

The Gospel Standard Baptist Library

Newsletter Number 14

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Introduction

In this newsletter we have aimed to give an introduction to the library's large collection of pamphlets. These are often overlooked, but are a valuable resource of shorter—bite-sized reads—perhaps more suited to the modern reader. An update on library news is found on the back page.

Don't forget the Pamphlets

In addition to its large stock of books, a significant portion of the library's collections are made up of well over 2000 pamphlets and booklets. Sadly, these often get forgotten. When you visit the library they are all stored in neat boxes on the shelf, somewhat hidden away at the end of the Children's section. While their location may explain why they get overlooked, we fear the greater reason why many people scorn pamphlets is because of their size, tendency to quickly become tatty, and they are easily lost. Consequently people prefer to find a book on the subject of interest. Such a view underestimates the value of the simple booklet. It would be fair so say some of the most rare and valuable items in the library are in its pamphlet collections. We also have a lot of new pamphlets in the library. Given the lack of time and appetite for reading books today, perhaps we should be turning to these shorter works more readily for a source of good reading material. We thought we would just highlight a few pamphlets in the library's collection to whet your appetite.

Firstly, coming to **commentaries**—two items especially worth noting, 1. A short commentary on Isaiah chapter 9, written by the great reformer, Martin Luther. For those who have read and enjoyed the recent reprints of Luther's commentaries on the Lord's Prayer, John 17 and Psalm 51, here is another short gem from Luther for your consideration. 2. The book of Revelation is difficult to understand. Not all commentators agree on an interpretation and therefore it requires prayerful consideration. Hidden in the pamphlet section is a series on revelation which together form a commentary on the mysteries of Revelation: *Revelation Spiritually Understood* by C D Alexander. Borrow them one at a time, and in bite size reads you will find much of spiritual profit in Revelation. This section also has C D Alexander's commentaries on the Gospel of John and the Song of Solomon—each published in a series of small bite-sized booklets.

Under the "Ec" shelf mark one will find a large collection of pamphlets **refuting evolution and "other modern objections."** The library probably possesses far more pamphlets on evolution than it does books and some of them would be very suitable for young people struggling with the subject at school. Here you will find information on the creation and biology of birds, camels, monotremes; on the biology of pollination and the doctrine of creation as expressed in the Prophecy of Isaiah.

Amongst the **biographical writings** are several accounts of lesser known Christians. Some of our readers will remember Walter Brehaut, the minister from Guernsey. All of his writings are in the pamphlet section and include his two autobiographical records. The memoirs of several minister's wives are hidden away here, they forgotten while

their husbands are well known—Mrs Hazlerigg, Windridge, Popham and Kershaw spring to mind. While under the name Thamar there is a precious account of the gospel blessed to the conversion of a young Jewish girl and her father.

Amongst the **hymns and poetry** are several slim hymnbooks compiled for the First and Second World Wars. Hidden away in the boxes are also some profitable poetry written by some Strict Baptists authors such as Herbert and Elsie Dawson.

In the small section of **correspondence** a few items stand out. Some letters of J. C. Philpot's close friend, Joseph Parry under the title *I was Brought Low and He Helped Me* are particularly profitable. Also a booklet of letters written by Mr Eben Clark (the old pastor at Barton) from the battlefields of the First World War. Finally some rather unusual letters written by Robert Link and his fiancé during their courtship. Robert Link was deacon at Gower Street Chapel in the 1800s. His little autobiography *A Memorial of Robert Link* is also worth reading. He was not born a Strict Baptist but was brought amongst us when a clergyman in Kent (we believe Legh Richmond's son) handed him a sermon of Mr Philpot's and saying he felt it would suit him. It did, and the rest is history.

In the **sermons** section there is a large selection of good sermons by a range of ministers, many of which were never collected together in books, but here they have been gathered up together that they may not be lost. Amongst them are several funeral sermons of our past ministers which often contain biographical snippets—for example, Mr Jabez Field (Blackboys).

Under the classification of **“Theological Lectures and Systems,”** there is a range of confessions of faith and catechisms—which often give simple and direct explanations of points of our faith which can be useful when answering questions posed by our children. It is also in this area of the library that there are good explanations of our distinctives: Mr Popham's tract on *Preaching to the Unconverted*, booklets on Strict Communion, and why we regard Believer's Baptism by immersion to be Biblically correct. There is also material on why we keep the Sabbath Day and setting out the errors of various cults and heathen religions—including Mormonism, the Jehovah's Witnesses and Islam.

Coming to the **“Treatises & Discourses Unclassified”** section we will find short booklets dealing with a range of doctrinal subjects. Many of them are spiritually precious. We could name *Immanuel* by Bishop Ussher—a short but sweet book on the incarnation of the Lord Jesus. *Foundation Truths* by J. K. Popham—his sermons given at Sovereign Grace Union meetings. Or J. C. Philpot's rare booklet on *The Immortality of the Soul* and Charles Hemington (another old Editor of the Gospel Standard) on *Eternal Punishment*.

Here also a range of **controversial subjects** are covered: the head covering, addressing God in prayer, television, cremation, modest dress or marriage and divorce.

The largest single section of pamphlets includes the **histories of 110 Strict Baptist chapels**. Sadly many are now closed and these booklets are a solemn reminder of how far our churches have decayed. Histories of the chapels at Chelsea, Ashford, Canterbury, Ninfield, Brighton Tabernacle, Petworth and Wadhurst are examples. There are also a large number of Centenary and 150th histories recording the Lord's goodness over many years to his people. These accounts are a helpful reminder that when the Lord works the scene can be changed very quickly. O that he would revive us again!

Finally there is a large selection of tracts on **Rome**, a collection of valuable leaflets produced by the **Trinitarian Bible Society** (not just on different versions of the Bible, but on the history of the Bible and on doctrinal subjects such as the Trinity). Perhaps one of the most useful sections of pamphlets is those produced over many years by the

Sovereign Grace Union (gathered under mark Sg). Here there is a veritable collection of short works covering all aspects of doctrine, experience and practice.

Finally, we should say there is no hard rule defining what makes it onto the shelf as a book, and what is put in a box as a pamphlet. Generally pamphlets are paperback and less than 100 pages. All are however catalogued in the second half of the general catalogue available for download on the library website.

So, next time you visit the library, don't forget the pamphlets. Please note—pamphlets are often fragile and readily mislaid, so please take extra care with them.

Ownership Marks

The library has purchased relatively few of the books it owns. Most of its stock is second hand and the books carry their own history. It can be quite interesting browsing the library shelves to see how many past chapel libraries are represented in the collection—as witnessed by their book plates carefully pasted into the front of books. You may find the book you are holding bears the signature of John Kershaw, William Wilberforce or J. K. Popham. The gold embossed initials J. C. P. on the cover give away that it was once owned and read by J. C. Philpot. Sometimes gift inscriptions record old friendships. Or links between churches, such as marking a gift between a Mr Popham and Rev. John R. MacKay (a minister in Scotland who once preached at Galeed for Mr Popham) found in a copy of Hugh Martin's *Christ's Presence in the Gospel History*—better known as *The Abiding Presence*—see photo below. Or there may be a minister's reflection on the book scrawled in the margins as you read. Look carefully at the next book you borrow. You could be holding a piece of denominational history!

Dear Mr & Mrs Popham,
Many thanks for remembering
us at this season. Please accept
this of Martin's with the compliments
of the season & with our love. I am
quite sorry I wasn't able to get a
newer copy of Martin.

Ever yours

Sharncliffe Gardens,
Edinburgh

John R MacKay

Library News

Over the last few months a lot of work has been done on the *Manuscript Sermons* pages of the website. Sermons available preached by Jesse Delves, John Tyler, Joseph Oldfield, Charles Hemington, Frank Gosden, Henry Haddow, Herbert Dawson, John Gosden, John Raven, John Hazleton, James Popham, Leslie Hyde, Frederick Foster, John Walder, John Harwood, Stanley Delves, Reginald Jupp, John Green and Joseph Irons.

Our scanner continues to receive heavy use and we are currently scanning the eighteen volumes of James Bourne's manuscript letters that the library owns. Many of these are unpublished. This project is part of an endeavour to publish these letters in due course, Dv.

Financially, the library recorded another deficit last year of just over £2000. We are thankful this was less than half of the deficit recorded in 2018, but the continual running loss is a burden to the trustees. Please could churches consider having a collection for the library?

We continue to add books to the collections—mainly through gift, for which we are very grateful. Readers will now have access to *The Christian on the Mount* by Thomas Watson (the Puritan)—a book on spiritual meditation; John Brown of Edinburgh's *Commentary on Hebrews*; a very interesting history of Protestantism in Ireland by Thomas Hamilton; E. B. Underhill's edition of the original church book of our chapel at Fenstanton, giving the history of its origins in the 1600s; the history of Jireh Tenterden published last year to mark the 150th anniversary of the chapel; John Dick's *Systematic Theology*—Dick was a minister in the denomination founded by the Erskine brothers; *Sermons on Important Subjects* by the godly church of Scotland minister in the 1800s, John Colquhoun of Leith; and a small interesting book detailing the development of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper at the Reformation. We also have three new books on creation: *The New Creationism* by P. Garner, *Explore Evolution* by Meyer et al, and *Origins: Exploring the Evidence* by Barnard et al. All would be very useful reading for our teenage 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 regularly receives books surplus to requirements and these are sold to raise money for the maintenance and expansion of the Library's collection and general upkeep. A catalogue is regularly produced.

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