



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

A pleasure boat's last party

It was a scene reminiscent of the feast of Belshazzar in the fifth chapter of Daniel. A rich young man organised a party for over 130 of his friends. He hired the Thames pleasure boat, *The Marchioness*. He wanted them to join him in celebrating his twenty-sixth birthday. For many of them, including the millionaire host, it was their last night on earth.

Out of the darkness

The music played for the dancers and the wine flowed as the party made its way up the river, little knowing that death was silently approaching them out of the darkness in the early hours of Monday, August 21st.

The dredger, *The Bowbelle*, some 20 times larger than *The Marchioness*, overtook the pleasure boat and literally ran over it. The dancers were swept into the water and tragically, over fifty perished. Included amongst the dead was the young captain of *The Marchioness*, Stephen Faldo.

The terrible collision appalled more than just the Thames-side community. For so many rich and successful young people with the world at their feet to be suddenly cut off, in the midst of festivities, brought home to a shocked nation the unexpected swiftness with which death may approach any one of us.

world-wide

The catastrophe attracted the attention of the world simply because of the numbers involved. Every hour of every day and every night men and women are overtaken by death unexpectedly. Oh! how we need to heed the Word of God when it says, "It is appointed unto men once to die . . ." Hebrews 9:27. When it will happen to us we know not. But that it will happen is beyond dispute. Let each one of us make ready for that appointment by coming in repentance to Jesus Christ. He has promised, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me". John 14:6.

*My soul, in sad exile, was out on life's sea,
So burdened with sin and distressed,
Till I heard a sweet voice saying 'Make me your choice',
And I entered the haven of rest.*

*I've anchored my soul in the haven of rest,
I'll sail the wide seas no more;
The tempest may sweep o'er the wild stormy deep,
In Jesus I'm safe evermore.*