

Changing the Landscape

As we reach Candlemas on 2nd February we finally wave a fond farewell to Christmas and Epiphany and all that goes with the great season of celebration. At this point, Jesus begins to move from childhood to adulthood and the bulk of the gospels to do with his life and death and resurrection unfold through the following pages. After Candlemas Jesus finds his voice. We have so much to look forward to at this time of the church's year. The lectionary between Candlemas and Good Friday and then Easter through to Pentecost and beyond speaks of the Jesus who changes the landscape of our lives. Indeed, he changes the landscape of history.

A less significant 'February event' happened on 6th February 1783. Lancelot Brown died. Who? Lancelot Brown? He was a gardener. A gardener? He was England's greatest landscape gardener. Really? But we remember him by another name. We call him Capability Brown. Ah yes. If you walk through Burghley Park in Stamford, you see the handiwork of Capability Brown. Or if you want to travel further, try Blenheim Palace or Stowe or Chatsworth. In these grand surroundings you will see the work of the great Capability Brown. He was called 'Capability' because of his habit of describing the great 'capabilities' of his clients' landscapes. On a website dedicated to him, it says this:

Lancelot 'Capability' Brown changed the face of eighteenth century England, designing country estates and



mansions, moving hills and making flowing lakes and serpentine rivers, a magical world of green.

He moved hills and made flowing lakes. He changed the landscape.

Jesus, through his death on the cross and his resurrection from the tomb, changes the landscape of our existence. We no longer drag the accusing weight of the past behind us. We are forgiven by his grace and given hope and a future. Jesus looks at your life and sees great capabilities. It may be February and we may be surrounded by a pandemic – but that is great news.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ormston". Below the signature is a horizontal line.

Richard Ormston
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