

3 Children

In addition to these 64 children with epitaphs there are around 40 others buried as infants, usually with their parents, without name, date or epitaph and about a dozen with name and date but no epitaph. The distribution of these does not vary over time; a late Victorian family was just as likely to bury a number of infants anonymously as an eighteenth century one. Statistically there are fewer child stones from before 1800 than the overall distribution, which may indicate a slight disinclination to bury children in separate graves, but this can be no more than a very tenuous thought!

In most cases siblings were buried in the same grave – whether the stone was re-inscribed at each event or after the final burial is not known. The Stone family stands out, burying four young children in separate graves each with a (presumably) carefully chosen verse.

Where we have been able to trace sources (only rarely are these given on the stone) of the epitaphs, we find that most are of biblical origin. A favourite was Matthew ch 9 v 14: ‘*But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven*’. As with adults, the short biblical references are most numerous after 1850.

The verses on two stones are from ‘Epitaph on an Infant’ by Samuel Taylor Coleridge and on another two are from the same Charles Wesley hymn, “The Great Archangel’s Trump”. Several other verses are repeated on different stones that we have traced through the web to other churchyards both here and in the USA, but we have been unable to find the source. One imagines undertakers had books from which one could choose appropriate and well formed verses, some of which are cloyingly sentimental by today’s standards. The highly sentimental verses tend to be from 1800-1849, the Romantic period.

The key messages in the verses are that heaven is a much better place than earth and that by dying so young the child is without sin. Presumably because of high infant mortality rates, the death of children was accepted stoically as a fact of life; the verses are not mournful or indicative of parental misery at their loss. As with other categories of stone, the changeover between using verse and using one line (usually) biblical quotations is dramatic. Prior to 1800 there were no one line quotes. Between 1800 and 1849 15 had verses and 4 one line quotations. Between 1850 and 1900 three had verses and 22 one liners.

1744 SE113 CHEATHAM Godfrey Jnr 7
Death crops ye flower the blossom and the bud
Happy in youth or age whose lives are good

1753 SE115 DOUBLEDAY John 15
No age so young if death will spare all ages they must die.
Therefore to die let all prepare to live eternally.

1759 SE132 HINDE William 1
Thomas ?
I saw the world awhile and soon I dy'd
but had I longer lived to have espy'd
a heap of mischiefs in this world contained
I might have lost that which now have gained

1789 NW004 BAXTER Elizabeth 11m
WHAITE George (1801) 2
*Here rest in silent and peaceful repose all that was mortal of Elizabeth,
daughter of George and Betsy BAXTER and of George, son of John and Mary
WHAITE of Marbellour, the former of whom died April 29th 1789 aged 11
months and the latter June 19th 1801 aged 2 years and nine months.*

Happy babes who having escaped the vicissitudes of the wicked and transitory world are now .. Enjoying the special (?) lessons of ... purchased only by the suffering and death.

- 1801 SW078 WHITE John 1
 Samuel (1811) 19
 Sarah (1812) 15
 Each child snatched from us is a plume
 Plucked from the wing of human vanity
- 1802 NW005 BREWSTER Sarah 6
 Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not for of such is the
 kingdom of God
*(Matthew 19:14: But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of
 such is the kingdom of heaven)*
- 1802 SE006 STRONG Mary 2
 Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not for strong is the
 kingdom of heaven.
*(Matthew 19:14: But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of
 such is the kingdom of heaven)*
- Bright to the sun expands the vernal rose
 And sweet the lily of the valley blows!
 Sudden impetuous whirlwinds sweep the sky,
 They shed their fragrance, droop the head and die,
 Thus this fair infant from life's storms retir'd.
 Put forth fair blossoms, charm'd us and expir'd.
- 1802 SW051 CHETTLE Thomas
 Who were early permitted to exchange this vain and transitory life for one of
 never ending happiness.
- Blest infant! Sleep in peace, recline
 From danger and from trouble free
 Oh! May thy friends by grace divine
 Prepare themselves to follow thee.
- 1802 SE105 WALKER Mary 2
 When the archangels trump shall sound and souls to bodies join,
 What crowds below would wish their lives had been as short as mine
*(Charles Wesley 1789 "The Great Archangel's Trump" based on "We will all be changed—in a flash, in
 the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised
 imperishable, and we shall be changed." 1 Corinthians 15:51-52)*
- 1805 SW052 CHETTLE John 18
 Young people all prepare to die
 For life is short and death is nigh
 Repent in time, make no delay,
 I in my youth was called away.
- 1807 SE099 BREWSTER Richard 2
 Go home dear friends, do not lament
 Don't thus express your love
 Rather rejoice and be content
 That we're with Christ above

- 1808 SW110 HOUGH Elizabeth 11
 Hannah (1808) 7
 Ann (1796) infant
 Weep not for us except with joyful tears
 Let our blest change engross your worldly cares
 Be wean'd from earth and when your summons come
 Your souls with joy shall bear that happy doom
 Oh come you blest when all both small and great
 Shall stand before Christ's awful judgement seat
(Owes something to: Luke 8:52 And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.)
- 1815 SW005 MABBOTT William 12
 Remember thy creator in the days of thy youth.
(Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them)
- 1816 SE183 RAWORTH John 2
 Ann (1831) 6
In memory of one son and one daughter
- These lovely babes so young and fair
 Called hence by earthly doom
 Just come to show how sweet the buds
 In paradise may bloom
(Verse used in many other graveyards both here and in USA)
- 1818 SW022 STONE Sarah Ann Marshall 2
 Thrice happy infant what a doom is thine
 Far worthier of our envy than our tears,
 Destined so soon thy burthen to resign,
 So soon translated to thy native spheres
 Where, all transform'd, a future ethereal mind,
 Thou minglest with the blest angel with his kind.
- 1820 SE154 WOOD Elizabeth 3
 Jane (1820) infant
 If virtue ever graced an early bier
 Or patient suffering claim'd a parting tear
 Oh! view the sacred mansions of the dead
 And o'er this tomb, the tribute softly shed
 Sacred to virtue! now enthron'd on high
 Lost with a tear - remembered with a sigh
 Her spotless spirit dwells an heavenly guest
 By angels guarded and by angels blest
- 1821 SW154 EATO George 6 m
 Eliza (1824) 1y 6m
 Suffer little children to come unto me
(Matthew 19:14: But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven)
- 1822 SW023 STONE William 3
 Ere sin could blight or sorrow fade,
 Death came with friendly care,
 The precious bud to heaven conveyed
 And bad it blossom there.
(Samuel Taylor Coleridge - Epitaph on an infant)

- 1823 SW021 STONE Sarah Marshall 2
 Just to her lips the cup of life she prest,
 Found the taste bitter and declined the rest,
 Averse then turning from the face of day,
 She softly sigh'd her little soul away.
- 1829 SW026 STONE John Marshall 3
 When the archangel trump shall blow
 And sleeping souls to bodies join,
 What crowds shall wish their stay below
 Had been unstained and short as thine
(Charles Wesley 1789 "The Great Archangel's Trump" based on "We will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed." 1 Corinthians 15:51-52)
- 1831 SW117 RASDALE Mary Ann 15
 Happy spirit thou art blest
 Thou has entered into rest
 Freed from sin, released from pain
 Thou has prov'd to die is gain.
- 1831 SE041 BREWSTER Jane 17
 Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord!
(Revelation 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.)
- 1833 SW145 WALKER John 3
 George (1838) 1m
 Hannah (1841) 17
 Methinks I see them joyful stand
 Before the God of Heaven.
 He smiles, they enter Zion's land
 and there reward is given
- 1857 NE075 CHETTLE John Henry 3m
 CHETTLE Arthur William 1m
 For of such is the kingdom of Heaven
(Matthew 19:14: But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven)
- 1859 Garden LANGLEY George Edward 2
 Of such is the kingdom of heaven
(Matthew 19:14: But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven)
- 1862 NE100 CHEETHAM Joseph 7
 O lost too soon, O loved too well,
 Too dear for death, farewell, farewell;
 One soothing solace yet is given
 Though lost on Earth, he lives in heaven.
 Fond faith forbids us to deplore:
 The loved not dead, but gone before.
- 1865 NE032 DONCASTER Fanny 14
 She is not dead but sleepeth
(Luke 8:52 And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.)

- 1866 NE128 WILLS William Nowell 4
 Samuel Crauford
 Of such is the kingdom of heaven
(Matthew 19:14: But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven)
- 1866 NW108 DICKMAN Elizabeth 9wks
 John Thomas (1866)
 If short our course we sooner rest from sin and trouble free
- 1869 NE136 BRIGGS John Edwin 1
 Jesus called a little child unto him
(Matthew 18:2: And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them)
- 1872 NW085 NEWTON Rhoda Elizabeth 4
 She sleeps to live in the peace of Jesus

 Erre sin could blight or sorrow fade,
 Christ came with friendly care.
 The op'ning bud to heav'n conveyed
 and bade it blossom there
(Samuel Taylor Coleridge - Epitaph on an infant)
- 1872 SW149 PARNHAM William 13
 The Lord hath taken away
 Blessed be the name of the Lord
(Job 1:21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord)
- 1874 NW072 CASTLEDINE Henry 6
 one or two words readable:
 He ** shall ** with ** them
- 1876 NW071 CASTLEDINE Jessica (or Amelia)
 This lovely bud
 so young and fair
 Called hence by early doom
 Just came to show how sweet a flower
 In Paradise can bloom
(Verse used in many other graveyards both here and in USA)
- 1876 NW057 WIDNALL Robert 1
 Not forgot
 Safe in the arms of Jesus
(Hymn by : Frances J. Crosby, 1868
Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on His gentle breast;
There by His love o'ershaded,
Sweetly my soul shall rest.
Hark! 'tis the voice of angels
Borne in a song to me,
Over the fields of glory,
Over the jasper sea)
- 1877 NE133 SCOTHERN Samuel
 Suffer little children ...
(Matthew 19:14: But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven)

- 1879 **NW035** WHILES William 10
James (1882) 8
The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord
(**Job 1:21** And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord)
- 1880 **SW144** HITCHCOCK Arthur Skinner 9
Dear child thy love on earth was short but lasting are the joys of heaven
- 1881 **NW105** CURTIS Mary Lydia 14
(Mary Lydia)
Her end was peace
- 1881 **NW061** RUSSELL Charlie W.K. 2m
Safe in Glory
- 1882 **SW150** TAYLOR Mary 9
He shall gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom
(**Isiah 40:11** He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.)
- 1882 **NW090** BROWN Edith Mary 9m
Safe in the arms of Jesus
(Hymn by : **Frances J. Crosby**, 1868
Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on His gentle breast;
There by His love o'ershaded,
Sweetly my soul shall rest.
Hark! 'tis the voice of angels
Borne in a song to me,
Over the fields of glory,
Over the jasper sea)
- 1883 **NE058** HUTCHINSON Sarah Esam Grant 13
For so he giveth his beloved sleep
(**Psalms 127:2** It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep)
- 1884 **NE047** GILMAN John 4
Suffer little children to come unto me
(**Matthew 19:14:** But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven)
- 1885 **NW056** SPOUGE John Edward 10
And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof
(**Zechariah 8:5**)
- 1885 **NW104** SQUIRES William Thraves 6
Sarah Lizzie (1885) 3y 3m
Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven
(**Matthew 19:14:** But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven)
- 1884 **NW019** AYSCOUGH unknown Christian Name 3m
Thy will be done
(The Lord's Prayer – **Luke 11**)

- 1869 **NE090** STRONG Percy Dykes 10m
 Safe in the arms of Jesus
Hymn by : Frances J. Crosby, 1868
Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on His gentle breast;
There by His love o'ershaded,
Sweetly my soul shall rest.
Hark! 'tis the voice of angels
Borne in a song to me,
Over the fields of glory,
Over the jasper sea)
- 1886 **NW050** GOODWIN John Thomas
 Thy will be done
(The Lord's Prayer – Luke 11)
- 1886 **NW110** BROWN Rose
 Suffer little children to come unto me
(Matthew 19:14: But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven)
- 1887 **NE080** JOHNSON Eva Louisa 10
 Thy will be done
(The Lord's Prayer – Luke 11)
- 1889 **NE123** ROADLEY Zillah 9
 Thy will be done
(The Lord's Prayer – Luke 11)
- 1890 **SE188** DONCASTER Evelyn Sarah
 Thy will be done
(The Lord's Prayer – Luke 11)
- 1897 **NW086** AYSCOUGH Elsie 3
 He shall gather the lambs with his arm
(Isaiah 40:11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.)