.

Vic: Yes I was forgetting , Lord, Still you must get depressed at times I mean ,if I ,as a simple minister of the Word, get narked off, you must want to strike us all down, or send another flood or do something dramatic.

God: I promised not to flood the earth again, don't you remember?

Vic. Oh yes, still you could always change your mind.

God: Hardly

V: No, I suppose not. Still it is infuriating that people can get so blasé and non-committal about you and you just leave them to it. The odd thunder bolt would do the trick. Anyway, half the people I talk to are always saying they'd believe in you if you did something really dramatic

God: So you think that's a good way for me to boost the membership of the kingdom, do you? It doesn't leave a lot of room for freedom of choice and that's the other thing that people seem keen on.

Vic: Well I just think people outside of this building are looking for you to act. You know- like in the old days. Parting of the Red Sea, Lions' Den, water into wine stuff. That 's the thing to get them queuing up at the porch.

God: Are you implying Trevor, that I've somehow stopped working or I've become ineffective?

Vic: No, Lord. Anyway, it's not my job to tell you what to do..

God: Thank you

Vic: it 's just that people outside this building need waking up to who you are.

G: Well haven't you told them. That is your job.

Vic: Yes, of course. But I can't make them listen or do anything about it.

God: Well as it happens I have been a little worried about things in this corner of my vineyard if you'll forgive the metaphor. I rather thought I would take a little action. Something in the modern idiom so as to speak. Something that would be a little more up to date than plagues of frogs and locusts and the like. Anyway it's a trifle hard to find locusts in this corner of Wiltshire unless we allow for an accident at a local scientific laboratory.

Vic: Well what had you in mind, Lord. A drought maybe. Though as I recall their answer to that seems to be to call the government appoint a special minister. The rest of the time they complain about the government and then they think that it's going to

help them with a crisis which is pretty obviously your province.
No, Lord, I despair of them ,I really...

God: Trevor! You must give me a chance to get a word in edgeways. That's one thing I've noticed with human beings. They're very keen on letting me know their gripes and wants but less keen on listening to me. I thought I'd got round that one by giving them twice the amount of ears than they have mouths. But it doesn't seem to stop them.

T: I'm afraid that its the use we make of the tongue. It's one muscle/that gets a fair bit of exercise, Lord.

God: Yes, well consider yourself rebuked. Now, where was I?

T: You wre saying, Lord, you wanted to take action. In the modern

idiom, you said.

G: Ah yes, precisely. I thought I'd go on strike. It's very popular, you know, nowadays.

T: (Absolute astonishment) But... but, Lord- that would be disastrous. It would bring the nation to its knees.

G: Well that's what I'd rather hoped.

T: What –oh yes-I see. But do you realise what chaos it would cause, Lord?

G: Well of course I do. That's one of the problems of being all-knowing

T: But, Lord, you've said- no you've promised not to bring disaster to the earth again.

G: Well, it's not a flood, is it? I promised not to flood the earth. No this is much more contemporary, don't you agree? Withdrawal of labour. Non-aggressive, if a little inconvenient.

T: Inconvenient is not the word for it. Lord, this will be far worse than

than any world wide flood. After all there were 8 survivors after that. This will be an absolute holocaust for people, Lord you've got to reconsider.

G: Have I?

T: Sorry

G: anyway, I rather think you're exaggerating. I rather think that an awful lot of people won't even notice the difference for a while. I've become superfluous,,: you know, in many people's eyes. Shame really.

T: Oh come on, Lord. Who's not going to notice the difference?

G: Well for a start your little flock, my dear Trevor. The remnant small and weak that just left my house as fast as their legs would carry them.

T: What the Prince's and the Sharpe's and Miss Stevens and ... Mrs Owen. But, Lord, you're talking about pillars of the church.

G: Without about as much room for me as the stone ones holding up your leaking roof, Trevor. Oh no, they're not going to notice the difference if I strike. Not for a while ,at any rate.

T: Well why do they come here. Lord, if it isn't to meet with you?. I've got to take issue with you..

G: Pardon

T:not that I'm doubting your word ,Lord. But I can see very little point in these folk attending this church Sunday by Sunday if they saw no relevance in your continuing existence.

G: They come and they've forgotten why they come. They come for the same reason that they drink tea in the morning and cocoa at night, for the same reason that they smoke their pipes and watch their televisions. Habit , just habit. As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be. That's their motto.

T: Yes but surely not all of them. You can't be right.

G: There you go again!

T: Sorry

G: No , not all of them. Now take Mr Jones,the bank clerk. He comes because the manager Mr Jarvis comes. And Mr Jarvis comes because Mr White at the golf club suggested that it would do his chances of membership even more good if he were seen in the right places, so as to speak. So the motives are not always what I would like. For that matter the prime reason that Miss Young and Miss Green, are faithful attenders at your early

morning communion is more to do with your new young curate than any particular desire to meet me in person. As I said, Trevor, I do have the ability to look beneath the surface and it's not always pleasant to see what's there.

T: Well alright maybe they don't particularly take much notice of you Lord. But that doesn't mean they won't be affected if you strike.

G: No- just that for them, with all their church going, I might as well not exist. I make no difference to their lives now, when I'm not on strike

T: Lord, are you quite serious about this business. I mean, well, begging your pardon, have you quite thought it out.?

G: Trevor,! am not in the habit of making light hearted decisions.

T: No, that's what worried me. Look, Lord, supposing, I could find a bunch of people who really need you who like you- well love you. If I could find people who -re going to be cut up if you go on strike. Would you re-consider.

- G: Yes, but you might have a bit of job on. And I wouldn't start looking in here.

T: Well, Lord, say I could find some.

Q: How many did you have in mind?

T: (tentatively) 50?

G: All right, Trevor. If you find me just 50 people who love me then I'll take it back.

T: Well, of course, it's possible I mightn't find 50 Lord. It could be say 45

G 45 will do.

- T: There again, given the state of the nation and the general apathy that seems to prevail around these parts I might only be

able to scrape 40 together ,Lord.

G: 40 will do

T: When you say 40 it does seem rather a lot. If we could knock it down just a little to, say 30

G: 30 will do.

T: Or 20

G: 20 will do

T: Or even 12, say

G: Trevor, if you can find me 12 really righteous people I will not strike.

T: Thanks, Lord. It's a deal. You can put your money on it .Lord.

G: You know, I sometimes wonder about you Trev and your past life. What would have happened to you if we hadn't met.?

T: Perhaps you can tell me sometime. I've got to hurry I've got 12 people to find

G: 11

T: Oh yes. Thanks, Lord. You're really something

• _ _ **Interval Music..**

T: Whew, what a day I've had. You've really no idea, Lord.

G: On the contrary.

T: Sorry, Lord, I was forgetting. It's funny how easy it is to slip into well worn ways of saying things without really thinking who you're talking

to.

G: It doesn't mean to say that I'm not interested in hearing you tell me though, Trevor. It'll do you good to get it off your chest and at this precise moment there are precious few people you can talk to about it without running the risk of being locked up in some institution for the rest of your earthly days. So speak on..

T: Well I thought I'd start in the obvious places, you know, Council of Churches, several fairly influential committees, .one or two key people. You know the kind of thing.

G: And what was the outcome?

T: Very disappointing, I'm afraid. It's pressure of work, you know,.Lord. I don't think people are necessarily averse to giving me a hearing but you've got to be able to give a fair bit of warning to influential bodies like these. They have very long agendas. Very likely you'd have to bring it up through one of the sub-committees or working parties. So I'm afraid I've not had a great deal of luck.

G: Luck doesn't come into it.

T: No,I suppose not. Well at any rate, things have not gone as I had hoped. So I tried some important good -will organisations. You know, Lord, the Royal Order of Hamsters and that kind of thing. But they hardly gave me a hearing. I think if I hadn't been wearing my dog collar they'd have thrown me out on the spot. As it was I hardly got a word out and what I did manage to say went quite over their heads. Without wishing to hurt you Lord, I must admit ,I don't think they were over-interested, I might have put it over badly ,though. Sorry.

G: Don't apologize, Trevor. It's not your fault, I cause a lot of offence so I'm getting pretty use to it. But it does look like you'll have to try again. I suggest you start looking in some less likely places and at least chose people who have some time to listen to you.

T: Yes .Lord. I really didn't think it would be that hard to find 9 people who really love you and wouldn't want you to go on strike. I'm beginning to have my reservations. I suppose you wouldn' t consider a little divine guidance, Lord? Just a Ittle help to find the right folk.

G: Well ,of course I could. But the idea was yours after all. You struck the bargain. I was all for going on strike without all the fuss. After all I understand that's how it's done. All the arbitration and. conciliation comes after you've worked yourself into a bargaining position. But then, I'm relatively new at this type of thing, .No I really think you're going to have to do the hard slog on this one, Trevor, but as I say don't look in the obvious places.

T: O.K. Lord. Tomorrow's another day. I can see the bishop's going to be getting a bill for wear and tear on shoe leather.

• — — — **Interval music**

T (rushes in) Hi ,Lord (out of breath) Wow, what a day. But I've had some luck. I know that's not the right expression where you're concerned. I didn't think I was going to turn much up but things turned out O.K.I I've still got a bit of a way to go, though. But it's a start.

G: Well. how many have you found, Trevor?

T: Well not a vast amount but as I say, Lord, it's a start. Oh I admit not the class of person you'd expect to be too interested you'd expect to be interested in you Lord. But beggars can't be choosers and all that...

G: Just how many followers have you got together, Trevor?

T: Well,,, to be absolutely precise;... one. But there's hope of more Lord, I know on the face of it doesn't sound too good. But where's there's life there's hope and all that...

G: You don't have to apologize. I do know the beginning from the end

T: Yes, Lord, I was forgetting. Does that mean it's all right?. I'll find the number I need?

G: Now, that would be saying.

l': Lord, that's what I find so infuriating. You know everything and we're left with only half the picture. Still I get the feeling you're teasing me more than a little.

G: Now does that sound like me?

T: Sorry, Lord.

G: Go on telling me about your day

T: Well I tried the obvious places at. first again-you know churches and

chapels and so on. But midweek there's quite a strange picture.

G: How do you mean.

T: Well folk are still busy enough. There's jumble sales and rummage sales and bingo and socials and summer fayres and..

G So what did you get out of that?

T: Well I came away with a tea cosy, a fruit cake and an elephant's foot umbrella stand.

G: But no one to help for your present problem.

T: No. Everyone's too busy. Very well-meaning, though. They gave me a hearing although really, I think, they thought I was a bit cracked. But then they all got back to their sales and bingo sessions. Lord, how do you feel about all these things? Is it really what you're after.

G: Well ,Trevor .you may recall I did get a little violent when I

was in the temple at Jerusalem with the money changers and tradesmen.

T (offended) Yes but-that's hardly the same thing ,is it?

G: No?,

T. Well any way the church is desperately hard up. We need to generate a cash flow.

G: Why's that, Trevor? Haven't I provided enough?

T: Well, of course, you have, Lord. But we've got these large churches to run and many of them are pretty ancient and there's books and so on to pay for . You've no idea of the cost of things today.

G: I've a fair idea actually and my ancient people seemed to manage all right even with a huge temple to administrate. But then they worked on the principle of giving to me first of all and worrying less about their own lifestyles. I used to be more in charge of that. Not a bad arrangement as it happens.

T: Yes , I see what you mean. Perhaps we ought to let you in to our financial problems more but I suppose people think it's beneath your dignity to get mixed up with such sordid affairs,

G: I got mixed up with all sorts of sordid affairs when I was on earth, don't forget. I thought I had a pretty reasonable track record when it comes to showing interest in mankind. After all I did die for you all.

T: Yes, sorry Lord. I always seem to end up apologising to you.

G: Wish there were more like you. Which reminds me you still haven't told me about your one concerned person. Who is it? How did you come upon him?•

T: Did I say it was a Him, Lord? Though as it happens it was.

G: I know.

T: Well I was just coming out of St Bardolph's Late Summer Bazumble.

G: Bazumble ?

T: It's a sort of mixture between a Jumble sale and a bazaar. G: Oh.

T: Well-there he was. On the corner, just by the sign with the large thermometer asking for money to rebuild the spire. You know, Lord, the placard that is asking for £200,000 with a thin line at the bottom showing the £3000 they they've collected since 19 whatever.

G: Yes, I remember. You know you're the first person to mention the problem to me. The problem with the spire, that is.

T: Really? Well anyway I was attracted by the music at first. He was standing by the sign playing a clarinet. Not bad really. I went over and threw a few coins in the hat. Then he got to the end of the tune -Pennies from Heaven it was- we had a bit of a chat. Do you know it's a crime that such talented people don't have a better chance in life? Well we did have quite a chat, Lord, and it turned out that he has got quite a lot of time for you. In fact he's got a lot of time, full-stop. One of the only commodities I'd say that he's got in abundance. Though I've never seen him in church...

G: Does that really matter?

T: Well, no ,it's just I'd didn't really expect him to be interested in your ultimatum, that's all

G: Well I did tell you not to look in the obvious places

T: Well it turns out that he's got one or two other friends- in the lodging house he stays in-rough and ready types by the sound of it-who he reckons might want to be counted amongst the ten. I don't know if it's true but he's going to let me know.

G: Oh it's true enough. Not respectable as you say, at least as people would judge nowadays but with one great quality,

T: Oh and what's that Lord?

G: When you've sunk a fair way down on the social ladder it often helps you realise your own inadequacy. When you realise you're nobody special it helps you make time for somebody who is special.

T: Yes, I suppose you're right.

G: And there are precedents. Remember Zaccheus.

T: Yes you did have a soft spot for tax gatherers and the like when you were down here.

G: Only because they were outcasts and dregs and so their own sin was only too obvious to them. Everybody's tainted with it you know. It's just that some folk are better at realising it.

(Raucous noises off)

• T: Whatever's that. ?

G: I rather suspect that it's a small group of your local punk contingent.

T: Sorry Lord. I've had occasion before to remind them that this is your house and not somewhere' to come and shelter from the rain. G: I rather thought it was a type of shelter.

T: Well yes but not in that sense.

G: It would seem a golden opportunity to speak to them. We might even say heaven-sent.

T: Yes I'll go and give them a good talking to, Lord.

G: That wasn't quite what I had in mind.

T: Well what then Lord?. (Pause) You surely don't expect me to talk to them about your deal,....about your threatened strike....(Pause) I mean they'd think I was completely off my rocker-off my punk rocker for that matter (Pause) You know I hate it Lord when you don't answer me. It usually means that I'm the answer to my-own prayers, (Pause) OK, Lord you win. But I'm not promising any results, mind you

G:I don't expect you to. It's not in your job description. You just do your part and I'll do mine.

Interval music

T: You know, Lord, it really is amazing what you find out about people if you' bother to listen. Now that half dozen lads ,for instance. You'd think they had nothing better to do than terrorise the local silver threads club or scare people down the local shopping centre. I admit they don't look too special -in fact they look like the very last of the Mohicans. In fact you can see why the Mohicans died out if they looked like that. But when you get talking to them they are really quite remarkable.

G: Did you really expect anything different. They're not a race apart you know.

T: Theremight be some who would quarrel with that ,Lord. But I take your point. Underneath the surface they are really very interesting. And what's more Lord they've got a lot of time for you. Admittedly not much time for what we've done to you but for you they've hardly got a bad word to say.

G: I'm glad to hear it. Did you expect differently.

T: Well I did have my doubts. Still that's encouraged me. There's 5 of them Lord and with the musician and his friends that brings us up to 9- Wow, there's only 3 to go .I'm beginning to be quite optimistic about this whole venture. I wonder where the others are. Still no hints I suppose, Lord?

G: Only the same one. Look in the unexpected places. You can't expect me to hand everything on a plate to you. After all half of your team did walk in here hardly half an hour ago. And even then you nearly sent them packing. By the way are you feeling thirsty?

T: Not particularly. Why?

G: Oh, I just thought you might fancy a visit to the local.

T: The local what, Lord? oh that local. You know I try to avoid being seen in that type of place. You've got to watch your reputation you know, Lord. Once a few parishioners see you mixing in that type of joint, the tongues start wagging.

G: Yes and they've been so much help to you, haven't they-your parishioners.

T: Hmm. See what you mean. But Lord, don't forget I am a sort of representative of yours in earth and it's your name that gets dragged through the mud in a manner of speaking if I mix with the wrong sort.

G: Trevor it didn't worry me and it shouldn't worry you. I mixed with quite the wrong types. Recipe for disaster really.

T: Yes Lord, I take your point.

G: I should try going for a drink.

V: Since you mention it I am beginning to get a little dry. Must be all this talking. (Music)

T: Lord, do you know what a mod is?

G: I believe I do.

V: Oh. Only I didn't know how abreast of the times you keep. Things change so fast these days.

G: I make the time*

T: Yes. Quite so. Well as you know Lord mods are young people who spend a great deal of time on motor scooters, -.wearing long jackets and listening to records. I met some tonight. Two to be precise, A mod and a modess I suppose. Anyway boy and girl.

G: Where was this Trevor.

T: Well at the Pony and Shovel actually.

G: Not a local by any chance?

V: Yes I took your advice. Quite an experience. I saw some of my flock there what's more. Mr Dixon and Miss Pritchard. Quite enjoying themselves-I didn't realise they could smile. I've certainly seen precious little evidence of it in church. And there in the corner was this couple of young people. Mods.. I went over to .the corner to be inconspicuous. They were really nice to me. They saw I was like a fish out of water, -but they had a chat wIth me and put me at ease.

G:: I'm glad to hear you made some new friends. You must get out more often.

T: Yes and what's more they brought up the subject of you. I told them about our little deal and about the 9 people we've got. I expected them to laugh me right out of the public bar but they believed me.

G: Why shouldn't they it's true,

V: Well I could think of a lot o f reasons but we'll leave that. Anyway they want to help. They've got time for you ,Lord.

G: That' s good. I've got plenty oft time for them too,

T: There isone slight .problem. though.

G: Oh yes, what's that?

T: Well as you may or may not know these mods don't particularly get on like a house on fire with other groups. Rival gangs you might say. Like for instance punk rockers. And as you also know I've a few in the team . To be precise 5.I'm not quite sure chat's going to happen when they meet up but I'm rather expecting that sparks could fly. It .could be the end Lord. It could mean the whole project could be washed up. Rival factions could be the death of it. I must admit I can't see it working.

G: Don't you .think so

V: Well with respect, Lord, you don't know what humans can do to each other. And two such opposing groups can spell trouble.

G: A bit like say Zealots and Roman collaborators. One group violently patriotic and one selling out the country to the enemy.

T: Yes that's the type of thing, Now that would be real headache, wouldn't it.?

G Not for long it wasn't.

T: Wasn't? (Pause) Oh good grief, I see. OK, Lord ,you caught me out that time One to you. So you think it can work?

G: Judging by past experience it could.

T: Right then. We're nearly home and dry. One to go. Shouldn't be too difficult now. If you don't mind, Lord, I won't hang about, I'll get out again. Strike while the iron's hot and all that,

G:Well I thought...

T: Yes quite enthusiastic I am now. I'll be back in a jiff I shouldn't wonder. Cheers,.Lord

G: Well if you insist

caution.. V: Yes I know you mean well, Lord. But really I must get some sleep. I've a feeling tomorrow's got a lot in store for me.

G: More than you think.

Music

T:I suppose you going to say 'I told you so'. I just don't know what went wrong.

G: Well I do. And I'm not going to say 'I told you so' -as I recall I didn't get a chance to get a word in edgeways

T: He just seemed so right, you know all the right qualifications . It never crossed my mind that he was lying -you just don't expect it. He seemed so genuine.

G Not from where I'm looking.

T: No- but then I didn't see that.

G: You didn't ask.

T: It's all so sordid. Not that I really worry about myself .Lord. It's your reputation that really worries me. What are people going to say when they read about it in the paper. And that's another thing -I wouldn't have minded if it had been one of the more respectable Sunday papers but the 'Sunday Scandal Mongerer' that was the last straw. I feel so ashamed for you, .Lord.

G: I think really you're more concerned for yourself. After all you didn't come out to well in the article, did you?

V: No, Lord. It's the way he portrayed everything. It was all twisted. But there was an element of truth in it all. Well there was bound to be, having spent some time with us. He had all the inside information. But he made us all look so foolish. We came out of it sounding like a load of madmen. Oh -if only I'd taken more time to think. it out before I took him on It makes me

shiverevery time I look at the headline. 'Trevor Martin- the deranged vicar' All that bit about delusions of grandeur, hearing voices from God, and the motley collection of similar minded maniacs. G: Talking of whom-where are they?

V: All went didn't they. Can't say I blame them, Lord. They really love you but they didn't want to be look upon like something from a circus. They seemed to lose confidence in me- I lost confidence in myself for that matter.

G: And what about me ? Has any one lost confidence in me?

T: Well if they have ,Lord, it's my fault,! guess.

G: Does this amount to a confession of wrong?

T: Yes, I'm afraid I have quite an apology to make I've really messed things up.

G: At last. Now we're getting somewhere. All the time you were happy doing it all by yourself I was in no position to help. But now at least we can make a start. All I need is you to realise you can't do anything without me.

T: I'm sorry. I should have realised before .But it's all been do confusing the last few days. You don't know what I've been through. Mockery, desertion, misrepresentation, loneliness. Some people have said I'm a danger to society, to established religion, to political stability. That I'm mixing with dangerous elements in the country, don't know what I'm talking about. Some have said I'm just plain mad. Lord. it's been unbearable.

G: I think I understand all those things. I've known them too.

T: Yes ,of course. Lord did you feel like this when you were let down. V»hen the person you had so much trust in turned you in. I guess you did. And you knew what it was like to have the group closest to you run off . What did you do about it .Lord.

G: I came back

T: Right so you did. You mean there's still hope?

G: Oh yes. With me there always is. Anyway they've only deserted you -not me. You've got 11 true believers who really love me. It's not a bad start. I've been in a similar position myself. Now let's see-where could you go from here.

T: I think you know, Lord. All I know is it's my job to follow. Running ahead does n't seem to pay off.

G: That is the way I planned it and a lot of good can come from 11 loyal men. You could turn the world upside down . It could happen. It has been known.