

# *The Gospel Standard Baptist Library*

Newsletter Number 17

Autumn 2022

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## **Introduction**

The number of visitors to the library has increased over the past few months, but the number borrowing books from the library continues to fall. We would encourage you to look at the library catalogue or give us a call if you are looking for a book. We can promptly post you books in our collection free of charge, thanks to the kind payment of these costs by the Gospel Standard Trust. The Library is open Monday to Thursday mornings from 9.30 to 12.30, and at other times by appointment.

This newsletter details major changes afoot at the library to bring the collection into the digital age, it gives details of a selection of books recently added to our collection and provides an in-depth look at the selection of children's books on our shelves.

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## **Changes in the Library**

The borrowing and lending system at the Library has remained unchanged for many years. The Library is a unique collection of books, magazines and pamphlets, but few are aware of the range and quality of information contained in it. It is largely what librarians today call a 'hidden collection'. Unless a user knows exactly what they want or visits the Library so that they can be guided through what is there, it cannot be used to its full potential. So we are currently installing a new computerised cataloguing system which we hope will encourage greater use of the Library, whether for borrowing books or for research.

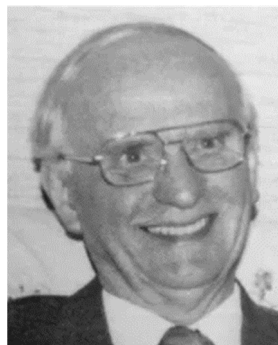
What we hope to achieve, is to allow potential users, wherever they are in UK and beyond, to search the Library collection and find what we have related to any given topic. The catalogue will include notes about the contents of the book and previous ownership and any marks the owners made in the book. For example search for Alexander Whyte's book on James Fraser of Brae and you will be able to see what Mr John H. Gosden wrote in the front of his copy.

Scans of our photographs, rare pamphlets and manuscripts can also be uploaded to the catalogue allowing people to view them, or see them remotely. If you search for Popham and locate Mr J. K. Popham's *Letter to his Church and Congregation*, when you open the record, there is an item in the listing called "link" if you click on the words in green next to this, it will take you to a PDF of the original pamphlet which you can read or print at home (the pages may appear out of order, but they are that way so if you print the pages two sided, you will end up with a booklet you can fold up as an exact copy of the original).

We hope it will also open up some of the treasures buried in the complete works of various Puritan divines in a way which the present catalogue does not. For example, in John Owen's *Complete Works*, his book *The grace and duty of being spiritually minded* is hidden away in Volume 7 and therefore rarely read.

Finally, we have a very large collection of magazines connected with the Strict Baptists and others. Mr Kenneth W H Howard compiled a massive card index giving references to a large variety of ministers, chapels and other topics in the magazines and other books. This index is housed at the Library and is a very useful research tool. In time, we hope to add scans of these cards into the catalogue to allow interested readers to search them.

So far we have transferred some 10% of our books onto the Library system we have adopted. If anyone has time when they would be willing to help us with this cataloguing project, even for a few hours per week, we would be pleased to hear from you. The Library would be happy to reimburse travel costs. No experience is needed, and full training will be provided. There is the possibility of some work being done remotely. If you are interested in helping, please email [gospelstandardlibrary@gmail.com](mailto:gospelstandardlibrary@gmail.com).



Kenneth Howard

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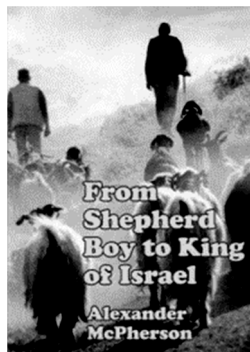
## Some New and Noteworthy Books

Over the past few months the library has been able to add nearly 100 books to the collection. Many of these came from the late Mr H. M. Pickles, a past user of the library. We have also received books from the libraries of several other friends who had either had to downsize or have died. While many of these books are duplicate and we can sell them to raise funds to preserve and expand the collection, often a good number of donated books are new to the library and it is nice to see these added to our collection. Many of the books in the library bear ownership marks and in many ways, the collection forms a memorial to past generations of readers who have donated for our use a vast wealth of spiritual literature.

Of particular note, we have been able to add a number of titles dealing with Welsh church history which has been a subject area previously poorly represented in the library. So if you are thinking of a holiday next year in Wales, now may be the time to consider some background reading. Starting with the history of the Puritans in Wales we have acquired copies of Thomas Rees' *History of Protestant Nonconformity in Wales* and Thomas Richards *Puritan Movement in Wales 1639-1653*. One particular minister from this period worth knowing about is Walter Cradock. His views on the law and gospel were not dissimilar to those held by our churches. We have been given a brief biography of him: *Walter Cradock: A New Testament Saint* by Noel Gibbard. Coming to later Welsh history, we have gained a copy of *History of the Calvinistic Methodists* by William Williams, which gives a readable account of the churches ministered to by men such as Howell Harris and Daniel Rowlands. We are just accessing a copy of *Some of the Great Preachers of Wales* by Owen Jones, which gives short biographies of Daniel Rowlands, Christmas Evens, John Elias, and Thomas Rees amongst others. A volume of previously unpublished sermons by John Elias: *An Experimental Knowledge of Christ*, and *A Basket of Fragments*, notes of sermons by Thomas Jones, a Welshman who was for many years rector of Creaton in Northamptonshire and a friend of John Newton and Thomas Charles of Bala, round off these acquisitions nicely.

Turning to Scotland, we have added a copy of *Harriet and her Circle* by D. A. MacFarlane. Harriet MacDonald was a godly Scottish lady in the early 1900s who had various connections with previous generations of Strict Baptists. We have had for some time Donald Fraser's *Life and Diary of Ralph Erskine*, but recently were able to acquire a copy of the *Life and Diary of Ebenezer Erskine* too. Both are rare, so this is a valuable addition to the library. We have also gained a biography of the well-known highland minister John MacRae or "Big MacRae" as he was known. Also Alexander MacRea's *Revival in the Highlands and Islands in the 19th Century* and Archibald Auld's *Memorials of Caithness Ministers*.

For young people we have purchased a copy of *From Shepherd Boy to King of Israel*, a small book about the life of King David and applicatory lessons for us, by Alexander MacPherson (former Free Presbyterian minister in London). We were gifted a copy of the newly published *History of the Croydon Strict Baptist Educational Society 1920-2020*. Founded just after the First World War, this society continues to meet on Fridays during the winter months to listen to an address by a chosen minister. This book contains an interesting and well illustrated history, together with a profitable selection of the addresses over the years.



Three volumes by John Calvin have been added to the shelves. A small paperback volume containing a selection of Calvin's recorded prayers. Similarly, a small selection of his letters recently published by Banner of Truth. Both provide good reading matter for those with little time. Finally an important volume of his sermons on the deity of Christ.

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## A Look at the Children's Section

One of the larger sections of the Library is taken up with books for children and young people. This is also the second most popular for borrowing (the most popular section is Biographies and Memoirs). The children's books are found in section S in the catalogue. It contains nearly one thousand books. While some of the books, such as those written by Simonetta Carr (books about Newton, Bunyan, Anselm, Luther and Augustine among others) are recent and well-presented with lots of colour and illustrations, we also have many treasures dating back to the 19th century when spiritual life was healthier in our churches.

There are a number of well-written accounts of the more famous men including Calvin, Luther, Wycliffe, Tyndale and Oliver Cromwell. These were men, who under God's wise providence, shaped history. To read of their calling, work, trials, discouragements and victories is most instructive. We have a number of lives of each, including: *Two Noble Lives* (Wycliffe and Luther) by D. J. Deane; a book of interest for older readers would be *Luther and the Cardinal*, giving details of the decisive break point between Luther and Rome; *Oliver Cromwell* by H. G. Groser in the *Splendid Lives* series; and *Plain Mr Knox* by Elizabeth Wheatley.

No less important, although little known, are those tender accounts of young people called early into eternity. Often these were written by grieving parents in hopes that the death of one young person might be the life of others. We have,

among others, *The Tender Blade and the Early Harvest*, an account of Mary Banfield of Brighton; *A Gathered Lily* about young girl from the Fens; *Ralph Gemmell*, who was a young covenanter; and *Captain Hedley Vicars* about a young man who died in battle in the Crimea. We hold a complete run of *Friendly Companion* (1875 onwards—also the rare two first volumes of the magazine from the 1850s, and even its two short lived predecessor magazines: all published by John Gadsby and now long forgotten). The *Friendly Companion* for the years 1919-50 are particularly weighty and calculated to edify the young. The two editors through those years were Mr J. K. Popham and Mr J. H. Gosden. We also have nearly complete runs of the *Cheering Words* (from 1863) and *Little Gleaner* (from 1854) magazines. *The Little Weaver* is an interesting account of the early life of Thomas Hull, later the pastor at Hastings and editor of the *Little Gleaner*.

General histories of the Christian foundations of our society are very important and are well represented in the Library. These include *The Story of the Pilgrim Fathers* by H. G. Tunnicliff; *The Scottish Covenanters* by Robert Pollok, covering the fifty years of persecution which shaped Scottish history; *Tudor Society and the Reformation* by Llewellyn; and *Early Torch Bearers* by W. Stanley Martin dealing with the times of the early church. An interesting and little known book is the *Autobiography of French Martyrs condemned to the Gallies*.

We can recommend *A Thousand Miles of Miracles* by Archibald Glover, an account of suffering during the Boxer uprising in China; and *Bernard Palissy* by Thomas Finlayson, Palissy being a well-known French Huguenot minister and sufferer. Finally how many young people know and learn *Songs for Children* by Isaac Watts.

This is a small sample of what is available in the children's section. Do bring your children down to visit the library and browse the shelves for themselves. We would particularly appreciate new younger readers.

## How to Use the Library

**Borrowing Books:** To borrow any of the books mentioned in this newsletter, you do not have to visit the Library, or become a subscriber. Simply phone or email the librarian (contact details below) with the book title you wish to borrow and your address. The book will be posted to you free of charge. Return postage is paid and you have three months to read the book. Similarly, you can borrow any book from the catalogue (except those marked as being in the reserved collection); the catalogue is available on the website.

**Surplus Books:** The Library sells books surplus to requirements to raise money for the maintenance and expansion of the Library's collection and general upkeep. If you wish to receive emails with details of books for sale, please let us know.

**Donations:** Donations towards the library's costs are always appreciated. Our bank account details are: The Gospel Standard Baptist Library Fund, Acc. No. 00333934; SC. 30-98-74. Gift aid forms are available.

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