

The Gospel Standard Baptist Library

Newsletter Number 15

Spring 2021

Introduction

Almost 12 months have passed since we last sent out a newsletter. This is mainly due to the situation we have found ourselves in with the Covid pandemic. We are thankful to report that, although closed to visitors during lockdown, the library continued to send out books to readers and assist researchers. We have received a large number of books during the past year, a significant proportion of which have been added to the surplus books list and are available to purchase for a small price.

New Additions to the Library

During the past year we have added a number of new puritan books to the library. These are mainly modern paperback reprints of short Puritan works, with the language and structure sympathetically modernised. These include the following titles:

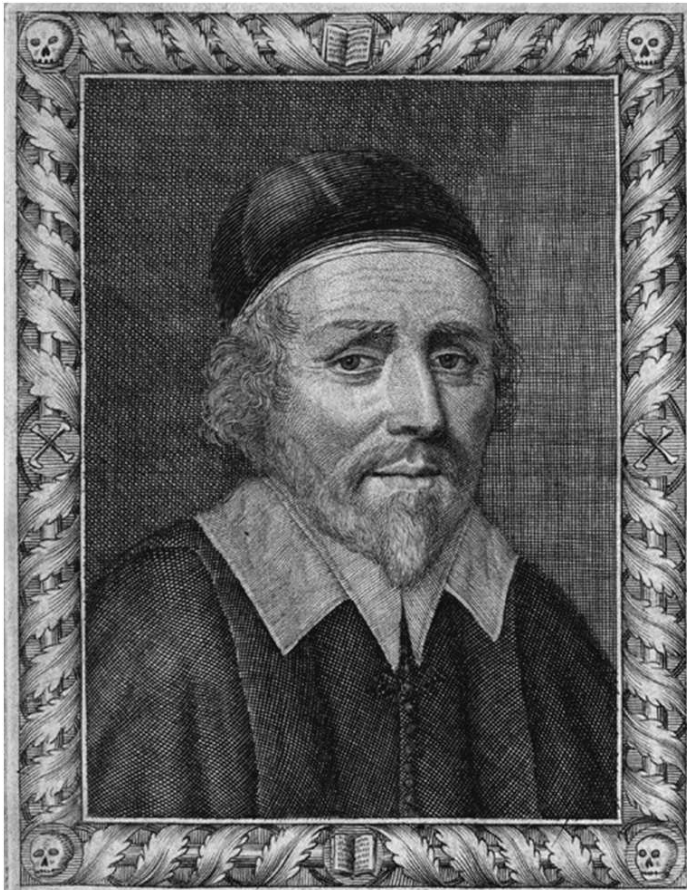
Alexander Nisbet's *Preparing for Eternity*. Nisbet was a Scottish minister, and this book contains an exposition of the last chapter of the book of Ecclesiastes.

William Bridge's *Comfort and Holiness from Christ's Priestly Office*. William Bridge was the pastor of the Independent Church at Great Yarmouth. His subject is choice—the blessings we receive from the work of our High Priest.

William Greenhill's *Stop Loving the World*. Greenhill is one of the lesser known Puritans, best known for his remarkable *Commentary on Ezekiel*—also in the Library's collections. The present world is a great snare to the Lord's people. The Psalmist confessed his soul cleaved to the dust. The subject of this title has great relevance to us all.

Anthony Burgess's *Advancing Christian Unity* deals with the divided state of the church of Christ which should be of primary concern to us. "Is Christ divided?" the Apostle Paul incredulously asked the Corinthian Church. A topical book still as relevant today as when it was written in the 1600s.

John Downname's *The Cure for Unjust Anger*. How quickly anger rises—how little of our anger is of the sinless sort which Paul described to the Ephesians.



William Bridge

We have purchased a few more of Simonetta Carr's books for children.

1. Jonathan Edwards—the leading minister of the Great Awakening in America during the 1700s. His collected works, and several of his separate books are in the library—including his well known *Charity and its Fruits* and *On the Religious Affections*.

2. Augustine—Bishop of Hippo and well known father of the church. This book helpfully summarises Augustine's life as a runaway youth. But the prayers of his godly mother were answered and after his conversion Augustine became a leader in the church. The book also covers his distinctive teaching and some of his well-known sayings.

3. Benjamin B. Warfield—One of the leaders in the Presbyterian Church of America around the turn of the twentieth century. Warfield had to stand against liberalism in the church. He spent much of his life caring for his invalid wife. Mrs Carr has the ability to make even the most unknown of characters interesting.

4. Julia Gonzaga—An Italian Countess of the reformation who supported the Italian Reformers in the face of great persecution. It is good to be reminded of “little people” of whom it can be said, as it was with the woman who threw her mite into the Temple treasury—“She hath done what she could.”

5. John Bunyan—Surely Bunyan needs no introduction, the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*. But how much do we know about his interesting life?

Two recently published books of writings of old Gospel Standard ministers have been added to the library:

Sermons of Ebenezer Clark. “Eben” Clark as he was popularly known, was the godly pastor at Barton-le-Clay for many years. This book contains a collection of his otherwise unpublished sermons. His ministry was in many ways unique and makes searching reading.

Pastoral Gleanings by William Fay. William Fay's early experience was published in the February *Gospel Standard*. He was pastor at Norwich. This book contains letters, sermons, prayers and other writings of Mr Fay, all published from manuscripts. These pieces are often short and make for good reading—a good source of material for deacons looking for prayer meeting addresses.

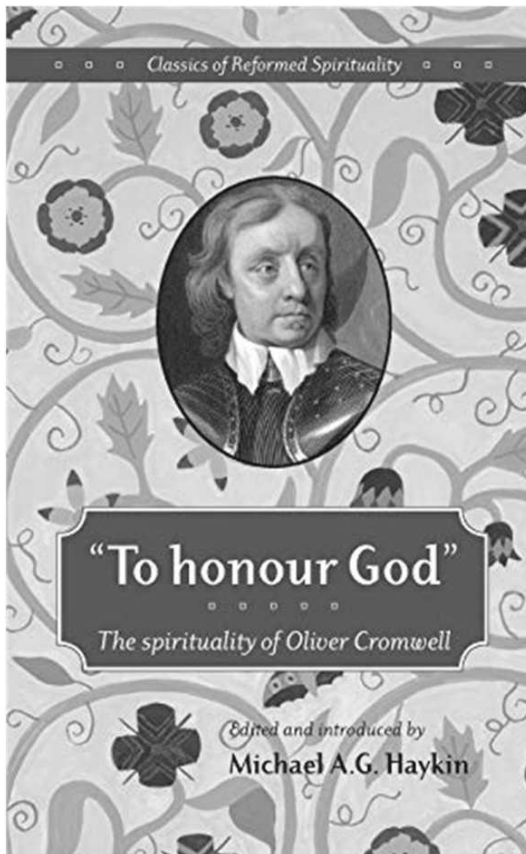
Two new titles have Scottish background.

Christ Victorious by Hugh Martin is a collection of sermons, essays and letters by a minister in the Free Church of Scotland during the 1800s. Pieces by Martin have appeared in *The Gospel Standard* in the past, and this book was reviewed in the magazine last year. Martin delves into depths of doctrines which we perhaps do not normally consider, and makes very clear that Christ was not defeated on the cross, but died a triumphant death over sin, the grave and hell.

Men of Skye by Roderick MacCowan is a precious book describing the characters and experiences of some of the Lord's people who lived on the Isle of Skye during the nineteenth century.

Then there are a couple of books which publish for the first time manuscript remains of two of the well known professors of Princeton Theological Seminary in the USA.





A Commentary on Hebrews by Charles Hodge contains short notes on most of the book of Hebrews, along with some of his sermons on the same subject. *God, Creation and Human Rebellion* is a publication of the notes taken by Charles Hodge of lectures originally given by Archibald Alexander to his students. These take a question and answer format covering the doctrines named in the title.

Finally, the library has received several second-hand books which are new to the library collections. These include biographies of Philip Doddridge (by Malcolm Deacon), the Countess of Huntingdon (by Sarah Tytler), C. H. Spurgeon (by Robert Shindler—one time pastor of Ebenezer Chapel, Matfield), Savonarola—the Italian reformer (by Professor Villari), William Carey (by Mary Drewery) and Christmas Evans (by D. M. Evans). A very profitable read is: *To Honour God*—Selections from letters and speeches of Oliver Cromwell, a paperback produced more recently by Michael Haykin. Also a fascinating

book describing all the martyrs who have died for their Baptist beliefs between AD30 and 1660 by T J von Brahtg.

Christian Responses to Previous Plagues and Pandemics

The Covid pandemic is not the first pandemic to affect our country. How did the godly respond in the past? Several Puritans wrote responses to the Great Plague of 1665. Perhaps most well-known (although sadly the library does not possess a copy) is Thomas Vincent's *God's Terrible Voice in the City*. However, Thomas Brooks wrote an introduction to his *Privy Key to Heaven* (in volume 2 of Brooks' *Works*) which is an exposition of Micah 6 verse 9—dealing with God's judgement in time of the plague. While volume 6 of Brooks' *Works* includes *London's Lamentations* and *A Heavenly Cordial for all those Servants of the Lord that have had the Plague (and are Recovered)*. *An Ark for all God's Noahs* by Thomas Brooks, points the Lord's people to the only place of safety in times of trouble. Volume 1 of the *Works* of William Bridge contains his short work on Psalm 91, entitled *The Righteous Man's Habitation in the time of Plague and Pestilence*. Several of John Owen's sermons in volumes 8 and 9 of his *Works* are also very apposite to the situation today—both in terms of judgement and mercy in the church at this time. David Clarkson—successor to John Owen—has a sermon on the importance of the physical gathering for worship (on Psalm 87 verse 2), entitled: *Public Worship to be preferred before Private*, in volume 3 of his collected *Works*. This is important reading for our situation today. Of course, Ralph Venning brings us back to the basics in his work *The Plague of Plagues*—a treatise on sin, which he published shortly after the great plague. From an earlier period, *The Later Writings of John Hooper* (one of our reformation martyrs) contains a sermon for the time of pestilence.

Coming to more recent times, the library has a very rare volume of letters written by James Bourne's wife. Hidden amongst these letters are several which mention the

outbreak of Cholera during the 1850s and the solemnizing effect it had upon her spirit. If anybody knows of other material in the library which has a bearing on the current crisis, we would be interested to hear from you.

Leaving aside plagues, we should not be forgetful of the stand made in the past by our nonconformist forefathers against intrusion of the State into the worship of the church. The doctrine of the Church State relationship is one which we fear has been sadly forgotten and neglected. Works such as Palmer's *Nonconformist Memorials*, the life of Richard Baxter, or Neal's *History of the Puritans*, give much background information on this subject. While the struggle in Scotland during the Covenanting period and later during the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843 are covered in books such as Smellie's *Men of the Covenant* and Brown's *Annals of the Disruption*. We should not forget women too, whose accounts are given in Donald Beaton's *Scottish Heroines of the Faith* and James Alexander's *Ladies of the Covenant and Women of Puritan Times*. What tremendous sacrifices were made for the liberties we now enjoy!

Financial Appeal

While the library has much to be thankful for, we continue to run at a deficit. Other than the sale of surplus books and the occasional donation, the library has no regular income. This year our working funds dipped below £1000. Recently we have only been able to continue through the generosity of the Gospel Standard Trust and the Providence Chapel Croydon Charity. We care for a precious heritage of books collected over many years by previous generations in our churches. Our running costs are low, but we have to maintain public liability insurance and pay for heating, lighting and repairs at the very minimum. We want to remain relevant to modern readers too, so endeavour to purchase new books for the collection as able. We would appeal to all who have an interest in the library to consider making a donation towards our running costs. Our bank details are: The Gospel Standard Baptist Library Fund, Acc. No. 00333934; SC. 30-98-74. Gift aid forms are available.

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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