

PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



"By me kings reign, and princes decree justice"
Proverbs 8. 15.

SPRING 2016

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EDITORIAL

“If he sleep, he shall do well” (John 11. 12).

So said the disciples those many years ago, recognising then, as we do now, the wonderful benefits of sleep. Their friend Lazarus was sick - to sleep was the best thing for him. It would be safe to say that sleep is one of God’s greatest blessings to his creatures, in both sickness and health. We are told that “the sleep of a labouring man is sweet.”



It is well known that the newborn baby sleeps for perhaps 18 hours every day. This need for sleep lessens as time goes on, and the average young boy or girl needs nine or ten hours sleep. For many years we were told that adults needed eight hours sleep, but this advice has been amended recently, and we are now told that six or seven hours is quite adequate for most older people. Lack of sleep has serious effects on our brain’s ability to function, so we should be very thankful indeed whenever we have a good night’s sleep.

The different stages of sleep have been the subject of much research. Sleep periods of 90 minutes are common, alternating between cycles of REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep and non-REM sleep. Most of our dreams occur during our REM sleep. There is a greater amount of deep sleep earlier in the night. Activity slows down in sleep almost to nothing. However, it is part of God’s wonderful design that if, for example, the body is cold, it will automatically curl up into a ball to preserve heat. We believe that God *designed* sleep - most certainly it was not the result of some evolutionary process. We read in Genesis 2. 21 that “God *caused* a deep sleep to fall upon Adam” (Gen. 2. 21) when He took a rib (close to his heart) to make a wife for him. A similar occurrence is recorded when David took the spear from a sleeping Saul and neither he nor his men woke up “because a *deep* sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them.”

Excessive sleep, indulging ourselves, is strongly condemned in God's word, as it is linked with laziness and indifference to the many things around us that need to be done. In Proverbs 6. 9 the question is asked: "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?" A sluggard is a most awful word, meaning a habitually lazy and inactive person. These people are directed to the ant as an example of business. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." The ant has a larger brain in proportion to its body than any other animal. They are some of the most hardworking creatures on the earth. Take the leafcutter ants as an example. Every ant is allocated its task by the queen ant. *Builder* ants are responsible for creating the tunnel network, *cutting* ants forage for leaves to bring back to the nest, *soldier* ants protect the other ants in the colony, *cleaner* ants remove waste. Certainly a hive of activity! The wise man in Proverbs tells us, "Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty." One of the earliest English proverbs has come down to us as: 'Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.' This proverb can be traced back to at least 1486 (*The Book of St. Albans*) which says: 'As the olde englysshe prouerbe sayth in this wyse, Who soo woll ryse erly shall be holy helthy & zely.'

Perhaps the value of sleep is best seen by the fact that so many find it difficult to sleep well. More than 10 million prescriptions for sleeping pills are given each year in England. Sadly, drugs lose their effectiveness over time because the body gets used to them, and the relief afforded is only short-term.

But there is also a most solemn sleep to be considered - Jeremiah calls it a "perpetual sleep" - that time when we shall "sleep in the dust of the earth" (Daniel 12. 2). All of us must come to that point one day. "Man goeth to his long home," Solomon tells us in the book of Ecclesiastes. Possibly even Solomon felt he could not really understand the immensity of eternity, using instead a simple word, long. David, the great King of Israel, had a long and varied life, but his time came, as it will to every man, woman and child on the earth. We are told that "David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep." Everyone, from the kings of the earth to the humblest peasant, will fall "on sleep."

If I might digress here for a moment, this is an unusual expression: "fell on sleep." It seems to be peculiar to the Authorised Version of the

Bible (although retained by the English Revised Version). We remember many years ago seeing the expression on a gravestone and thinking a mistake had been made. “Fell on sleep” - whatever did it mean? Virtually every other version of the Bible has “fell asleep” or simply “died.” We have not been able to find the expression in any other English literature, although we have not had time to go too deeply into it. It may seem a rather unimportant point, but our translators had a wonderful way with words and maybe there is more in it than is at first apparent. (Do any of our readers have any insight into this?)

The apostle Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians tells us that this final falling asleep is a mystery. “Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.” How sudden, and how quick, will this change be. “In the twinkling of an eye.” (Our eyelids are the fastest-moving muscle in the human body, capable of blinking five times every second!) For the Lord’s people, it will be a blessed change, when their bodies shall be raised from the dead, never to die again. “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

A year or so ago, a young person attending one of our chapels was very ill, and it was realised that she could not live many more days, and everyone was waiting for the inevitable sad news. Shortly after she had passed away I received a text message. This is all it said: “Safe in the arms of Jesus.” We felt what a blessed sleep this was for her - to leave the suffering of her last illness for an eternity in paradise.

Asleep in Jesus! blessed sleep!
 From which none ever wake to weep;
 A calm and undisturbed repose,
 Unbroken by the last of foes.

Asleep in Jesus! O, how sweet
 To be for such a slumber meet!
 With holy confidence to sing,
 That death has lost its venom’d sting.

Asleep in Jesus! O, for me
 May such a blissful refuge be!
 Securely shall my ashes lie,
 Waiting the summons from on high.

Asleep in Jesus! far from thee
 Thy kindred and their graves may be;
 But thine is still a blessed sleep,
 From which none ever wake to weep.

May this be our favoured lot too, to be found asleep one day “safe
 in the arms of Jesus.”

With greetings and best wishes to you all.
 The Editor

THE SABBATH

By the late Mrs. Elizabeth Jempson of Peasmarsh, Sussex

Grant that I bear no burden, Lord,
 Upon Thy Sabbath day,
 Help me to heed Thy holy word,
 And put my work away.

The burden of my anxious care,
 Remove it from my heart,
 May I to my Stronghold repair,
 And never thence depart.

Help me to worship and adore,
 And prove Thy Sabbath blest.
 May I Thy footstool fall before,
 And know Thy gospel rest.

An aged child of God, when visited on his dying bed at the age of 89,
 said, “I have many times been shaken *on* the Rock, but was never
 shaken *off* the Rock, Christ Jesus.”

BAPTISING OUTSIDE

Most Baptist chapels today have a baptistery inside the building. This was not always the case, as in the past it was common for baptisms to take place in the open air, usually in a pond or a river. Often, large numbers of the village population would come to see the spectacle, and the occasion was literally a public profession of faith in the real sense.

The photograph below is a baptism that took place at Cricklade in Wiltshire, about three miles from Blunsdon.



The minister was Mr. Robert Pigott, the Pastor of Providence Chapel, Swindon. This is his own account of the occasion:

September 8th, 1889 - This day is memorable. I had the privilege of baptising my wife's dear father, in the seventy-seventh year of his age, in the Thames at Cricklade, and at the same time his youngest daughter and four others. This was a happy day; indeed, I rejoiced in it, as well as many others. They all joined the church there (Cricklade). I experienced a wonderful time in speaking at the water-side from Mark 11 v. 28: "And say unto Him, By what authority doest Thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority to do these things?" I never had more authority in my life in speaking to over a

thousand people of all denominations. The other places of worship in the town were closed on the occasion, and a most orderly, solemn service, never to be forgotten. In the evening I preached from Revelation 3 v. 11: "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown," and the word was well received. I do hope seed was sown that will bear fruit to everlasting life. There are only a few such days experienced by the Lord's people now. For ever blessed be His name for permitting me to have a part and portion in them.

Mr. John Broome, the late esteemed Editor of *Perception*, always felt it was a retrograde step when we stopped baptising in rivers and pools and opened chapel baptisteries. The original photograph (now digitally restored,) is held in the vestry of Blunsdon Hill chapel.

Mr. Pigott was 48 years old when he lost his wife at the age of 52. His diary entry for the day of her death reads as follows:

1878. On August 5th the Lord removed my dear Sue from earth to (I trust) heaven. Her life was one of suffering indeed. I never knew her entirely free from pain for a single day from the first day I set eyes on her until the day she died. Sometimes the pain would be intense, at other times greatly moderated; sometimes sickness for weeks together, but her spirit was bright and cheerful. Although in June she seemed much better than usual, she gradually fell back after, and she appeared to sink away. She only kept her bed a fortnight. I called in a second doctor, who said her case was hopeless. If her life had been extended, he said, she would have become quite imbecile. She was quite sensible to the last. I went into the garden at 2 a.m. to pick her strawberries, and this was the last thing she took. A candid, transparent, true woman - little faith, but unwavering. She died trusting in God, and was buried in the cemetery at Faringdon by Mr Burberry, of Basingstoke. The friends here erected a tablet in the chapel to her memory. The Lord support me in my bereavement and loneliness.

The gravestone of Mr. & Mrs. Pigott can be found in the cemetery at Faringdon, but is now difficult to read.



IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE
OF
SUSANNA
THE BELOVED WIFE OF
ROBERT PIGOTT
WHO FELL ASLEEP AT SWINDON
AUGUST 5TH 1878
TRUSTING IN GOD

ALSO OF ROBERT PIGOTT
WHO ENTERED INTO HIS ETERNAL
REST MARCH 8TH 1902 AGED 72
FOR 30 YEARS PASTOR OF
PROVIDENCE BAPTIST CHAPEL
SWINDON

BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE
LORD FROM HENCEFORTH: YEA, SAITH THE
SPIRIT, THAT THEY MAY REST FROM THEIR
LABOURS; AND THEIR WORKS DO FOLLOW THEM.

ADVICE FOR A YOUNG PREACHER

Dr. William Carey, the famous missionary to India, is reported to have said to a young minister who preached before him: “My young friend, I have much approved of your sermon, but it had one deficiency. It had no ‘likes’ in it.” And when asked for an explanation, he added, “Why, when you read our Lord’s discourses, you constantly meet with the expression, ‘the kingdom of heaven is *like* unto leaven,’ ‘*like* unto mustard seed,’ ‘*like* unto a net,’ ‘*like* unto a marriage,’ and so on. Now never preach again, my young friend, without some ‘likes’ in your addresses.”

A SERMON FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE

This sermon was preached by Mr. Peter Simmonds at Ebenezer Chapel, Pick Hill, Horam on Lord's Day, 2nd January 1994. Mr. Simmonds was pastor of the church at Scaynes Hill, Sussex, commencing his pastorate on 1st January 1988. In May 1990 his wife was taken home very suddenly in a car crash. Mr. Robert Field wrote at the time: "It was a deep pathway to have to tread, and he was given much grace to walk through this trial and to bear it." A year later he suffered several heart attacks. During a heart by-pass operation, he suffered a stroke which took away his speech when under the anaesthetic. Many thought he would never preach again, but with much patience the Lord enabled him to speak, and eventually to preach. He died suddenly, but peacefully, in his sleep later in the same year that this sermon was preached, on 6th October 1994, at the age of 57.



Text: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment" (Ecclesiastes 11. 9).

What grace is needed to bring this word to you tonight. Necessarily, I must speak to the young. I say, and I mean it, that I bring this word in love. Now there may be someone that says, "That means that you are going to tell us off, for ministers always mean that when they say, I bring it in love." But you older ones particularly have walked this through, haven't you, because if you haven't, I have!

Now I want to speak to the young ones. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth." This does not exclude you girls here, not a bit of it. "Let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes." Is the preacher saying, "Do what you like"? No, he is not. How many of our younger friends are at that age, perhaps in their teens, that they think they know what is good for them. They know what they are going to do, where they are going,

and woe betide anybody that stands in their way. Solemn, isn't it, because there is a BUT here. "But."

So let us consider one or two things that take place in the hearts and the minds of the young. Firstly, you may well be saying to your parents, "You might be able to tell me what to do now, but you wait until I am 18 and then I will do what I like." Have some of our older ones said that? God saw it; God heard it.

But then, young friends, what are you rebelling against? "Well, we want to do what we like. This religion business is all very well, but it cramps our style; we cannot go to the cinema, we cannot have the television, we cannot choose our friends and so on." All right, says the word, go off and do it; choose your friends, go into the cinema, have your television but "know thou" - the certainty of it - "know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

You see, young friends, you might say, "Well, my parents seem to worry too much." Do you know why they do? Because they have walked this path, that is why. They are wiser. Perhaps you say, "Well, if they have passed this way, they have no right to tell us what to do." Oh yes they have! They have every right, God's right to tell you what to do, and any parent that lets you go off and does not stop you in word or in other ways, is failing as a parent. I do not mind what you say about it because the word of God is clear: "Bring up a child in the way that he should go."

Young friends, if you saw a man at Beachy Head who was blind, walking towards the cliff edge and you took no notice, what sort of person would you be if you did nothing to warn that person and to call to them and to lead them away from the cliff edge? That is what your parents are doing. Go on, says the word, "let thy heart cheer thee," go and get into all these things that you want to do, all these friends, so called friends that you want. "Walk in the way of thine heart." You see, your parents have a concern. What for? That you should walk in the things of God, that you should fear Him, to take heed from His word and that you should not bring distress and trouble upon your own heart and life. But there is more than that. They long for the salvation of your soul, and that is the root cause. Dear young friends, this is in love. We can see it; going towards the tip of Beachy Head, we can see you going and you will not heed, and unless God comes in His mercy into your

soul, you will go over the top. Oh yes, you will.

So then, young friends, where are you tonight? Who are your friends? Are you just waiting for this day to end so that you can go into the world and mix with your friends again? You know, if the grace of God is in your heart, the Lord's Day will be a special day. You will long to come up to the house of God to meet with the people of God. You may come in, the vilest of them all, but there is that love to God and His truth and His day. Well now, your parents cannot give you that, they cannot give you grace, *but they can pray*.

Do you think that when your parents correct you and lead you away from some of the things of this life that they leave it there? You see, some of these young people say, "Mother is always moaning. I never seem to be able to do anything right." Well, she has got reason to say so. I have to be careful what I say, because I am opening my own heart. But do you think that your mother or your father leave it there? Not a bit of it. They take you to the throne of grace. You may not pray for yourself, but your parents do, and I will tell you some of the things they say: "Lord, I cannot do anything with them, but deal with them in mercy, bring them to see the error of their ways, bring them to Thy feet and give them grace, make them one of Thine." How many of us here tonight have wept real tears, heart tears on account of the things that we have put our parents through? Some of you, your parents have gone, you cannot bring them back, but if you could, what would you say? "My dear father or my mother, do, do forgive me."

Well young man, or woman, "Let thy heart cheer thee." What cheers you? The company of the world? Well, there are many here that enjoyed the company of the world in their young days. They lived it up, as we say. Where are they now? They have shame upon the conscience at the recollection of those former days.

Dear friends, our young friends, if you go into the world to find your own friends, it will bring you nothing but trouble. *Nothing but trouble*. You cannot mix oil and water, and how we need to remember this. The friendship of the world is enmity against God. Yes, of course we must always be civil and courteous to those round about us, but we do not have to live their life. May God prevent us and keep us. You may not have any friends out in the world, but you will have the answer of a good conscience before God.

What about the fashions of the world? Ah, you say, you are dragging everything up. Yes, I am, because you will be brought into judgment on this account. You will have to suffer for it if you are a child of God. You will have to mourn over these things if you are a child of God. But what about the fashions of the world? Just a word to our girls. I have had all the arguments put before me. Well, it started with *the jeans*, and I pointed to the word of God in these things, and I was told this: "Well, if you think that this is a man's garment, you better try them on." But you see, the heart was not right. You see, we can make all the excuses, but God sees the heart and He knows why you have these things. You may think that it's big, but if the fear of God is in your heart, you will not have anything like that, no you won't, for fear of being lost.

Another thing - the paint. That is all I can say. *The paint* that the girls put on their faces to make them look beautiful - they think. Ah, dear friends, it is the heart - the heart. Through grace, the hidden man of the heart will shine; that will be beautiful, yes it will. The grace of God to be seen is beautiful. The preacher says, "Walk in the ways of thine heart," go on and do it if it pleases you - "and in the sight of thine eyes." You want to be like the world, go on and do it. BUT. But, "for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

You see, Christ is the great Judge and will divide the people, the sheep from the goats. Those that will go into heaven (the sheep) and those that go into hell (the goats). If you are a child of God, you will know God's judgment against all sin in your heart and He will bring you to repentance on account of it. This is part of the work of grace in a sinner's heart, to be brought to remember their former sins. You will not get away with it, no friends, you will not. God has marked it.

O, as I stand before you, I am one with you. When I look back upon my past life and even now, O how much there is to bring down, down, down, into self abasement. Ah, dear friends, each one of us, as we go home tonight, may we remember the sins of our youth, and may God give us godly repentance on that account.

Solemn it is to contemplate the final judgment day when the righteous Judge - Christ Jesus - will remind the wicked of every sin that they have ever committed and then send them down into the pit without hope. O that the blessed Spirit may work in your young hearts tonight.

O that you may hear that voice, “save him from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom” - even Christ.

Well, there I shall leave it. I make no apology for bringing this text, it is the word of God as it has been revealed to me and as I have walked through it. May the word - and it is the application that we need - be applied to our hearts. Amen.

Mr. Simmonds, when received into the church by Mr. J. W. Walder, was given these words: “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” May the Lord bless this solemn sermon to both young and old.

CANON RICHARD HOBSON’S SUPPER INVITATION

For 33 years Canon Hobson served as Vicar of St. Nathaniel’s, Liverpool, which he described as ‘sixteen acres of sin.’ Here he tells of his desire not to compromise himself before his congregation.

Not long after I was ordained I accepted an invitation to a wedding breakfast at the house of one of the rich families in the congregation. Amidst all the display, there was nothing to offend the conscience.

The same evening I had a supper invitation. On reaching the house I found it filled with people, mostly members of the congregation, in evening dress. When dancing began I felt that was not the place for me, so making my way, as soon as I could, out of the drawing-room into the hall, I asked a servant for my hat and coat, and off I slipped.

On passing my vicar’s house, seeing a light in it, I rang. He opened the door, and I told him what I had done. He said, “Oh, is there a dance? Thank God you have escaped.”

My next thought was whether the host and hostess would have taken offence; but they had not, continuing to be my friends. I know there is a difference of opinion about this matter; but I felt I could not stand up before the congregation and deliver the Lord’s message if I had compromised myself by remaining at the dance.

CAMOUFLAGE

God has given to some creatures the amazing ability to blend into their surroundings for their own protection. This makes them very hard to see. A few animals can change colour in changing environments such as the chameleon and the cuttlefish. Most animals are dark on top and light underneath. With light coming from the sky this countershading makes them less visible. The tiger's stripes and the giraffe's patches make them almost impossible to detect in dappled light. The fully-grown caterpillar often selects the underside of a leaf to undergo its transformation into a chrysalis (metamorphosis). There it is almost undetectable.



Lizard on a tree - very difficult to see

Camouflage is, of course, very similar to disguise. We think of the wife of Jeroboam who went in disguise to the prophet Ahijah. Now, although Ahijah was unable to see through old age, he knew who this woman was - God had told him. "Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam;" he called, "why feignest thou thyself to be another?"

Although camouflage can hide creatures from their enemies, no one can ever hide from God's all-seeing eye. There will come a time when sinners will seek to hide themselves from the face of God, with a vain hope that even the mountains themselves might fall on them. We read that the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the mighty men will say "to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." That day will come to us all, but may this be our desire:

"In that dread moment, O to hide
Beneath his sheltering blood."

There is the only place of safety - the precious blood of Christ.



JOHN SHERWIN ENGALL

“I placed my soul and body in God’s keeping, and I am
going into battle
with His name on my lips, full of confidence
and trusting implicitly in Him.”

John Sherwin Engall, Second Lieutenant.

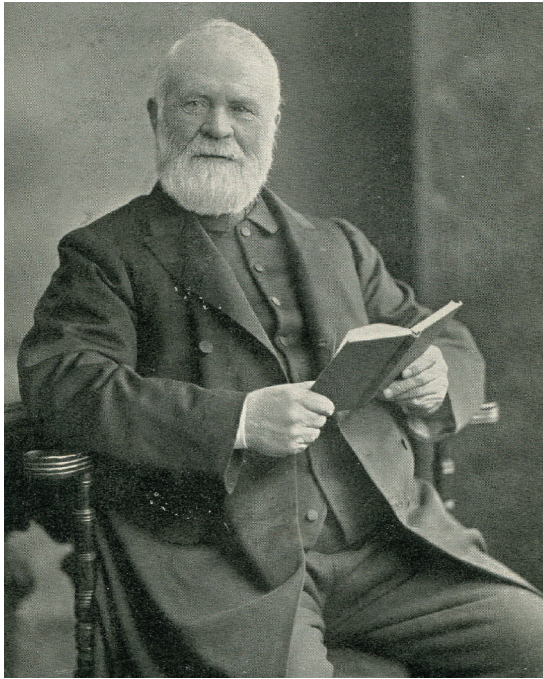
30 June 1916

Letter to his parents. He died in action the next day, age 20.

At 7.30am on Saturday, 1 July 1916 British troops clambered from their trenches to advance across no man’s land towards the German lines. The Battle of the Somme had begun. Within a few hours 19,240 men were killed, amongst them John Engall. He was in the London Regiment of the Queen’s Westminster Rifles. The number killed and wounded in that one day remains a record.

The quote above was in a letter written to his parents on the eve of the battle. He added: “I have a strong feeling I shall come through safely; but nevertheless, should it be God’s holy will to call me away, I am quite prepared to go. And you, dear Mother and Dad, will know that I died doing my duty to my God, my Country, and my King.” We can only imagine how his parents must have felt upon notification of the death of their fine 20-year-old boy.



WILLIAM SMITH

William Smith was Pastor of Rehoboth Chapel, Tunbridge Wells for twenty-six years. In the relatively affluent days in which we live, it is almost impossible to believe the hardships some of the Lord's servants endured in their younger days. William was brought up in extreme poverty, his mother died when he was just a boy, his father did not care much for his children, and his step mother was sent to prison for ill-treating his ten year old brother. He knew hunger, suffered unbelievably harsh and cruel working conditions, worked with worldly and often wicked companions, and never heard the gospel preached until he had been out at work for some years. When eventually he married, their first child lived only three months, and the second less than two months. He had a very ill wife, and at the time he walked eight miles a day to and from his work, and had only strength enough to crawl exhausted into bed each night. But the Lord used these experiences for his eternal good, and eventually the Lord called him to the work of the ministry. Here is his own account:

Birthplace and Parents

I was born into this world of sin and sorrow on November 22nd, 1827. My parents were poor people. My father was a sawyer, and worked on the estate of one Squire West for many years. I cannot remember the name of the hall where this gentleman lived, but it is situated about four miles from Stratford-on-Avon, where I was born, and which was also the birthplace of my mother. My father was a native of Evesham, in Worcestershire. My mother was a charwoman, and was very kind and tender to her children, who were seven in number, two sons and five daughters. One daughter died in infancy, and three others also, whose ages varied from three years old to ten. This left my parents with only three children: myself, who was the oldest in the family, one sister and my brother, who was the youngest.

I cannot say that either of my parents feared God, or either of their children except myself, and sometimes I feel even now as though I had no fear of God in my heart; but I can say that all my desire is before Him, and my groaning is not hid from Him. I do want to be right for eternity.

Earliest memories

I remember that when I was very young, I was sent to a Sunday school connected with a day school, which was carried on among the people who were called Independents; and from what I can remember of the character of the people, they were rightly named, for they talked as though they could do very well without the Lord's help.

I was only able to go to the day school but very little; but I went sufficient to learn to read and write a little, and I was enabled to improve myself by going to a night school after I was married.

A schoolfriend killed

When I was about eleven years old there was no railway near Stratford-on-Avon, but there were several stage coaches which ran by my mother's door daily. One used to pass along in the afternoon just as we came out of school. On one occasion myself and another boy ran behind one, and I left it when I got opposite home, but the other boy kept on behind it, and when it was running along another street he tried to get on to the step which was used by the passengers to get to the top of the coach. In so doing his foot slipped and went between the spokes of the wheel, and it took him round, his leg being fast in it, and his

brains were dashed out upon the ground. This dreadful incident was the means of preventing me from ever trying to put my foot upon the step whenever I ran behind a coach afterwards; but it did nothing more. This proves how the heart is hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, even in our youth.

A remarkable preservation

In the same year I had a very narrow escape from being killed through the following circumstance. One Saturday I went out to play with some boys, just below my own home, and we had not been at play long when suddenly there came a very restive horse round the corner of the street where we were, ridden by a groom, and he pranced about very much, which caused my companions to run across to the opposite side of the street. There were houses on that side, but where we were at play there was only a wall which enclosed a gentleman's garden. The groom pulled the horse up to keep him from running over the children, and this caused him to rear up upon his hind feet, until he overbalanced himself and fell backwards upon me. The people ran and held the horse down while they got the groom up; he was not hurt very much, but me they picked up for dead.

They carried me home quite unconscious, and I lay so until the following day. I don't remember what became of the groom nor who he was. I remember, when I became conscious, seeing my father sitting upon my bed watching me, and I felt my head was hurt, and my nose was almost flat. The doctor examined me, and to their great astonishment there were no bones broken ; but my body was very much bruised. My dear mother dressed my wounds and nursed me so well, that in a few weeks I was so far recovered as to be permitted to walk into the town; and that on a Friday, which was market day.

A person went with me to take care of me. We went to the market hall. Here there was a large space of ground where five streets met, and where a great many carriers' carts stood which came out of the country to the market; and sometimes there was crockery laid about the ground for sale, so that there was generally a great deal of business done there.

A runaway horse

By some means I got away from my attendant, and was trying to make my way to the other side of the market, when a runaway horse came dashing along and ran over me. I was picked up by someone and

carried into a draper's shop. I was very badly bruised, but there were no bones broken. I cannot say what became of my attendant, nor who took me home, nor how long I was laid aside; but with careful nursing and the Lord's blessing, I soon recovered so that I could get out again.

Here again I see the Lord's watchful care exercised towards me, in sparing my life and fulfilling His own covenant promise where He has said, "I will be with thee in all places whithersoever thou goest," and I cannot help shedding a tear of gratitude unto the Father of all mercies for His goodness manifested towards me. We read that not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice, and I believe it.

His father taken ill

When I was about twelve years of age, my father was taken ill with a fever and sometimes he was delirious. My mother used to send me upstairs to watch him, and if he tried to get out of bed I had to call her. One day, I was watching as usual, and when he went to sleep I walked slowly to the dressing-table on which there stood a bottle full of something black, which I thought was port wine. I took out the cork and had about two or three swallows, and behold it was my father's fever medicine.

I began to feel ill, and my mother came up to see what was the matter, and when I told her what I had done she was afraid it would poison me. She wrapped me up in a large shawl, and the doctor came and gave me something which soon relieved me, so that after a few days I recovered from that affliction. I cannot remember that either of these solemn events caused me to think either about my never-dying soul or of a never-ending eternity; for I went on like others, seeking after nothing but the world's so-called pleasures.

A situation opens

At length I was engaged by a doctor, who knew my mother, to go as errand boy, to carry out medicine for him to patients living in various parts of the town. This doctor had a brother who was a minister in the Established Church at Stratford-on-Avon, and when I had nothing to do at the doctor's I went to the minister's to do errands and weed the garden.

It was here that I learned to read writing, in the following way: he used to have parties, and I had to distribute the notes of invitation at the addresses written on them. When he had got them all ready, he used to

call me into his room and show me where they were to be delivered; then I had to read them over to him, and if I could not remember he would tell me the names of the persons and also the names of the streets; so by these means I learned to read.

The minister's servant!

After a time, I was wholly employed there and slept in the house. This increased my duties, for on those Sundays he was at home to preach, I had to carry his gown to church, and being proud of my situation as a minister's servant, I fulfilled my office with as much sanctity as ever a hypocrite could put on. I now began to learn the Church service and soon learnt it by heart; so that if I was a little behind when my master was not at home, I could fall in with the service at any part of it without my prayer-book.

This knowledge puffed me up with pride and self-conceit, and caused me to act, at times, very deceitfully. When I had to carry my master's gown to church, I used to contrive to go down the church just after the mayor and town council had taken their seats, because I had to pass by where they sat. When I returned from the vestry I tried to get a prominent seat in the church where they and my master could see me, that they all might think how good I was, and I believe they did think I was a good boy, for my master used to call me into his room after the afternoon service to ask me where his text was, and I could always tell him. This satisfied both him and myself; though, at the same time, when anything offended me, I could swear or even tell lies when I thought I was likely to get into trouble, or be discharged from his service; as the following circumstance will show.

Deceives the master

One Sunday in the winter, my master was from home, and it was very frosty weather, so severe that it froze the river Avon, and the ice was so thick that hundreds of townspeople went to slide and skate upon it on the Sunday afternoon; and I was among the company instead of going to church. While I was sliding, the thought, struck me, What shall you do if your master asks you tomorrow where the text was on Sunday? I then went and met the people as they were coming out of church; and at length I saw an old man that I knew always sat near the pulpit, and I went up to him and said, "Will you please tell me where the text was this afternoon, for I really could not hear what the minister said." He

told me, and I went off quite pleased to think my master would not know that I had not been at church. On Monday he asked me as usual where the text was, and I at once told him, and through my craft got safe through that difficulty.

More deceit

On another occasion I started to go to church, but instead of going there I joined a companion of mine in a game at football; we had not been at play long, when a boy on the opposite side to me gave the ball a hard kick, and I being in front of him, the ball rose and gave me a severe blow on the eye. It was soon swollen up, and I went home to my mother, which was not far from where we were at play.

I told her what I had been doing, which caused the blow I had received; she bathed it and got the swelling down, then it turned black. Now I felt myself in a great strait. I began to think and plan first one thing and then another, so that my master should not know how I came with such a black eye. With the help of the devil moving in my own wicked and deceitful heart, I resolved to pursue the following course.

I stayed at my mother's all Sunday night, and went to my master's on Monday morning; when I saw him he asked me what was the matter with my eye; I told him that as I was going to church on Sunday afternoon, there were some boys playing football down the road, a short distance from my mother's, and as I was passing by, one of them gave the ball a hard kick and it rose and caught me on the eye. He seemed excited and asked me who they were, saying, that if he knew, he would prosecute them. I began to fear I should be found out, so I said I did not know; I told him I had stayed at my mother's all night. Then I was afraid he would go to see her about it, so the first opportunity I had I ran down home and told her what I said to my master and what he had said to me; then I strictly charged her to tell him the same that I had told him, if he came to enquire anything about the matter.

Whether he ever went or not I do not know, for I never heard anything more about it. My eye soon got well, and I was very pleased that I got so cleverly out of my trouble. Oh the deception of the human heart, how dreadful! What a long-suffering God is the God of Israel; how He bears with the provocations of His people even in the days of their ungeneracy!

Two boys drowned under the ice

One afternoon I had nothing to do, so I went down home, and my mother said she wanted me to go on an errand for her about four o'clock. I promised to go, but told her I was going to play on the ice for an hour before she wanted me; so I went and played with some boys at what we called bandy or hockey. All went on very well while I was with them, but after I had left the ice broke, and three of them went under the ice, and two of them were drowned before they could get help. When I heard of this sad calamity, I kept off the ice for a long time.

His mother taken away by death

In a little while after this my mother was taken ill. I cannot remember what her complaint was, but I was not allowed to go to see her. The cook used to go to see her on certain days, and when she returned would tell me how she was. One day when she returned I saw her weeping, and it was at once suggested to my mind, your mother is dead. In about an hour she said to me, "You may go down home, but do not be afraid if you find your mother is dead." I started at once, but it was to find when I got home that she had departed this life and left my father and four children to mourn our loss. In about three days she was buried, and I with my father followed her to the grave. I remember I wept bitterly, saying to myself as I walked behind the coffin, "What will become of me now? I have lost my best friend on earth," for my father was one of those men who did not care much about their children. If anyone abused us it was of no use going to him with our complaints - he would not hear, or if he did he would say, "You must defend yourself." This caused me to learn to fight in order that I might be able to defend myself when I was attacked by others.

Soon after the death of my mother, my father married one of our neighbours, a widow, and she proved to be a cruel wretch. Now our troubles began. I had left my master through a sad affliction which had deprived me of the use of one side, but through mercy I got better again, but not quite well. Just about this time my master left Stratford-on-Avon and went to reside at a country place some miles away, so I refused to go to live with him there, as I liked the town best.

Hard labour becomes his lot

After I got well I went to work at a brickyard, to carry clay for a brickmaker. He was a cruel master that I worked for. I had to carry the

clay out of a very deep pit, up planks to the top where the bricks were made. I had to work twelve hours a day in the hot sun. I did this for two or three months; then he took me to carry the bricks away from the bench as he made them. For this work I received four shillings and sixpence per week, which in those days was very good wages, as plough boys only got three shillings a week. I, in general, had to carry away two thousand bricks a day when it was fine weather.

I always had to go without shoes and stockings except on Sundays; this made the bottom of my feet very hard, so that I could run over loose stones without feeling hurt. On one occasion I went home to one of my meals, my step-mother had just cleaned the house and it was clean; so I lifted my feet to wipe the dust off the bottom with my hand, when I felt a nob on one of them. I asked my father to see what it was; he took a knife and cut the hard skin through, and behold, it was a small stone which had buried itself in the first hard skin and another skin had grown over it. I felt no pain or inconvenience after it was taken out; indeed, I got so used to going without shoes and stockings that they were a plague to me when I was ordered to wear them. I remember being sent about four miles on an errand when I was ordered to wear my shoes. I put them on and walked in them just through the town, then I took them off, tied them together, put them across my shoulders and walked to the place and did my errand. Then walked back to the entrance of the town very comfortably, and in a great deal less time than if I had worn them; then I put them on again. I was compelled to wear boots every winter.

But to return to what I said about my master being a cruel man. I remember one hot day, after running to and fro with the bricks I became thirsty, and I asked him to let me go to the pump and have some water; but he would not, and I became very distressed, so at length I dipped my head into the trough where I had to dip my brick moulds, which was half full of thick clay and water, and drank like a fish until my thirst was assuaged. He stood and looked at me, but I cannot remember that he spoke a word to me. I then went on with my work and never felt the least harm by what I drank. Hunger is a sharp thorn, but I think thirst is the sharpest.

A further preservation

While I worked for this man I remember one day going back from dinner, and there happened to be no one on the works. An empty

barrow stood at the bottom of the planks in which the men that were employed in the clay pit used to wheel clay to the top, where I and my master worked, which as far as I can remember was about thirty feet high. I thought I would try and see if I could not wheel this empty barrow to the top. I started, and when I got a few feet from the top I fell, the barrow came after me, and fell just beside me where I lay. Through mercy I was not hurt much, but if the barrow had fallen upon me I must have been killed. Here I see the kind hand of my covenant God stretched out to save me from a deserved hell.

In this clay pit there used to be a pond of water which the men used to temper the clay with. It was about half a yard deep. One day I and another boy fell out, and instead of fighting we walked into this pond with a shovel, and each began to throw water at the other. As I was using my shovel quickly, I caught the side of my great toe, and cut a deep gash in it. This at once put an end to our water throwing, and I got the worst of it. My toe was very bad for some time, but I had to keep at work, and through the Lord's blessing the toe got well again.

In both these circumstances I am now led to see the Lord's preserving mercy exercised over me, even at those times. I cannot remember how long I worked at the brickyard, but as I had to lose a great deal of time in the winter, I left that kind of employment and went into farmer's work.

Work on the farm

I was engaged as a plough boy at sixpence a day. I had to walk three miles to work, and then walk to and fro in the field with the horses at plough seven hours; then clean the stable out where four horses lay, and carry all the litter in for them to lay down upon, and then walk three miles home again. What would some boys think if they had to do the like now? I hope they are grateful that they live in better times. Sometimes I was employed to keep the birds off the land where the wheat had been sown.

Once, when the snow was on the ground, I was sent into the field to cut turnips for the sheep; it was very cold and the snow was falling fast. Towards three o'clock in the afternoon I got so benumbed with the cold, that I fainted and fell on the ground among the snow. The men and women that were there at the same work picked me up, and when I recovered consciousness they sent me home, at which my step-mother

was not pleased. I do not remember how long I remained with that employer, but eventually I left and got a place of work nearer home, at the same rate of wages, sixpence a day; but I was to have a shilling a day for one month, in the harvest time, which my master gave me as long as I remained with him.

After I had been at this place a short time, I was taken one day with a violent internal pain and I was very sick. After a time I became very prostrate, and it was of no use their taking me home, as my father and step-mother had gone to Evesham to see my father's relations. So the workmen put me up into the hayloft, and there I lay among the hay until night, without a bit or drop of anything. When it was time to go home, they came and got me down, and with their help I managed to get to the foreman's house. He kindly gave me some elderberry wine, and that, accompanied with the Lord's blessing, quite cured me so that I had a comfortable night's rest, and was able to go to work the next morning.

A biting horse

After this, I one day went to cart away some refuse which had been cleared out of a ditch by the road-side. One of the horses we were using to draw it away was apt to bite; the men because of this set me to back him up to the place where they were going to fill the cart. I took all the precaution I could, but one time as soon as I loosed him he ran at me and bit the flesh up on the top of my shoulder. One of the men pressed the flesh down level, and then put some oils on it, which almost drove me mad; but I had to do the best I could, there was no other remedy for it.

Some time after this we had been at work with this same horse, and when we had done our day's work we went home and put the horses into the stable. I went to unharness this one, when he turned round suddenly and bit me right in my left side. This was a very bad hurt, and when the foreman heard of it he told the men they should see to that horse themselves, for it was not safe for me to go near him; so I had only to drive him afterwards.

Hunger - and chilblains

But I had many things to endure while I was at this place, although through the Lord's blessing my shoulder and side soon got well. About this time we were in great straits in a way of providence. One winter, I had to go to work with only dry bread, or hard dumpling made of flour

and water with a bit of bacon fat in it. As my jacket and shirt sleeves were too short to cover my wrists, I had chilblains come upon them, and my feet were almost as bad for the want of good shoes and stockings. I have had to fill up a cart with snow, from before my master's house, for hours together, when it has gone through my shoes and quite soaked my stockings.

TO BE CONTINUED

SOWING TO THE FLESH - OR TO THE SPIRIT?

J. W. Tobitt

If you sow a bad crop, you will have a bad harvest.

Do not misunderstand me; your harvest will correspond with your sowing. "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." Now, I want to prove you. Do you feel, my friend, you are a sinner? Do you realise it? Not merely, do you say so in so many words, but is it a matter of experience and a cause of sorrow?

Yet that is not enough. To feel you are a sinner will not take you to heaven - something more is necessary. Is there in addition to this feeling of sinnership a *hatred* to sin? Do you want pardon, and sanctification as much as pardon? Would you be holy? Do you long to know Christ? Do you desire something more than merely to be saved from Hell? Do you pray to be conformed to the image of Christ? Do you seek to know Him, Whom to know is life eternal? Do you wish the old man mortified, and every grace of the Holy Spirit in your heart, life, and conversation? If these inward longings and aspirations are in you, this is sowing to the Spirit, and "he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Amen.

DR. DAVIES

When Dr. David Davies, minister in Lincoln, was informed of the death of Dr. Edward Williams of Rotherham, he burst into tears, and said, "I am almost ashamed to be alive, when so many great and good men die."

COAL MINING IN ENGLAND - THE END OF AN ERA

Kellingley Colliery, Yorkshire, the country's last remaining deep pit colliery, has closed. The colliery's 450 miners, who have lost their livelihood, shed tears and hugged one another as the final shift came to an end at the close of 2015. A century ago Britain had more than one million miners, but the once-mighty industry has been killed off by cheaper imported coal from China, Colombia and other foreign countries. The general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers said: "I am saddened and devastated."

There are, of course, many references to coal in the Bible, generally referred to in the plural, coals. Perhaps we think of Peter at the time of his denial of the Lord Jesus: "And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself." Then there is that wicked King Jehoiakim who cut God's word with a penknife and threw it onto the fire in the hearth.

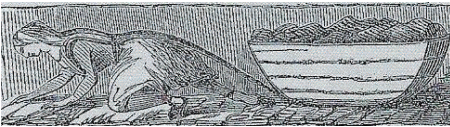
Coal has always been a puzzle to the evolutionists who believe that the material in coal beds accumulated over millions of years in swamp-like environments. However, they are forced to admit that no process of coal formation is going on today in spite of poor attempts to prove otherwise by means of the so-called 'peat-bog theory.' As John Whitcombe explains in *The Genesis Flood*: "There is no actual evidence that peat is being transformed into coal anywhere in the world. No locality is known where a peat bed grades into a typical coal bed. All known coal beds, therefore, seem to have been formed in the past and are not continuing to be formed in the present."

Most creationists believe that the coal beds were laid down at the time of Noah's flood, when vast quantities of vegetation were buried in all parts of the world, including Antarctica. In *The World that Perished* John Whitcombe writes: "Enormous masses of vegetation that existed all over the world just before the Flood were swept into huge piles here and there, repeatedly covered with layers of mud, and carbonized through heat caused by enormous thrust and weight pressures."

The universal flood explains far better than any other concept many of the features of the earth's crust, including coal. The modern geologist does not want to accept that such a flood could have been

caused only by supernatural intervention - there is no place in his mind for such an intervention by the God of heaven and earth.

The provision of coal has been one of God's great blessings to mankind, providing him with a source of fuel and heat. In more recent times it made possible the great industrial revolution from the late 18th century onwards, with all its benefits to society. But the extraction of coal from under the ground, although providing employment for millions, has come at great toil and loss of life. Huge quantities of coal were required to fuel the furnaces of Europe, and the only way to obtain it was to dig it out by hand. Whole families worked together: men toiled at the coalface, while women and children moved the coal they had cut.



A young girl crawls on all fours as she drags a heavy corf of coal along a low passage 200 yards long

Children were essential to the process - in some mines, the passages leading to the coalface were as low as 18 inches (46 cm), forcing even a five-year-old child to bend double.

The working day began between five and six o'clock in the morning. The workers descended the shaft to the coalface in the wagon (known as a corf) itself - hooked on to a rope and lowered by turning a windlass or wheel and cog gin. Sometimes they descended by simply clinging to the winding rope. Many accidents occurred: corfs collided, workers lost their grip and fell, or coal dropped down the shaft onto them.

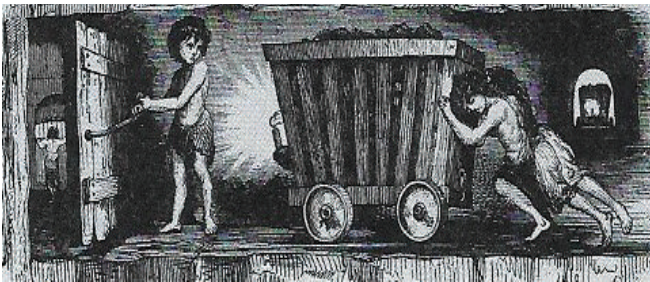
At the coalface, the miner squeezed his shoulders into the narrow seam then, lying on his side, prised the coal from the base of the seam with a stout pick, and shovelled it into a riddle (sieve). In the gloomy passage behind him, a worker called a hurrier - usually a woman or a girl - shook the riddle and loaded the coal into a corf, a large, wooden, tub-shaped sledge. She dragged the full corf away using a harness which ran between her legs from a leather belt around her waist. The tunnel to the shaft was steep and narrow and water poured in from the roof, chilling the unfortunate woman to the bone. She then returned to the face with the empty corf.

One of the biggest problems of mining for coal was firedamp - methane gas. This gas, highly explosive when mixed with air, forced

miners to work in virtual darkness. To keep gas levels under control, a fireman, wrapped in wet sacking to protect him from getting burned, set light to pockets of the gas with a candle on the end of a long pole. One way to improve the airflow was to light a furnace at the bottom of one shaft to draw clean air down the other.

Drama in the dark

To prevent pockets of gas forming, and to ensure a degree of ventilation throughout the mine, engineers devised a system which relied on child labour. Children aged five or six years - known as



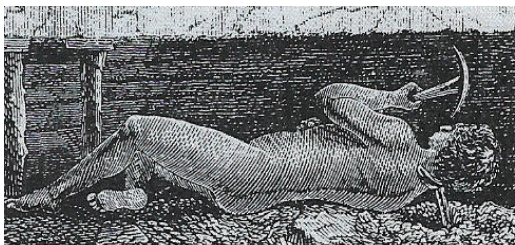
A trapper boy opens an airtight door to let the coal through.

trappers - opened airtight doors to let the workers and coal tubs pass through, and made sure they were shut at all other times.

These doors had to be opened and shut to ensure a

steady flow of air. A door left open in the wrong place could increase the risk of an explosion. It was a solitary ten-hour working day spent crouched in the darkness. A seven-year-old boy trapper said: "I stand and open and shut the door; I'm generally in the dark, and sit me down against the door . . . I never see daylight now, except on Sundays."

All those underground worked equally long hours, stopping only for a few minutes at midday to eat a piece of bread or oatcake and cheese. In Britain, conditions did not improve until the mid 19th century when an investigation into working conditions led to laws in 1842 which banned



Naked labour - stripped to the skin, a boy, his head supported by a wooden rest, coaxes coal from the coalface.

women and girls, and boys under ten from working underground.

**An account of the dangerous calling of the coal miner -
The Barnsley Colliery Explosion 1866 (written not long after)**

It is a curious and painful thing to think of the tens of thousands of men who start out for their daily toil with the certain knowledge that the trade they are following is dangerous or injurious, and will sooner or later, in all probability, cause them to die a violent death. No-one can visit the mining districts, for instance, or dwell in the Black Country, without becoming aware that in every house the same fear is to be found - the fear that "something may happen." Here are hundreds of brave-hearted men who go forth to their poorly-paid toil with the terrible secret locked up in their breasts that dangers are brewing in the pit or mine where they work; but they hide it lest it should cast a deepening shadow of gloom over the household, and heroically they face the danger and as heroically escape, or perish.

These "every-day heroes" are little thought about, they struggle on and pass away, and others take their place, and only now and again when some great catastrophe happens does the world think of its indebtedness to heroes of dangerous toil.

Every year hundreds and sometimes thousands of lives are lost in coal mines, not by explosions only, although these destroy a terrible number, but by the falling in of coal, crushing the men below, or accidents in shafts, as the sudden running down of a cage, and so on. Of these accidents the world at large hears but very little, a life here and a life there are not worth recording, but it is a dreadful thing to remember that almost as many unrecorded deaths occur annually as those which thrill the heart of the nation as the news spreads of many lives sacrificed in a "terrible explosion."

One of the most appalling of the many disasters caused by explosion in coal mines occurred towards the end of 1866. On the 13th of December a thrill of horror ran through the whole country when the news spread far and wide that at the Oaks Colliery, near Barnsley, West Riding of Yorkshire, an explosion had occurred on the previous day, and that 340 men and boys working the day shift were killed. It was the same sad story that had been so often told before and, it is to be feared, will often be told again - a large body of men, in a moment of time, *hurled into eternity* through the explosion of fire-damp.

It happened about one o'clock in the day, when the colliers had been in the pit above seven hours, and had only some three-quarters of an hour more to remain before the day's work would be done. Terrible was the excitement in the neighbourhood, frantic the rush towards the pit's mouth, and heart-rending the cry of mothers and wives and children weeping for the dead. The sight of the distress and the knowledge that so many men were in the pit nerved brave men to heroic deeds that day. Scarcely an hour elapsed before a party of three went down into the pit to explore, and awful was the sight that met their gaze. The dead, victims of the fire-damp, lay scattered about in all directions, frightfully charred and shattered; others, half sitting up, or with their heads resting on their arms, after one deep draught of the "after-damp," had fallen into the long sleep that knows no waking.



The fire-damp (methane) explosion

Later in the day, when many skillful engineers from the neighbourhood had assembled, volunteers to the number of seventy or eighty were found, who, in prosecuting their search for the killed and wounded, went in the face of the choke-damp, and did not relax their labours until they had brought out about eighty of the sufferers, of whom only nineteen were alive.

When, towards midnight, it became apparent that there could not be any more men alive to be rescued, the pit was left in charge of Parkin Jeffcock, a young mining engineer of great promise. Only four or five years previously, when the terrible inundation occurred at Clay Cross Colliery, he had neither rested nor slept for three long days and nights, while the colliers with superhuman effort dug through a coal wall 155 yards thick.

Jeffcock directed his efforts to extinguishing any remaining fires and to restoring the circulation of fresh air, so that the recovery of the bodies might be proceeded with on the following day. He spent all that night in making explorations through the mine, in the course of which he found the path obstructed, to the height of three or four feet, by debris brought down by the explosion, and came, now upon a group of dead men lying together as though asleep, and now upon a knot of young boys, one of whom lay beside the horse he used to drive.

About eight in the morning, undaunted by the fatigues and horrors of his long night of toil, Jeffcock, with a band of brave explorers, went down again into the mine. He had not been there long when a “suck,” or reversal of the current of air, caused great anxiousness among those who were anxiously watching above. About nine o’clock there was heard a loud, awful blast of an explosion, and, before ten, another, not less terrible. Jeffcock and his brave band of explorers had perished in their noble effort to save life.

From a little memoir by his brother, there is hope that Jeffcock was prepared for the sudden change of time for eternity. He was a zealous Christian worker, and took great delight in his Bible class for young men, to whom he gave the subjects for study some time in advance. For the Sunday after his death these words had been selected, “He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.”

An incident occurred on the day following the two explosions,

which crowned a long series of heroic deeds. About nine o'clock, when a few persons were standing at the pit mouth, they were startled by hearing the signal bell rung by someone at the bottom of the shaft. What could be done? The head-gear of the pit was all destroyed, even if any one, after the terrible fate of the explorers on the previous day, had been brave enough to descend.

Listening, they heard the sound of a human voice below. A bottle of brandy was lowered, and the solitary survivor took it off the wire. There were those standing round who could not bear to think of such suffering, and such death as might happen, without an attempt at rescue; and two young men came forward, volunteering to make the perilous descent by means of an extemporised contrivance. "Into the jaws of death, into the mouth of hell," went these two brave fellows, passing through great dangers, and soaked with streams of overflowing water. In a quarter of an hour they reached the bottom, and there they found the man, one of the brave volunteers of the previous day, sitting faint and almost senseless on a heap of rubbish. He could tell them nothing.

They sought to push into the mine, but a pile of coal-wagons on fire, raging like a furnace, barred their progress. They shouted aloud the names of others who had gone down the mine the day before, but there was no voice or sign.

Reluctantly they prepared to return, bearing with them the rescued man; and perilous was the ascent. One of the men was thrown out of the bucket into a pool twenty-seven feet deep, but escaped as by a miracle, for their voices could not be heard by those who were drawing them up, owing to the noise of falling water; but at last there went up the shout of triumph, as they stood on solid ground with the rescued man between them, the only survivor of the 370 victims of the catastrophe.

The Barnsley Colliery explosion will always be memorable as one of the most terrible in the extent of its calamity, and for the gallant efforts made to discover and raise the bodies.

The accident remained the worst in British history until the Senghenydd Colliery Disaster in South Wales in 1913, which claimed 439 lives. Only 72 bodies were ever recovered.

ARE WE IN LIVING IN A GOLDEN AGE? (1)

By Andrew Rayner

Mankind has always sought to improve his standard of living. This includes the environment in which we live, our health, our life expectancy and our wealth. To a point, there has been a great measure of success. This has been seen very clearly by those born in this country at the end of the Second World War as the improvements since that time have been especially significant. An example is life expectancy which has increased by around 20 years in this period. This contrasts vividly with the period immediately preceding which included the two World Wars.

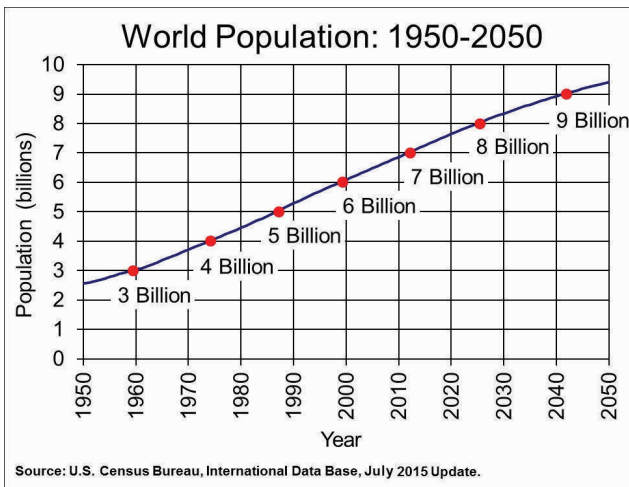
It may be that this present time will one day be seen as a kind of *Golden Age* in this respect. However, we believe that God has ensured a balance in His creation. As man develops improvements, overcomes diseases, increases agricultural output and improves transportation, new problems and adverse effects soon arise. Some examples are:

- antibiotics - superbugs;
- advances in medical techniques - genetic weaknesses being built into the population;
- improved living standards, e.g. with regard to heating and cooling - pollution, climate change;
- improved agriculture - soil erosion and damage;
- cheaper, more readily available food - obesity and the problems that flow from it;
- increased life expectancy - an increased elderly, retired and disabled population for the country to support;
- improved transportation - increased spread of disease around the world;
- improved communications - cyber warfare, viruses, cyber bullying.

In a recent survey, many middle aged parents thought that their children would not benefit from significant improvements in living standards through their lives as they themselves had so clearly enjoyed in their own lifetimes. Indeed it seems difficult to see how the rate of progress can continue. War, biological disasters, nuclear accidents and many more setbacks are possible. Of course, we know that all this is

subject to God's ruling and His will and He has made it abundantly clear that time itself has a fixed span and nobody can say how much further the current scene will be permitted to develop.

But the point is: there is a balance. If this is a *Golden Age*, its end is perhaps threatened more than anything else by the rapidly increasing world population which, even with further unknown advances in technology, is thought to be unsustainable. The UN says, 'The current world population of 7.2 billion is projected to increase by one billion over the next 12 years and reach 9.6 billion by 2050.' There are wildly varying projections for the years beyond 2050. The following is from the US. Census Bureau:



Even if we develop new technologies and techniques which enable the world to grow sufficient food, the increased population will inevitably cause greater potential for conflict and more competition for resources, not least for water. It seems that we are already seeing an effect on the climate with more violent and severe weather events. Scientists say that biological disasters in the form of new strains of plants, insect plagues and infestation and epidemic diseases are more and more likely as we break down the biodiversity of our environment.

Of course, all this sounds depressing but God's balance works both ways. He has promised in Genesis 8. 22: "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and

day and night shall not cease.” God has promised that harvests will not be totally obliterated. His balance protects us as well as ensuring that progress will not go unchecked. Two further texts:

“Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further” (Job 38. 11).

“He bindeth the floods from overflowing” (Job 28. 11).

Because of sin, because of Adam’s fall, God has promised “thorns also.” If not ‘thorns’ it will be ‘thistles.’ If not one thing, it will be another. We will always have to labour in sorrow. “Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee” (Gen 3. 17-18).

We learn that we are not to seek perfection in this life, in this world, but rather in that hereafter. “Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter” (Rev 4. 1).

DR. LIVINGSTONE’S BOOKS

Missionary David Livingstone died in Zambia in 1873. He is buried in Westminster Abbey, London.

When the famous Dr. David Livingstone started his trek across Africa he carried with him 73 books weighing 90kg (198 lbs). After his party had travelled some distance, Dr. Livingstone was obliged to leave behind some of the books because they were too heavy to carry.

As he continued his journey, he was obliged to dispose of yet more books. In the end he had but one book left, his Bible. This, the living Word of God, he could not do without. It was, he said, his most treasured possession.

Which books would you leave behind, and which would you take? A man is known, says the proverb, by the company he keeps. Is the Bible your companion? Or would it be some other book you chose to take?

NATIONAL SERVICE DAYS (3)

One of our esteemed ministers has sent the following account of some of his experiences whilst on National Service.

Reading in the latest issue of Perception the account concerning National Service I came to the name Hednesford. Oh what memories! R.A.F. Hednesford. Oh what shame!

January 1953. How am I going to read my Bible in a barrack room with about twenty men in it? I know. *I will take my Bible into the toilet block and read it there.* Which I did for several days until I saw the man with the next bed to myself sitting on his bed openly reading his Bible. I still feel the shame of it whenever it comes into my thoughts as it did so forcibly as I read the article and the name Hednesford. I could never hide my Bible reading after such a reproof in my conscience. But, blessed be God, I can recount better things. The last sermon I heard before going abroad for eighteen months was in the little chapel in Cherry Lane, Lymm, Cheshire. The minister was Mr. Rowell and the text, “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” I have never forgotten that time.

In 1954, in a barrack room in Germany, one Sunday evening all the other men in the room had gone out to seek the pleasures of this world. A loving caring relative posted me a sermon most weeks and that evening I read the sermon and my Bible. I cannot remember the text but the Lord so blessed that sermon to my soul that I was filled with the love of Christ and the peace of God which passeth understanding. I said to the Lord, “They can have the world. I have got my God.” There in that barrack room, far from home and the house of God, the exercise of following the Lord in baptism came upon me.

Two years National Service. A wasted two years, viewing it with nature’s reasoning. But no. All in the gracious purposes of God for spiritual blessing and teaching.

A FEW CURRENT MATTERS

Family breakdown

Sir Paul Coleridge, former High Court judge and founder and chairman of the Marriage Foundation, wrote recently: “It is a shocking fact that half of all children in Britain are no longer living with both parents by the time they are 16.” He went on to say: “The root cause of nearly all our social ills is family breakdown.” The Marriage Foundation promotes long-lasting, stable relationships within the traditional framework of marriage, believing that is where stability is to be found.

Britain among the least religious in the world

In the UK only 30 per cent of the population call themselves religious, with 13 per cent who are ‘convinced atheists.’ In a survey of 65 countries, the UK came 59th. In contrast, 94 per cent of people in Thailand call themselves religious. Last of all is China, where only 6% regard themselves as religious, and 61 per cent claim they are atheists.

Gay marriages annulled in Italy

Hundreds of gay “marriages” have been annulled in Italy. Although same-sex marriage is illegal in Italy, some mayors have been registering marriages that have been conducted abroad. Italy’s highest appeal court has ruled that their actions in defiance of the law cannot be allowed to stand. The decision has angered gay rights groups. We believe the Bible teaching is very clear: that a man shall “leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his *wife*” Genesis 2. 24.

A hymn book, please, for Christmas

A little girl’s Christmas letters asking for crayons, a dolly case and a hymn book have been discovered up a chimney nearly 80 years later. Christine Churchill, 82, was just five when she penned her requests for these simple presents. The charming letters were found in what is now a bathroom at the Grade II-listed Garthmyl Hall, in Powys, Mid Wales, as new owners renovated the building. Mrs. Churchill said: “I was just flabbergasted to see the letters. I remember we were told to put them up the chimney in the playroom. We had very simple wants. I get absolutely aghast with how materialistic we have become, especially at

Christmas. We want more, more, more. Children now don't appreciate things because they have more than they can cope with." She added: "I wonder how many children today ask for a hymnbook."

Jesus - not a real Person

The Lord Jesus Christ said, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8. 24). This solemn statement brings into focus a study commissioned by the Church of England and the Evangelical Alliance which has found that 40 per cent of British adults did not think that Jesus was a 'real person who actually lived,' whilst 22 per cent stated that Jesus was a 'mythical or fictional character.' A third of those questioned said they did not know anyone who was a practising Christian.

Sunday trading

Plans published by the Government to relax the Sunday trading rules have been put on hold. In a bid to boost town centre shops, local councils were to be given powers to extend opening hours on a Sunday. However, a cross-party group of MPs opposed the move, causing the Government to cancel the proposed vote in the House of Commons in November 2015. Officials estimated that relaxing the rules across England and Northern Ireland could generate £1.4billion for the economy. Under current laws small shops with a floor area of less than 3,000 square feet can open all day, but larger stores can open for just six hours on a Sunday. The Church of England is being urged to relax its opposition to plans to extend opening hours, having previously claimed it would undermine family life and further hit dwindling church attendances. In a recent poll, more than two-thirds of people do not want to see the law changed. Commenting on the proposed change, John Bowers QC said: "More Christians will be forced by their employers to choose between their faith and their job - not just retail workers, but those in security, cleaning, distribution and transport."

The Entertainer toy shop chain.

A reader has drawn our attention to The Entertainer, which has more than 100 stores in the UK. Gary Grant, the founder, runs his business on Christian principles. As a result, the shops never open on Sunday, do

not stock Halloween goods or some of the most popular toy ranges including Harry Potter related merchandise. The chain tithes 10% of its profits to charity. When commenting on the firm's continuing success, Mr. Grant notes that the Bible states: "Them that honour me, I will honour." We felt our readers would like to know of this firm and encourage them by making use of the toy shops when possible.

Oldest known animal

The world's oldest living land animal is thought to be a 183-year-old tortoise named Jonathan, born in 1832. Although now almost completely blind, he remains in good health and experts are hopeful he may reach his double century. The tortoise lives on St Helena, the South Atlantic island where Napoleon died.

Britain a Christian country

The Education Secretary delivered new guidelines in December 2015 that pupils are to be taught that Britain is a Christian country. The guidelines come as a result of a challenge in the High Court by the British Humanist Society. Mrs Nicky Morgan said she is "determined to protect schools' freedom to set their own religious studies curriculum, in line with the wishes of parents and the local community." Schools will not have to include atheism in GCSE religious studies lessons.

Calls for Easter to fall on the same Sunday every year

The Church of England will be joining talks already under way between Pope Francis and Coptic church leaders to try to fix a date for Easter. At present Easter Sunday can fall any time between March 22 and April 25. This year it falls on March 27. If fixed, the most likely day would be the second or third Sunday of April. Teaching unions have welcomed the move as offering certainty for schools.

Has the city of Sodom been found?

After years of excavations archeologists believe they may have found the remains of the biblical city of Sodom. The massive site, Tall el-Hammam, dates back possibly to 3500 BC. It is situated some eight miles north-east of the Dead Sea. The excavations reveal thick walls, ramparts, gates and watchtowers. Although many archeologists believe

the evidence for Tall el-Hammam as Sodom is overwhelming, others are not so convinced. However, all agree this was certainly one of the “cities of the plain” (Genesis 13. 12). “And Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent towards Sodom.”



Tall el-Hammam, Israel - Biblical Sodom?

World's largest telescope

China is in the final stages of building the world's largest radio telescope, with a 500 metre spherical dish (the size of 30 football pitches). Work began in 2011 and is planned to be finished by September 2016. “It will help us to search for intelligent life outside of the galaxy and explore the origins of the universe,” said Wu Xiangping, director-general of the Chinese Astronomical Society. In the meantime scientists have calculated that another giant planet could be lurking at the edge of our solar system, 55 billion miles from the sun. It would take 20,000 years to orbit the sun. If the new telescope confirms the maths behind the spectacular claims, then it will qualify as the ninth planet in the solar system. (Pluto was stripped of its status as a planet in 2006 following a major conference in Prague.) Wonderful and awesome though these things are, we find no mention of a creating God. May our language be David's in Psalm 8: “When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?”

THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER

The Palace of Westminster is the meeting place of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, the two houses of the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

Amongst the Palace's 1,100 rooms is a debating chamber known as the Moses Room. Why? Because one entire wall is devoted to a mural entitled *Moses bringing down the Tables of the Law from Mount Sinai*. When King Alfred the Great wrote his Code of Laws he pre-fixed it with the Ten Commandments of Moses, upon which English common law has been founded ever since. The Code was originally known as Alfred's *dom-boke*, 'dom' or 'doom' meaning judgment or law, and into it was incorporated much of the Mosaic law. For example, in his laws Alfred admonished: *Doom very evenly. Do not doom one doom to the rich; another to the poor. Nor doom one doom to your friend; another to your foe*, virtually a translation of Leviticus 19. 15.



The fresco in the Moses Room, House of Lords

The Government is faced with a big problem as the Palace of Westminster is in urgent need of extensive restoration work. There are two options - to remain in the Palace while the work is done (cost £7.1 billion) or to re-locate for six years (cost £3.5 billion). MPs are due to decide in Spring 2016.

PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



"There is a river, the streams whereof shall
make glad the city of God." Psalm 46. 4.

SUMMER 2016

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PERCEPTION

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EDITORIAL

*“Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening”
(Psalm 104. 23).*

At school, certainly by the time you reach Year 9 and perhaps before, your thoughts begin to turn towards the future. You have options to decide - which direction are you going to take? You will be taking decisions which will begin to shape the rest of your education, and your working life. Making sure these decisions are the right ones is vitally important.

These decisions are difficult because most young people have not thought much about their future career path and often do not really know what they would like to do. We hope that as choices are made they will be prayed over by both children and parents, asking the Lord's help to make the *right* decisions - only God knows the future.

After the fall of man as recorded in Genesis we read that the Lord God said to Adam, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.” The ground had been cursed through sin. It would now bring forth thorns and thistles - to till the ground would be hard work. There is, however, a great blessing in the whole concept of work. It is a very true couplet of Isaac Watts (the whole of his poem is given at the end):

“For Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.”

To be usefully and fully employed is a great antidote to wasting time and the sin that often follows. We do realise how difficult it is for some people to find a suitable job, and genuinely to be “out of work” is a soul-destroying situation to be in. If we *do* have employment which is suited to our abilities and temperament, then may we be truly thankful for it.

The apostle Paul made it clear that there is a duty to work and to support ourselves and our families. “For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat” (2 Thessalonians 3.10). Even so, it is possible to become so

involved with our work that it can become a snare to us. “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life” is Paul’s exhortation to Timothy (2 Timothy 2. 4). If we become so entangled with our work that it is coming between us and ‘better things’, then we should do everything possible to free ourselves from this over-involvement. Most of all, may we never forget the Sabbath Day: “Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest.”

There is much talk today of the work ethic, that is, a set of principals an employee uses in his job. They include such things as integrity, a sense of responsibility, emphasis on quality, discipline, honesty, a sense of teamwork, respectfulness, dependability, dedication, determination, accountability and so on. One work ethic we came across recently we felt was a good one - humility. This is acknowledging everyone’s contribution, and freely sharing credit for what is achieved. It includes gratitude to colleagues who work hard. And lastly, while you always take your work seriously, you should always strive to maintain a good sense of humour. How different the work place would often be if everyone followed all of these things!

It goes without saying that the Christian young person should endeavour to practise all these things in his or her work, even if their fellow workers do not. Sometimes we may feel our work is not being noticed or appreciated, and we may feel undervalued. When this is so, it is helpful to remember Paul’s words: “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.” God sees our work, even if others do not.

Some years ago I worked with a man who did some of his work at home, and he asked if he could take home the typewriter to help him. This permission was freely given. Later, he told me that he had done a personal letter on the typewriter and hoped that was all right - “but,” he added, “I bought my own typewriter ribbon to use for my own letter.” This man’s honesty, almost beyond belief, has never left me. The world would have laughed at him, but God noticed it, I am sure.

In the Bible, work is frequently referred to as ‘occupation.’ We read of Pharaoh asking Joseph’s brethren, “What is your occupation?” Their answer was, “Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and also our fathers.” The shipmen asked Jonah (although he never actually answered the question), “What is thine occupation?” Paul said that he

abode with men of the same craft as himself: "For by their occupation they were tentmakers." Another word used more frequently in the past was 'calling.' People would ask, "What is your calling?" which is a nice way to think of it.

But we wish briefly to come to another work. Joseph Hart, speaking of the wondrous works of God, says, "Yet one strange work exceeds them all" - that is, the work of redeeming love. Although our own work, and our attitude towards it, is important, the only work that will profit us when we come to the end of our life is the Holy Spirit's work in our heart. Our daily work will one day cease, either through increasing age, infirmity, lack of mental capacity, or death. But do we know God's work in our hearts? With many, God's work begins very gently. They begin to have thoughts they never had before. "Oh to be right," becomes their desire. Perhaps things are going well - but what if you should gain the whole world, but lose your own soul? You have prospects before you - but, "Lord, art Thou my chief desire?" You have a lovely wife and family - so much to be thankful for, but one day you must leave them. "The one shall be taken, and the other left." One day you must tread the verge of Jordan - how will you do in its swellings?

So the most important question is this: have you and I a hope that the Lord has begun *His* work in our never-dying soul? If so, we shall prove that the Lord never forsakes His own work but "will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1. 6).

With greetings and best wishes to you all.

The Editor.

Against Idleness and Mischief (Isaac Watts)

How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day,
From every opening flower!

In works of labour or of skill
I would be busy too:
*For Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.*

How skilfully she builds her cell!
How neat she spreads the wax!
And labours hard to store it well
With the sweet food she makes.

In books, or work, or healthful play,
Let my first years be past,
That I may give for every day
Some good account at last.

HYMNS - OR PSALMS ONLY?

“To be employed with solemn pleasure in singing the praises of God with the spirit and with the understanding also, is a blessing peculiar to God’s elect.” William Gadsby, Preface to his *Selection of Hymns for Public Worship*, 1838.

Editor’s Introduction

Singing and music is one of God’s gifts to mankind. Sadly, that gift has been marred by sin and grossly abused. Some music is undeniably beautiful. About the year 1630, the Italian composer Gregorio Allegri wrote for the Sistine Chapel a setting of Psalm 51, *Miserere mei, Deus*, Latin for “Have mercy upon me, O God.” It was considered so beautiful that it was forbidden for anyone to transcribe the music and was allowed to be sung only on the Wednesday and Good Friday of ‘Holy Week.’ Writing it down or performing it elsewhere was punishable by excommunication from the church. Eventually, it is said, Mozart on visiting the chapel wrote it down entirely from memory! However, the ornamentation which made the performance so special was a closely guarded secret. (It was written for a double choir with nine parts.)

All Christian churches sing as part of their services. In our Strict Baptist chapels we firmly believe in *congregational* singing, and music and anthems beyond the capabilities of the congregation, however beautiful, do not have a place in the public worship of God.

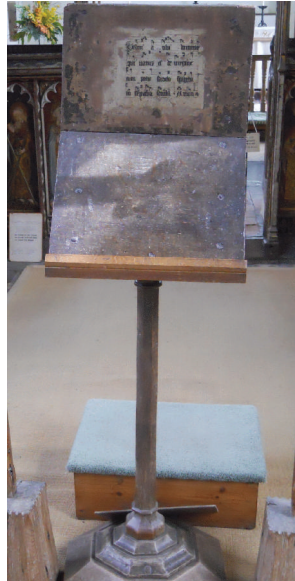
But *what* should we sing? The majority of Christian churches today sing hymns, and arrangements (or paraphrases) of psalms and other portions of Scripture. However, some churches believe we should sing *only* psalms, that is, *exclusive Psalmody*. The metrical versions of the psalms closely follow Scripture, but of necessity word order and phraseology is changed to fit the tunes to which they are sung. People unfamiliar with these arrangements sometimes find them difficult to sing. Another form of psalmody that developed in the 16th century was Anglican chant, which was non-metrical and resolved the problem of the need to alter the biblical text. When the *Young People’s Hymnal* was published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications in 1973 a section containing paraphrases of some of the Psalms appeared with the

comment, “many having felt that the singing of Psalms is neglected among us.”

It is probable that in the Jewish synagogues the Psalms were sung *antiphonally*, that is by alternating groups of performers, hence the mirror structure of the Hebrew psalms. This method is still the practice in many of our cathedrals and larger parish churches, where half the choir on one side of the nave sing one verse of a psalm, followed by the rest of the choir on the other side. It is generally thought that the hymn tune Leoni (number 963 in the *Companion Tune Book*) is a very ancient Hebrew melody dating from temple times.

When we come to consider a subject such as this - should we or should we not sing hymns? - there is a temptation “that we are going to win the argument.” This is *not* our wish at all. In no way do we wish to “score points” over those who see things differently. However, we would just say this. We understand there is an early reference in the works of Pliny, the Roman author, about 70 years after the death of the Lord Jesus, where he mentions the practice of Christians gathering together before sunrise to sing “a hymn to Christ, as to God.” This does not seem to accord with the often repeated assertion that the early Christian church sang only Psalms.

One of my earliest memories is my grandmother (the only grandparent I knew) sitting at her little pedal organ, singing to herself the hymns she loved so much. My parents were enthusiastic hymn-singers too. At junior school we sang from *Songs of Praise*. I can still remember the numbers of many. “All things bright and beautiful” was easy to remember - 444! Our headmaster, Mr. Smith, was a sidesman at Ashwell Parish church, and we had frequent and enthusiastic hymn practices. How I longed for a hymnbook like the teachers had - slightly larger than the ‘words only’ edition because it had the melody too! The Lord’s Day, too, was a day of hymnsinging, not only at chapel but in the evening too.



*Old lectern with Psalm,
Ranworth Church, Norfolk*

Then one day, when still a boy, I heard something that rather shook me. There was, I was told, a group of people who said that it was *wrong* to sing hymns. These people, they said, lived in Scotland, and held strongly to the view that in church only psalms were allowed to be sung. Being only a youngster, the reason for this I had absolutely no idea, but having lived in a world of hymns ‘since the cradle,’ I could scarcely believe that such a thing could be true. After all, even the King and Queen sang hymns! Since then, of course, I have learnt a lot more.

We are very grateful to Mr. Graham Hadley, Pastor of Hope Chapel, Stotfold, for permission to publish a talk he gave on the subject of “Is it Scriptural to Sing Hymns?”

IS IT SCRIPTURAL TO SING HYMNS? (Part 1)

Graham Hadley

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3.16).

Some weeks ago I had the pleasure to go to the Annual Meeting of the Trinitarian Bible Society, and quite a number of people were there for the service which followed the business meeting. The first communal singing was a psalm. How sweet and voluminous and harmonious was the singing of that psalm - it was quite noticeable. The other two forms of communal singing were hymns. One was based on a psalm, and the other was a hymn from the Gadsby’s hymn book, ‘Immortal honours rest on Jesus’ head.’ I particularly noticed in the last hymn that the singing was relatively quiet compared to the psalm singing especially. As I looked around I could see a lot of people standing with closed lips and I realised that there is much strong feeling today among some churches regarding the singing of hymns. And so the topic I address tonight is, ‘Is it scriptural to sing hymns?’

There are several churches, godly churches, that count the singing of hymns as God-dishonouring. Many of us perhaps have friends in Scotland, and we have friends in Holland. Those churches only sing psalms, and many of the Presbyterian churches in England sing psalms only. They believe that hymns, as we have them today, are unscriptural and they call them the ‘uninspired hymns.’ Their young people are

brought up and taught that they should not sing hymns in formal worship.

So, it brings to mind the question, ‘Should *we* only sing psalms?’ What is the Scriptural position? You may have friends that attend churches and they only sing psalms, or you may come into contact with them in years to come. Now I think we should be clear on what is right and what is wrong in accordance with Scripture, because we do not want to base our arguments purely on the traditions of man. We need to search the scriptures as to what is right, what is permitted, what is good in the sight of the Lord.

In the scriptures we have many references, don’t we, to the singing of psalms. They were sung by the Jews in the days when the temple was built. They were sung even before the temple was built, when David set up the ark in the tabernacle on Mount Zion. Also, the Jews sing psalms when they are on a pilgrimage from places in Israel as they ascend up into Jerusalem. These are called the ‘songs of degrees’ recorded in the Scripture. We read that the early church, the early church of Christ, sang psalms. When Paul was addressing the Corinthian church regarding their worship, he said, ‘One of you hath a psalm.’ James in his epistle said, ‘Is any merry? let him sing psalms.’ In our reading tonight, there is a reference to ‘singing psalms’ and it is linked with ‘singing hymns and spiritual songs.’ Now, what is the distinction between psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs? Perhaps it is a question you young people have asked from time to time: “What is the difference between these three?” Well, really to find the true difference, we have to go back to the original words of the Hebrew, and also of the Greek. Now I don’t want to give you a Hebrew and a Greek lesson, but there are one or two words I just want to refer to and I trust they will be for our learning.

Firstly, the word ‘psalm.’ There are several different words in Hebrew which have been translated as the single word ‘psalm’ in English.

- We have the ‘Book of Psalms’, the title for the 150 Psalms. Now the Hebrew word there is *tehillah* which means ‘praise.’ So the Hebrew title for the Book of Psalms is really the ‘Book of Praise.’
- Perhaps you have noticed that many of the psalms themselves have a heading, ‘a Psalm of David,’ ‘a Psalm of Asaph,’ and so on. Now

that word in the Hebrew is a different word, *mizmowr*, which means ‘a poem set to notes,’ musical notes - and that is how we think of the psalms, isn’t it?

- Psalm 98 verse 5 uses a Hebrew word *zimrah*, which literally means a ‘musical piece.’
- Psalm 95 verse 2 contains the word *zamiyr*, a similar word beginning with ‘z’, which means ‘a song accompanied by music.’
- In 1 Chronicles 16 verse 9 we have the word *zamar*, which means to ‘touch or play an instrument.’

All these are related to the worship of God and all have similar meanings. We have different words in English, don’t we, for the same thing, words which have similar meanings but perhaps a different emphasis. In the New Testament there are two Greek words for ‘psalm.’

- One is very similar to our own, *psalmos*, which we find in the Acts of the Apostles when Peter was preaching and referred to the second psalm. *Psalmos* means ‘a sacred ode with voice and harp,’ the same word which we read tonight in Colossians 3. 16, ‘admonishing one another in psalms,’ and ‘singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.’
- There’s another Greek word translated as ‘psalm’ and that is *psallo*, found in James’ epistle, which means ‘to make melody,’ or in other words, play a musical instrument.

But what about the word ‘hymn’? Where do we find the word ‘hymn’? Well, we only find it in the Greek, and there is only one word, *hymneo*, which means a ‘religious ode.’ It is that word which is used when Jesus ate the Passover, which we call the Lord’s Supper, with His disciples, - ‘and when they had sung an hymn, they went out.’

What about the word ‘song’? Well, there are a few words in the Hebrew meaning ‘song’.

- We have, as already mentioned, the Song of degrees, and the Song of Solomon. That is a Hebrew word *shyir*, which means singing.
- Another is ‘Jehovah is my strength and my song’ in the prophecy of Isaiah chapter 12 verse 2, and that is another word *zimrath*, only one letter different from *zimrah* which means ‘a psalm.’

- Then there is the third one *neginah*, which is in the title to Psalm 61, which means ‘a poem set to instrumental music.’ It is also found in Psalm 77 verse 6. The word ‘song’ in Colossians is prefixed with ‘spiritual’ - spiritual songs, songs that are religious. The word ‘spiritual’ has an aspect of supernatural, that which is above man, that which is of the Spirit of God.

So, dear friends, we find that these words ‘Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs’ in the original language are all very similar. All these words can apply to the psalms of Scripture, and that is the position of the Scottish Presbyterians and the Dutch churches, and those who sing psalms only. The Scriptures may say, ‘psalms, hymns and spiritual songs’ but they all apply to the different forms of psalms we have in the Book of Psalms, in the book of praise.

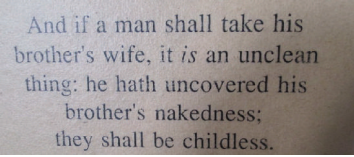
Therefore, are ‘hymns and spiritual songs’ limited to Psalms of Scripture? Are the ‘hymns and spiritual songs’ as we know and sing them from our hymn books, unscriptural? Are they outside the permissive will of God? Now, dear friends, we do not want to do anything, do we, which is outside the permissive will of God. God forbid. Now there have been many opinions on this question, opinions which have caused divisions.

I wonder if some of you know who first composed a book of hymns. We have to go back to the beginning of the centuries. There was a Bishop of Milan named Ambrose. Now Ambrose had a dispute, a doctrinal dispute, with many others at the time. There were some who said that Christ was not truly divine, it was called ‘Aryanism’ – Christ is not truly divine. Ambrose believed fervently in Christ, the divine Son of God but there were many being persuaded by that false doctrine that Christ was not truly divine. Ambrose put to verse many of the beliefs which he held so that they could be sung unitedly to encourage his followers and strengthen them in the doctrine of the divine Sonship of Christ, the Son of God. At the same time, Saint Augustine (you have probably heard of him) frowned on these hymns. They were man’s work, and man’s work should not be used in praise to God. Some of those hymns (but only a few of them) have even survived down to today. Two of them you may know; one is, ‘Jerusalem the golden,’ and another of the hymns, it is a sweet hymn, I know it quite well, ‘Jesus, the very thought of Thee, with sweetness fills my breast.’ There were various

hymn-writers in the early centuries but nothing really held until we come to the Reformation.

TO BE CONTINUED

KATHARINE, QUEEN OF ENGLAND



And if a man shall take his
brother's wife, it is an unclean
thing: he hath uncovered his
brother's nakedness;
they shall be childless.

Who would think that this text from the book of Leviticus could be a verse that helped forward the cause of the Reformation in England? Well, this was the verse that led to the separation of England from the dominance of the Pope.

Although King Henry VIII is famous for having married six times, his first wife Katharine was his wife for well over twenty years, while the other five shared only fourteen years of his life between them. Katharine was the daughter of the Spanish monarchs, King Ferdinand of Aragon and Queen Isabella.



Katharine age 20

The early years of the marriage of Katharine and Henry were very happy. But infant mortality was devastatingly high in Tudor England. Katharine conceived soon after her marriage, miscarrying a daughter in January 1510. She quickly conceived again, bearing a son on 1 January 1511. They named him Henry after his father. On 23 February the baby died, having lived less than two months. She suffered another miscarriage in September 1511. On 8 October 1513 a second son was born. Sadly, this second Prince died shortly after birth. A third son was born in late December 1514 but also quickly died. On 18 February 1516, Katharine gave birth to her only child that

would survive to adulthood, Princess Mary (the infamous ‘Bloody Mary’). Henry gave up hope of ever fathering a son and heir with Katharine.

To marry Katharine in the first place a dispensation had been required from the Pope. She had previously been married to Henry’s older brother, Arthur - therefore to marry Henry was forbidden by Scripture. She and Arthur had been married in the old St. Paul’s on 14 November 1501, he a youth of only 14 years, and Katharine just 15 years. Four months later, on 2 April 1502, Arthur died of what was called ‘consumption,’ probably a form of influenza.

By 1526 Henry began to think of an annulment of his marriage. Katharine was now past the years of child-bearing, and Henry was showing more than a passing interest in a lady at court, Anne Boleyn, and soon he was deeply in love. Perhaps she could be his mistress - but no, Anne was too honourable for that: she would be his wife or nothing. So then began the *King’s Great Matter* - how could he be rid of his first wife, leaving him free to marry Anne.

A secret ecclesiastical court opened in London to try the validity of Henry’s marriage to Katharine. Divorce as we know it today was not possible in the 16th century, but the king could seek an annulment. He seized upon the book of Leviticus, which stated that a man who married his brother’s widow would be childless. Could his virtually childless marriage be God’s punishment, even though the Pope had given his dispensation? Did the Pope have the right to grant such a dispensation in the first place?

The Pope refused to act in the matter of an annulment. Katharine refused to accept the authority of the ecclesiastical court. According to her own testimony her marriage to Arthur had never been consummated. During the sitting of the court she threw herself at Henry’s feet declaring: “*And when ye had me at first, I take God to be my judge, I was a true maid without touch of man. And whether this be true or no, I put it to your conscience.*”

Henry decided that if the Pope did not declare his marriage null and void, he would declare the Pope a heretic. Sermons were preached opposing the proposed divorce. Brave friars even said this in front of Henry himself, refusing to be intimidated with threats. Bishop Fisher also preached in her favour. And the people felt deeply for her.

Katharine was now made to move to Hatfield. On 25 January 1533 Henry secretly married Anne. It was not until Easter that the marriage to Anne was made public. On 10th May a court was opened at Dunstable, which finally judged that Henry's marriage to Katharine had been invalid.

But on 23 March 1534 the Pope finally made his judgment: Katharine's marriage to Henry *was* valid. It was too late.

Katharine was moved to Ampthill, then to Kimbolton where she spent the rest of her days. In 1535 she fell ill. In the early hours of 7 January 1536 she was very restless. She heard Mass at daybreak, completed her will and wrote a moving letter to Henry in which she declared: "*For my part I pardon you everything. I commend unto you our daughter Mary, beseeching you to be a good father unto her. Lastly I make this vow, that mine eyes desire you above all things.*" It is said Henry shed tears upon receiving her letter.

At 10 a.m. she received extreme unction and at 2 p.m. she died.

What happened next is graphically described:

"The good Queen breathed her last at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Eight hours afterwards, by the King's express command, the inspection of her body was made, without her confessor or physician or any other officer of her household being present, save the firelighter in the house, a servant of his, and a companion of the latter, who proceeded at once to open the body. After making the examination, he went to the bishop of Llandaff, the Queen's confessor, and declared to him in great secrecy, and as if his life depended on it, that he had found the Queen's body and the intestines perfectly sound and healthy, as if nothing had happened, with the single exception of the heart, which was completely black, and of a most hideous aspect. After washing it in three different waters, and finding that it did not change colour, he cut it in two, and found that it was the same inside. The man also said that he found inside the heart something black which adhered strongly to the concavities. And moreover, after this spontaneous declaration on the part of the man, my secretary having asked the Queen's physician whether he thought the Queen had died of poison, the latter answered that in his opinion there was no doubt about it, for the bishop of Llandaff had been told so under confession."

In her will she asked that 500 masses be said for her soul. Her

gowns she left to be made into church vestments. When asked where she should be buried the King said it would be too expensive to bury her at St. Paul's. He wished her to be buried at the nearest *great cathedral church*. That was Peterborough, some 12 miles from Kimbolton.

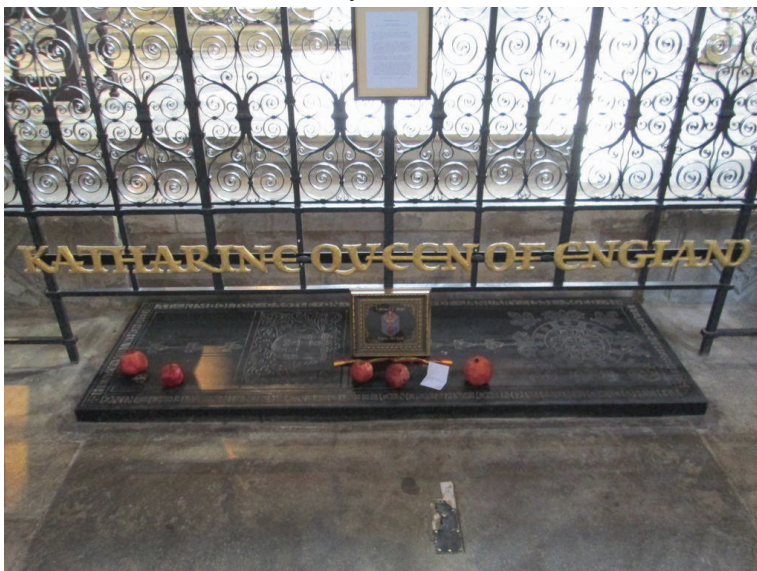
The funeral cortege left Kimbolton on 27th January. "There was provided a hearse with twenty-four tapers, garnished with pensils and other decencies. The corpse was reverently conveyed from the place



Peterborough Cathedral – thought to be the finest facade in Europe

where she died, under a hearse covered with a rich pall of cloth of gold. All ladies were in mourning habits, with white kerchiefs over their heads and shoulders. First, sixteen priests or clergymen in surplices went on horseback, without saying a word, having a gilded cross borne before them: after them several gentlemen, and after them followed the maitre d'hotel and the chamberlain, with their rods of office in their hands; and, to keep sides, nine or ten heralds with morning attire and batons, and in the middle of them was drawn a wagon, upon which the body was drawn by six horses covered with black cloth to the ground."

The cortege stayed overnight at Sawtry Abbey and arrived at Peterborough on the 28th for the funeral on the 29th. Henry did not attend, nor would he allow Mary to attend.

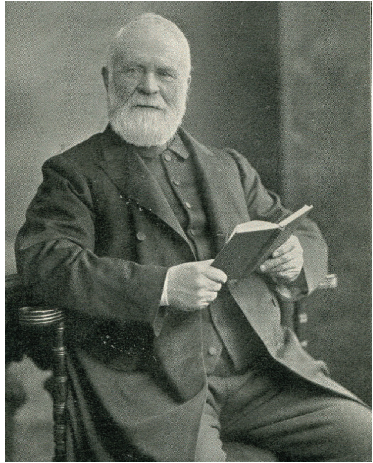


Katharine's body still rests in the north side aisle of the cathedral. There was a rumour that Katharine's faithful friend, Maria de Salinas, was buried in the same tomb as Katharine. In 1777 the tomb was opened to see if it was true. Only one body lay within.

How sad that both Henry and Katharine died without coming to a knowledge of the truth. Was ever a woman treated more cruelly by her husband? The imperial ambassador to England, Chapuys, wrote of her that she was "the most virtuous woman I have ever known." Five hundred masses said for her soul? If five hundred thousand masses had been said for her soul, what would it avail? Nothing but the precious atoning blood of Christ will ever purge away our sin. But in the mysterious workings of God, this episode in the history of our country led to the separation of England from the power of the Pope. It also led eventually to an order from Henry in May 1536 that a Bible in English was to be placed in every church, and readers provided for the illiterate.

WILLIAM SMITH - PART 2

Hunger satisfied by the cat's food. Clothes provided by a kind master taken by his father for his own use. Knocked to the bottom of a deep pit by a fighter. His father and step-mother imprisoned for cruelty. Walks twenty-four miles to see his father as he missed the train. We continue with the life of this dear man who afterwards became Pastor of Rehoboth Chapel, Tunbridge Wells.



(CONTINUED FROM SPRING 2016 PAGE 25)

Feeds on the cat's food

After a time I got along a little better; and it was brought about in the following way. There was no farmhouse on the land where I worked, so my master lived in the town, and so did all the labourers and myself. My master kept a favourite cat up at the farm to catch the rats and mice, and he did his work well. One day my master said to me, "William, do you think the cat catches mice enough to live upon without having something more?" I said I did not know. He then said, "If he does not, you must go down to the house and ask one of the servants to give you some food for him." I said I would do so; and some few days afterwards when I was short of food myself, I thought of what my master had said to me about the cat, so off I went to the house to ask for some food for the cat.

When I got there one of the servants came and asked me what I wanted. I told her I was sent for some food for the cat. She smiled and then went and filled a paper bag with bits of meat and crusts of bread. Off I started back, thinking more about my own case than the cat's.

When I got up to the farm, I went into the stable and emptied my prize on the lid of the corn bin and began to eat the best of the bread and meat, and I must confess that when I had finished my meal there was not much food, either good or bad, left for the cat; but after all I don't think he suffered much through what I had eaten; but I must say I benefited a great deal by it.

After this, whenever I was short of food I used to go and ask for something for the cat. I believe I went so often that it made the servants think the dog wanted something to eat as well as the cat, for they put larger pieces of meat as well as more bread into my bag, so that from that time both I and the cat fared very well.

A hot head

I remember going down to the house to take some vegetables. It was about eleven o'clock in the morning. The cook was very busy getting the dinner; there were fowls and other things roasting before the fire on spits, which were turned by a chain worked by a smoke-jack up the chimney. She asked me to come and warm myself, and baste these fowls and other joints before the fire; I did so, and while I was at my work, basting, I saw a large Yorkshire pudding baking underneath a joint. The gravy kept dropping upon it, and it was browning over very nicely. After a time the cook came and cut me a nice large piece off the corner of this pudding, and put it into my hand, and told me to go. It was very warm, and just as I was going out of the kitchen I saw the mistress coming along the passage which led from the dining-room to the kitchen, and, I thought, she must not see the pudding, so I slipped it into my cap, which I put on my head, and away I went down the yard as fast as I could walk.

When I got out of sight of the house I snatched off my cap, for my head had got hot, and my hair was well greased with the fat that ran off the pudding, but I did not mind that. I quickly ate it, and thought it was very nice. The cook told me afterwards that I need not have put it into my cap, as the mistress would not have said anything about her giving it to me. She said they had a good hearty laugh to see me go so fast down the yard, as well they might, for most hot-headed people walk very quickly.

Leaves home to struggle for a living

I was now in my sixteenth year, and things were very unpleasant at home. My step-mother behaved very unkindly to my brother and sister, and this caused me to want to leave home, and very soon I was enabled to do so, as follows.

There used to be at that time a cattle fair held at the latter end of September, and a great many farmers used to attend it. One of the men who worked on the farm where I worked was in a public-house on the fair day, and heard a farmer enquiring if anyone in the company knew of a strong lad that wanted a situation. This man said he knew of one (that was myself); he would go and seek for me. He started to search, and found me. He said he wanted me to come with him, and told me what for.

I went with him to the house where the farmer was, and he looked at me and asked me a few questions; then he said I should do for him very well. He hired me for three pounds for the year, and then gave me a shilling to bind the agreement. I left him, and went home very much pleased to think I should get away from home. I was to be at my place that day fortnight. The distance to it was eleven miles, which I had to walk when the time came for me to go. I told my step-mother what I had done; she spoke cross to me, and asked me what I was going to do for clothes. This staggered me, for I had got none to take with me, and I had never thought of that. Therefore I was very much cast down, for I thought I should not be able to go, and I did not know how to let the farmer know, but it came suddenly into my mind to ask my master the next day if he had got any clothes that he had left off, that he would please give them to me.

With these thoughts I felt more composed, and the next day I watched for my master coming, as his custom was to walk up to the farm every morning. At length I saw him coming, and I left my work and went to meet him. When he saw me coming toward him, he stood still until I got near him. I then made my bow, and told him I had hired myself to a farmer for twelve months as I wanted to go to service, but I had forgotten that I had no clothes to take with me, and I had come to ask him if he had any old clothes that he had left off, and if so, would he kindly give them to me, that I might get some made to fit me out of them. He smiled, and said he had none, for he had given them all away,

but I might call at the house as I went home, and he would then see what he could do for me. I thanked him, made another bow, and returned to my work full of comfort and expectation.

Night seemed rather long in coming, but when it did come, off I started down to the house. One of the servants saw me coming up the yard and came to the door. I told her the master said I was to call as I went home. She went and told him I was at the door waiting to see him, and he instantly came to me with a parcel in his hand and gave it to me, saying, "Go see what you can do with that." I thanked him, made my bow, and quickly ran off home.

When I arrived there I showed my father and step-mother the bundle, and told them there were some clothes given me by my master. They quickly untied it, and there were some very nice trousers, a waistcoat, and other things, which they both said were too good for me. Consequently my father kept them for himself, and got me some common clothes just to fit me, but where he got them from I never knew.

His new situation

The time arrived when I had to go to my situation, and I had to walk the eleven miles, as I had no one who could pay the coach fare for me to ride. I had not one halfpenny in my pocket, and only a small bundle under my arm, which consisted of one pair of trousers, one shirt, one waistcoat, one pair of stockings, a round jacket, and one necktie. The rest of my things I was wearing, so I was not overloaded with luggage.

I arrived at my destination about five o'clock in the evening. It was a farm-house, about a mile on the left side of Oakley, which lies between Henley-in-Harden and Birmingham. They received me very kindly. They were old people, brother and sister. Neither of them had been married, so there were no children. The next morning I felt very lonely, having always been used to living in a town. After it got dark I used to stand in the road and weep bitterly, because everyone was a stranger to me, and all around me seemed to be stamped with death. But when I thought of my miserable home which I had just left I became more reconciled.

There were two more servants in the house, a male and a female, and we soon became united. We all had our food at one table, and all

sat at the same fire in the evening. My master played the bass-viol at the church, and I liked music, so we soon all became comfortable together. I stayed with them twelve months, and at the end of the year when I received my three pounds I scarcely knew what to do, for I had got my washing to pay for, also a pair of boots, a new waistcoat, and two new shirts. But I was enabled, through the kindness of my laundress, who charged me but very little for washing and mending, to pay all my debts, and thus leave that part quite free.

Changes his situation

The reason why I left that situation was because my master could not afford to give me the same amount of wages that another farmer had offered me, which was six pounds ten shillings. So I accepted this offer. This farmer lived at the "Dovehouse," Fillongley, about six miles from Coventry. Before I went to my fresh situation, I walked home to see my father and step-mother, who, I heard, had been sent to prison for two months each for cruelly treating my brother, who was then about ten years of age. I learned that it was my step-mother that had struck him with a knife and cut his hand, and the neighbours had caused them to be summoned before the magistrates, and other charges of cruelty were brought against her. But at the trial they sentenced my father to the same term of imprisonment as my step-mother, because he did not try to prevent the cruelty from being carried on. While they were in prison, my brother and sister were put into the workhouse until they returned home again.

This was the means of causing my father to lose his place of work, and it so undermined his constitution that he never enjoyed good health afterwards, but it seemed to make no difference to her. I stayed there about two days, and then started to my fresh situation. I arrived there quite safely, but I learned my master that engaged me did not live at that farm. There were two sons and daughters lived there, but he lived at a place named Whiteacre. After I had been there a few weeks I found that the eldest son was a drunkard, and not very honest, for he used to sell his father's corn to pay his own bills which he owed for beer and spirits. I am sorry to say he was the means of corrupting me, for as yet I knew nothing of grace. During the two years I was there we both ran into all kinds of vice too base to name, and if it had not been for the Lord's

preventing and preserving mercy exercised towards me in times of danger, I must have been ruined both body and soul.

This son was a powerful young man, and a great fighter. I remember on one occasion we went to plough a very narrow piece of land which lay by the side of a deep pit. There was no water in it. By some means I offended him, and he ran at me and struck me with such violence, that I fell from the top to the bottom of this pit, and the blow and the fall made me feel very poorly, in fact, for some time I scarce knew where I was, but after a time I came more to myself.

One of the labourers wanted me to summon him before the magistrates, but I declined doing so, and he never struck me afterwards. Though I forgave him, the Lord visited him with a sore affliction, by which he was launched into a boundless eternity, and that without hope. Since the Lord has called me by his grace I have been led to see, by this and other circumstances which have transpired in my experience, that the Lord will requite the injuries done unto his people by Satan's children, even if it be done while they are in their unregenerate state.

His father taken ill

At the end of two years I left this situation and went to live with a widow, Mrs. Cash, near to the village of Fillongly. My wages there were eight pounds ten shillings. This was reckoned to be very good at that time, which was about the year 1847. I stayed there one year. During that time my father was taken ill, and I was sent for to see him. This was in June. I asked leave of my mistress to go, and she told me I might do so, but I must go on the Sunday and come back on the Monday, which I consented to do.

On Sunday morning I started about eight o'clock, hoping to get a train at Coventry. I walked the six miles in one hour and a half, but the train was gone, so I had to walk all the rest of the way, which was eighteen miles, and I accomplished it in four hours and a half. I found my father a little better than I expected, and I stayed there all night. On Monday morning I returned. The first eight miles I rode in a carrier's cart, the next ten in the train to Coventry, and the last six I walked, but it blistered my feet badly. I got to my mistress's just in time for supper. After that I went to bed very tired, but I had to get up on Tuesday morning early and go to mowing clover. I felt nearly spent in the

evening, but after a few days' hard work I got all right again. My father got better, and lived for several years.

Preserved in time of danger

After this, one Sunday morning the carter came and asked me if I would lend him a gun which I kept in my possession to shoot the sparrows. I told him he might have it, and I showed him how to set the hammer half-way, because it was the safest way to carry it. I left him with it in his hand, and as I was about passing before him, by some means he let it off in the house. The charge passed just by me into the wall, blew a lot of mortar down, filled the house with smoke and dust, and dreadfully frightened us all. If it had gone off only a few seconds sooner the contents would have lodged in my body; but through mercy I was again preserved. He said he really did not know what caused it to go off, as he thought he had made it safe.

During corn harvest one day we went to carry some barley out of a field close to the village. When we were near to the end of one field I was loading, I told the carter I could put all that was in that field upon one waggon. I did so; then we bound it well with the rope, and I rode home upon it. When we got to the barn in which it was to be put, the load being so high, it could not go in. Without saying anything to me, one of the men had untied the rope, so that when I went to slip down, holding to the rope with my hands, which being unfastened flew over the waggon, and let me fall flat on my back in the horse road. They picked me up and carried me into the barn insensible, but after awhile I became conscious. They blamed the man for not telling me the rope was untied. I was bruised very much, but through mercy there were no bones broken, and my life was again preserved.

At the end of twelve months I left for the following reason: My mistress had two maiden sisters who lived retired in the village. She used to send one of the men to do little jobs for them every week, and they used to give the man that went sixpence. She had a man that had been in the habit of going to wait upon them for years, but she happened one day to send me. After this they always would have me, and this made the poor man very jealous. So in order that he might have his post again, I left. My mistress said she was sorry to lose me, and she gave me ten shillings more than my wages when she paid me, and asked me to

call and see her whenever I passed that way, which I did.

I went from there to live with another widow, of the name of Menett, in the same parish. Here we lived in a more fashionable way than I had ever done before. My mistress kept her carriage, and the eldest son his hunter. Here I began to learn there was as much sin and folly practised among the rich as there was among those that were poorer, only in a more refined way. She became very fond of me, and would have me to drive her almost everywhere she went. When she had parties I was invited to dance with either her or some of the young ladies who were invited, but through mercy I never was ensnared in any trap she laid for me. No thanks to me, but I can see now it was only by the restraining power of God I was kept.

A solemn dispensation

While I was there a shocking thing happened to a young man who worked there. It was as follows. Some brick-layers were repairing an old-fashioned house, at the front of which there stood two large pillars, one on either side, with a large capstone on each. The men had taken them off to do repairs, and when they were ready to be placed on the top again, this young man happened to be down there, so he bet one of the men so much money that he could carry one up himself, and place it on the pillar. The bet was made; they lifted the stone up, and he would have it placed upon his head. They put it as he wanted it, and he started up the ladder. When he got to the top they saw there was something the matter, so they went to his assistance. They got the stone off his head, brought him down, took him home and sent for a doctor, but before he got there he became insensible, and on examination they found the weight of the stone had crushed a small part of his skull in, and he died in the greatest agony.

This event caused me to have some very serious thoughts and feelings, such as I never had before. I used to go into the by-lanes and under the hedges to pray that I might not be left to die a death like his. These thoughts about death and eternity brought me very low in mind and body, so one day I went to see a doctor. He asked me several questions and then told me I should always be like I was. He gave me a box of pills, and charged me a shilling. So I left his house, thinking, if what he said came true I should always be a miserable man.

I stayed at this place until the 11th of October, 1851. My mistress tried to prevent me leaving. She offered to send me to the Exhibition, and pay all my expenses for a week, but she could not prevail upon me to stay any longer. So I left, and went to Birmingham with a young man who had a sister living there, whose husband worked at the stables belonging to the London and North-Western Railway Company. We went to lodge with them, and soon got work at the luggage station for the same company. Our wages were eighteen shillings per week. I was pleased with my fresh employment, and vainly thought I should soon save a lot of money, as at that time provisions were very cheap. But I soon proved my landlord to be a bad man, for he enticed me to go with him to a place where all kinds of wickedness were practised. But through the mercy of God I was prevented from falling into any of those things which he practised, and which he was not ashamed to own. I never went out with him again; if I had done so I might have been ruined in my health for life, as thousands have been.

In about three months after this, being exposed to all kinds of weather, I caught a violent cold and was laid aside from my daily work. I cannot say how long I was ill; but during my absence they had to set another man on in my place, so that when I was recovered I had no work to go to. This brought all my thoughts of my saving money to an end, for I could get but about two days' work in a week for some time afterwards. This being the case, I soon spent what money I had saved.
(TO BE CONTINUED)

GOOD ANSWERS

A young lady, who had more of the form of godliness than of the power, one day said to the popular London minister, the Rev. Richard Cecil: "Sir, have you heard that I'm going to turn from the dissenters to the church?" "Madam," he replied, "you are turning from nothing to nothing." On another occasion, hearing a person censoring a *churchman* for going to hear the gospel in a *meeting*, (the only place in the village where the gospel could be heard) he exclaimed, "Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred? How he went into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, but only the priests?"

HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS DRESS?

Naomi Sayers

If we know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, if we wish to honour Him in all areas of our lives, then the way we dress must be given some careful consideration. Before I begin we must remind ourselves that “man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Sam 16. 7). No matter how ‘Biblical’ we are in our clothing, however righteous we may wish to appear in others’ eyes, the Lord sees our hearts, and ultimately He is our judge. Also, for the same reason, we must caution ourselves against making judgments about others, but rather examine ourselves, and our own motives for how we dress.

The first Biblical principle is that *men* should dress like men, *women* should dress like women: “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God” (Deut 22. 5).

The word *abomination* means hateful to God. So it should be to us also, when we see a woman dressed in overtly masculine clothing. Also, it is easy actually to find it mildly amusing when we see a grown-up man in a dress - pantomimes in particular use this to get instant laughs from an audience, but it is completely against God’s will, and is hateful to Him.

We live in a culture when *homosexuality* and *transgenderism* is becoming not just more accepted, but actually promoted. We as Christians need to be extra careful that we dress appropriately and unmistakably in a feminine or masculine way.

The second Biblical principle is *modesty*. 1 Timothy 2. 9: “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.” This new testament reference is directed towards women but that does not mean that men cannot apply the Biblical principle set out. I accept that the reality is that at the moment it is difficult to buy modest clothing.

I found an excellent quote in a book recently which described what is immodest (or non-modest) clothing:

TOO MUCH

TOO LITTLE

TOO TIGHT

Too Much - this is clothing which is all about having the right label, very expensive, or shouts “look at me.” Let’s think about what you wear to chapel. If your heels are so high you can only totter along, if your hat looks more appropriate for going to Ascot, then you are probably falling into the ‘too much’ category. It is not modest and not proper apparel. As my Grandmother once said, “Is that the way a humble sinner should go to worship a Holy God?”

Too Little - this should be fairly obvious. Short skirts and low tops come into this category, and for men, excessively skinny jeans or to walk around without their shirts on when this is inappropriate. Even if it is not intentional, this way of dressing is sensual. We should be careful not to be a cause of temptation to the opposite sex. People have said, “Oh, I’d never wear a bikini because I haven’t got the body for it,” but if we really think about, if we *did* have the body for it that would be even more reason to cover up. Should we want to flaunt our body on the beach in a bikini and cause men to lust after us? Cover up when you come out of the sea - you can use a sarong. Your body is for your husband/future husband’s eyes only - that is the way God intends it to be. Something under your favourite top might prevent embarrassment for everyone. Shop around for longer dresses; online (and sometimes in store) buy skirts from the ‘Tall’ option.

Too tight - however long a skirt may be, or however high your neck line, any clothes that purposefully show off the shape of the body is leaving nothing to the imagination. Ask a trusted friend or family member to be honest with you, “Is this too tight at the back?”

No one is saying that Christians need to dress in excessively old-fashioned or dowdy clothes. A lady can look feminine, beautiful and elegant without looking extravagant or sensual. It has been said, if your clothing is a frame for your face, from which the glory of God is to

shine, it is proper. If your clothing draws attention to your body, to outline it, it is sensual - what you are doing is wrong.

The above texts also mention the broiding (or braiding) of hair and jewellery. Does this mean that we should not plait our hair or wear jewellery? In new testament times the wealthy Greek women spent many hours intricately arranging their hair as a fashion statement. Our culture does not wear their hair in those same styles today, but the principle we can take from this is that we should not spend hours of our time doing our hair. It is not a good use of our time to spend many hours in front of the mirror.

Some Christians do believe that we should not wear a lot of jewellery, and whilst we must respect their views, the principle we can take from this is that it is not a good use of our money to spend it on expensive jewellery, and also it may come into the 'Too Much' category of immodest dress. Rather we should think of the words, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, . . . For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6. 19-21).

AN ECCENTRIC BUT GODLY OLD MAN

Andrew Bonar once related an incident in his student days, which must have made a great impression upon him, as he told the story with much feeling.

In his daily walk to one of the college classes he and his companions used to meet an old man going to business. This man was sometimes walking along holding his hat a little way off his head. This peculiar action was noticed by those who met him, and at last someone ventured to ask the old man what he meant by it.

He was at first reluctant to tell, but at last he said, "Well, if you must know, I will tell you. As I walk along the street I have sometimes such fellowship with the Lord Jesus, that I feel as if He were close beside me, and I lift my hat in token of reverence."

NATIONAL SERVICE DAYS (4)

Another of our esteemed ministers has sent the following account of his experiences while on National Service.

I venture to state something of what the dear Lord has done for my soul, my own personal testimony to the glory of God. I entitle it “Providence and Grace.”

In January 1956 I received my call to Her Majesty’s Service. My option was the RAF, and the purpose of my wicked heart was to rid myself of religion and its restraints, having had the favour of being born into a godly family, and surrounded with praying parents and Sunday School Teachers. I later had to learn that what I intended for evil, the Lord very graciously, and in mercy, overruled for my eternal good, the salvation of my never-dying soul.

My first posting was to RAF Cardington, where I opted to serve for a period of four years, to get into photography, and to get away as far as possible from those parental restraints. I also volunteered for overseas service.

My initial training was at West Kirby; my trade training at Wellesbourne Mountford, Warwickshire. There was a song request program which always concluded at ‘lights-out’ with the evening hymn and last post, which invariably brought tears to my eyes, though religion was something I wanted to rid myself of.

Having completed my trade training, and awaiting final departure for my posting to Cyprus, I was the only one with an overseas posting. As I lay out on the grass on a lovely June afternoon, the clouds in the sky above me seemed to form the face of a Man looking down upon me. I felt I could not avoid His gaze, and I sensed it was the watchful eye of God, the overshadowing of God covering me, though it was something I was longing to escape from.

On arrival in Cyprus, I was posted to 208 Squadron, a fighter reconnaissance squadron, at Akrotiri. From there I was put on a detachment to Takali, Malta. The Suez crisis arose while I was there, and I was put on stand-by to go into the Canal zone. In the folly of youth I found this exciting. We were scheduled to leave in landing craft kitted out with water bottles, rifles and live rounds of ammunition, at 4am the

next day, a Thursday. At midnight, Wednesday, there was a cease-fire, and all was called off.

In November 1956, I had my first home leave. The Croydon Strict Baptist Educational Society was running another series of meetings at the Temperance Hall, Mint Walk, Croydon. I decided I would go along, mainly to socialise with some old Sunday School friends that I knew would be there. The speaker that evening was the late Mr. A. G. Charman, one time pastor of the chapel at Brockham Green. Presumably the subject was 'Gideon,' but I was not particularly interested. The Scripture read was Judges 6, from which two lines arrested me, standing out as though in an enlarged font size. The first was in verse 9, "And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians." The second was at the end of verse 10, "But ye have not obeyed my voice." These two lines sealed themselves with some power upon my wicked and rebellious heart. I could not get away from them; hence my title of "Providence and Grace" - Divine providence directing my steps, and Divine grace capturing my wicked heart.

In the following year, 1957, I learned that my dear mother had been admitted to Netherne Hospital. She suffered most of her life from rheumatoid arthritis, and the pain of it affected her poor mind, and my father felt unable to cope with the situation. As a family we understood that quite likely she would not come out of the hospital. I realised that on my return home, there would be no mother. I sought to share my concern with my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. As I prayed, the name of my wife, (now for over 50 years,) seemed to come into my prayer. I may have seen her once or twice before when doing some work for her mother. I remember also being at her mother's baptism, as I was working in the area and was invited by my employer.

Through the good hand of God, on my next home leave I had the privilege of meeting her. It was the Sunday School anniversary at Dorking Chapel, and she taught in the Sunday School, so I hoped for a meeting with her, and had made a vow to God that if a meeting was made, I would give up smoking. But she was involved with the children and that opportunity did not arise. I had one cigarette left in the packet and smoked it on the journey home. My father, who was also at the meeting but used his moped for transport, returned home with an invite

from this young lady's mother to tea at a convenient time. This, I sensed was the Lord's gracious doing. As I thought of the vow that I had made before God, I had to search my heart, asking would I have thrown away that one cigarette?

This opened the way for our meeting, and almost the first question she put to me when we were alone was, had I been baptised? She had shared with her pastor at Dorking, the late Mr. B. Strudwick, her desire to follow the Lord in the path of believer's baptism. Returning home that evening, and turning to my Daily Light, one of the verses of Scripture was Proverbs 23. 26, "My son, give me thine heart." This stirred my heart into prayerful exercise, but my leave was just about to end, and I was required to return to my duties in the Middle East.

Travelling by train to the airport to take up my duties again, I was troubled by a recent dream in which it was suggested that the aircraft I was travelling in would be caught up in an electrical storm and be brought down, and I would perish. Hence Satan seemed to suggest my desire for baptism would be unfulfilled. However, the words of Holy Scripture that seemed to drop into my mind with such a calm and comforting effect, were Romans 8. 28): "All things work together for good to them that love God." To my shame, I confess I never took the trouble to look them up.

I returned safely to complete my overseas tour, and returning home the following year, within a day or two I tore off the page of the block calendar at home, and the text was, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, etc." It was the opening three words that gripped my attention at that time, being something I had learned by experience. I was beginning to see more clearly that my plans were for evil, but the Lord turned them to good for me.

Home again having completed my overseas tour, I met my dear one again at the prayer meeting at Dorking, and one of the brethren gave out the hymn, "Ashamed of Jesus! that dear Friend," which drew me to share with the pastor, Mr. Strudwick, my desire for baptism. I eventually came before the church, was accepted by my testimony, and was baptised.

TRINITARIAN BIBLE SOCIETY

Open day for new premises

On 19 October 2015 the Trinitarian Bible Society moved into new premises at William Tyndale House, 29 Deer Park Road in South West London.

A day for 'Open House and Thanksgiving Service' was held on Saturday, 13th February 2016. A very cold and damp day did not stop between 300 and 400 people from all over the world - Brazil, USA, Ireland, Scotland, Wales and of course England - travelling to view the brand new premises. For many, it was a day much anticipated.

The new premises are situated on an industrial estate, only a mile or so from the old premises. The first thing we noticed was the large car park, soon completely filled with visitors' cars. There was, however, plenty more parking in the road outside.



Much work had gone into organising the day and we were greeted at the gates and directed to the warehouse next door (which is shortly to be let to a furniture removal company) where Mr. Paul Rowland, the General Secretary, greeted all visitors warmly. Here we were given hot and cold drinks. Several displays were on hand. This was the gathering place for the many guided tours which took place.

Our own group was taken round by the TBS Resources Director, Mr. David Broome (the son of Mr. John Broome, the late editor of *Perception*), on a most interesting tour of the upstairs offices, committee room, and library. The whole building had obviously been built to a very high standard and was well appointed in every way. The views were lovely from big picture windows overlooking Deer Park which it was possible to enter through a side gate, and makes a nice place to walk during the staff's lunch breaks.



One of the guided tours

In the warehouse downstairs, the Society had very kindly supplied refreshments for the occasion which were well organised considering the large number of people present. There was a packed lunch for each person. While lunch was being served, people were mingling, meeting new and old friends from different denominations. A lot of children were there and several ‘picnicked’ on the floor of the warehouse.

About 1.45pm, people began to take their seats for the 2 o’clock service of thanksgiving. The seats brought in for the occasion were set out in a wide aisle of the warehouse, surrounded by racks of Bibles in

different languages, and everyone could see the platform in the distance somehow. Many of the young people sat together for the service.



Assembling for the Service of Thanksgiving

Mr Gerald Buss, the Chairman of the General Committee, conducted the meeting and introduced all the different speakers. After Bible reading, prayers, greetings from different parts of the world and also a children's address, we sang Psalm 100 to the tune Old Hundredth. The unaccompanied singing was very powerful and echoed round the warehouse. Other Psalms sung during the afternoon were Psalm 115 to the tune Crimond, and Psalm 78 to the tune Belmont. The singing was led by Mr. J. Sayers. Mr. D. Broome gave a talk called "*The Lord's Wondrous Provision*" in which he outlined the remarkable way, through the Lord's leadings, in which the new premises had been purchased, which was a cause of great thankfulness. Then Mr. P. Mehrshahi, Pastor of Providence Chapel, Cheltenham, preached from 1 Sam. 7. 12: "Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

After the service had ended, we gathered ourselves together saying our goodbyes, some collecting refreshments on the way out. Many faced a long journey home, and some of the children will have been



Some of the TBS stock

tired, but everyone will have happy memories of this remarkable day. As we left we felt what a wonderful work the TBS were carrying out as the Word of God is distributed to all nations, and we thought of the Lord's word: "So shall My word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55. 11).

The late Mr. Jabez Buss, Pastor of Southill Chapel, used to say there was one thing that could be written on every Death Certificate in the land: *Cause of death: SIN.*

ARE WE LIVING IN A GOLDEN AGE? (Part 2)

Andrew Rayner

CONTINUED FROM SPRING, PAGE 35

If we are living in a Golden Age in terms of living standards and life expectancy, are we also living in a Golden Age in terms of religion and freedom of worship? Certainly, our age is far from a time of religious prosperity such as the 18th century Evangelical Revival. We live at a time when Christianity in general, especially Bible believing Christianity, is at a very low ebb. Some have thought that things cannot have been this low at any time since the Reformation, but that is far from clear.

At the beginning of the 18th century, historians make it clear that England was in a 'moral quagmire and a spiritual cesspool.' That's a low place! The true God was all but eliminated from the churches. Deism (the belief in God as a creator but one who does not intervene in any way in His creation) was rampant. Thus the churches taught little more than ethical standards. Sir William Blackstone says he visited the churches of every major clergyman in London but heard neither a single gospel sermon nor indeed a sermon which contained any significant Christianity. Morally, the country was in a decadent state. Gambling and drunkenness were in every corner. England was described as 'one vast casino' with many families suffering greatly as their scant income was wasted on drink and gambling. A vast proportion of poor children died in workhouses and newborn babies could be found abandoned. Entertainments included cock fighting, bear baiting and watching public executions for which tickets were sold. In the meantime, some from less poor backgrounds were gaining wealth from the degrading slave trade.

It was against this background, in 1737, that George Whitefield was converted and became an ordained Anglican clergyman. He soon began preaching the glorious Gospel with the greatest of zeal. His desire was to bring the message of sin and salvation to the masses and so, when he found the clergy closing their church doors against him, he preached in the open air to the greatest of effect. Many thousands assembled to hear him and other preachers were also raised up. Large numbers were converted from all walks of life and the effects of this preaching went

far beyond those who believed - the country's moral state was largely turned around and Sabbath keeping was greatly restored.

Looking back, we might think of the 18th century Evangelical Revival as a Golden Age, but when we consider the historical accounts of the period in which it was set, it helps us to see a wider picture. In the still broader context, earlier centuries had seen the almost total domination of the Roman Catholic Church. There was also a bleak period when the Anglican Church dominated and non-conformist preachers were outlawed and persecuted. Then there were brighter times when local revivals appeared.

Today, evolutionists, atheists and secularists hold almost total sway and our Lord's name is deemed to be valueless, and worse still, disdained. Recent changes to the law have seen the return of open persecution by the State, thankfully affecting relatively few cases so far. On the positive side, blessed be God, we still have free access to the Bible and freedom to worship. Many from previous ages gave their lives for these very privileges. Furthermore, there remains a significant witness to God, even though this is partly for historical reasons. Although the percentage of the population who literally believe the Bible to be true is tiny, that percentage seems to be spread widely and thinly across most areas. Churches which at least profess to be Bible believing, appear in or around most of our larger towns.

Overall, although it is clear that we do not live in a Golden Age in terms of Christianity, others have lived in much worse times. Changes in recent years suggest that darker days may again follow. Notwithstanding this, when we think of the way that George Whitefield was raised up from nowhere, actually from a pub in Gloucester, and when we consider the effects of his ministry, we certainly have no cause to despair but rather to encourage ourselves in our faith and in our prayers.

Above all else, we are living in the Golden Age - the Gospel age - the New Testament age - the time when the whole Bible is freely available and the Gospel is freely preached: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor 6. 2). Whatever the state of religion around us, it does not help to look back and wish we lived at a more prosperous time; many who lived at those times suffered greatly and may have wished they could change with the

likes of us! We are now in the Golden Age.

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb 3. 12-13).

“Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation” (Psalm 95. 7-8 and Heb 3. 15).

“Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it” (Heb 4. 1).

OUR QUEEN - 90 YEARS



Queen on birthday walkabout

HRH Princess Elizabeth of York was born at 2.40am on Wednesday, 21 April 1926 at 17 Bruton Street, Mayfair, London. She was, of course, the first child of The Duke and Duchess of York, who later became King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. At the time she stood third in line to the throne, but it was not expected her father would become King, or that she would ever become Queen. The Queen is the first British monarch to have celebrated a Diamond Wedding. The engagement between Princess Elizabeth and Lieutenant Philip

Mountbatten RN was announced on the 9 July 1947. (He was created “Duke of Edinburgh” by King George VI on marriage.) They were married in Westminster Abbey on Thursday, 20 November 1947 at 11.30am in the presence of 2000 invited guests. Queen Elizabeth is the fortieth monarch since William the Conqueror. We thank God for preserving her to us for so many years, and pray that the Lord’s blessing might rest upon her and Prince Philip in the evening time of their lives. The Queen’s devotion to duty has been outstanding, and we are thankful for the stability she has brought to our country.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” (Matthew 6. 13).

Good News Bible - words omitted.

New International Version - words omitted.

Phillips Translation - words omitted.

Revised Standard Version - words omitted.

The Living Bible - words omitted.

The Moffatt Translation - words omitted.

The New English Bible - words omitted.

These familiar words concluding the Lord's prayer are almost invariably omitted from modern translations of the Bible. Even if not omitted, a note is inserted casting doubt upon their authenticity. “They were added by later hands,” we are told, “probably to make the prayer more suitable for public worship.”

Modern versions of the Bible have been powerfully influenced by two scholars of the 19th century, Brooke Westcott and Fenton Hort. Their work resulted in the publication of the many modern versions which have so confused readers of the present age.

Reference is frequently made to “the oldest and best manuscripts” but, in fact, these are generally “the oldest but least trustworthy manuscripts.” They frequently disagree with each other and a great lack of harmony is exhibited by the manuscripts used by modern scholars.

Those who reject the words suggest that they were added in early church worship and were later wrongly recognised as authentic Scripture. This view first appeared 500 years ago in Spain. The reason for this may be because it was common practice for the congregation in the ancient Greek churches to repeat the prayer aloud up to “deliver us from evil,” and the Minister then uttered the last part alone as a solemn doxology. This usage influenced some of the early copyists, who were so accustomed to leaving the final words to the Minister that they assumed the words were of the “church” rather than of the Scripture. For this reason some copyists did not include these words in their copies but regarded them as an uninspired addition. This misunderstanding

affected only a small minority of the ancient manuscripts including some which have survived to the present time and are wrongly held in high repute by modern scholars.

There are very substantial grounds for retaining these disputed words as found in our AV Bibles. We may have full confidence that they came from the lips of the Lord himself and were faithfully recorded by Matthew, preserved through the ages and correctly reproduced by Tyndale and his successors as a part of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is noticeable that many of the omissions in modern versions of the Bible are those verses that testify to the greatness of God and the glories of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We would just add that it seems likely that the Lord Jesus was using a form of the words found in 1 Chronicles 29. 11: "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all."

Finally, here is the Lord's prayer from Tyndale's Bible, as translated in 1526.

- 7 And whe ye praye bable not moche as the hethe do: for they thincke that they shalbe herde for their moche bablynges sake.
 - 8 Be ye not lyke them therfore. For youre father knoweth wherof ye haue neade before ye axe of him.
 - 9 After thys maner therfore praye ye. O oure father which arte in heve halowed be thy name.
 - 10 Let thy kyngdome come. Thy wyll be fulfilled as well in erth as it ys in heven.
 - 11 Geve vs this daye oure dayly breede.
 - 12 And forgeve vs oure treaspases eve as we forgeve oure trespassers.
 - 13 And leade vs not into teptacion: but delyver vs fro evell. **For thyne is ye kyngedome and ye power and ye glorye for ever. Amen.**
-

A FEW CURRENT MATTERS

Digital engagement

A survey by IT firm Logically has found that teenagers spend more than nine hours a day ‘digitally engaged’ on computers and smartphones. Those aged 13 to 17 devote on average one hour and 40 minutes to social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter daily. They use up to 15 minutes a day just taking ‘selfies’ to send to friends or post online. Over the course of a year, this is a staggering amount of time. How careful both young and old should be not to waste time - “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”

Family stability

The new Work and Pensions Secretary, Stephen Crabb, has said the importance of family stability cannot be overstated. Very sadly, in his first keynote speech he made no mention of marriage. Mr Crabb, who was raised by a single mother, said a stable family was ‘vital and foundational.’ He added that he believed that ‘a stable home and a family life gave children the best possible chance.’ We understand that the minister dropped a draft paragraph saying the Government should not ignore that ‘where children come from a lone parent family or have chaotic upbringings, they are far more likely to fail at school, turn to crime or fall into substance abuse.’

Churches open only at Easter and Christmas

A major report by the CofE Church Buildings review group has recommended that many churches should become ‘festival churches’ opening only during major religious festivals. A report on 16,000 Anglican churches found that one in four parishes now has fewer than ten regular Sunday worshippers. The Anglican church is spending around £160million a year to maintain thousands of buildings - almost half of which are grade-1 listed and many others grade-2 listed.

No television

The Broadcasters Audience Research Body (known as BARB) says one in twenty households do not own a television set. A surprising number have opted out of watching television altogether, saying their “lives are richer without it.”

China ends its one-child rule

Towards the end of 2015 China abandoned its one-child policy in an attempt to boost the economy. Couples have been limited to having a single child since 1979, an often brutally enforced rule intended to slow population growth. The law has caused long-term economic problems. Many women were coerced into having abortions when they became pregnant for a second time. The one-child policy, combined with a preference for having boys, has created a gender imbalance so severe that it is estimated that by 2020 there will be 30million enforced bachelors in China, unable to find wives as there will not be enough women to go round. We marvel at God's wonderful providence that in Britain the number of boys and girls born is almost the same: 105 girls to every 100 boys. We interfere with God's design at our peril.

Atheists on the rise

A study of almost 60,000 people has found that the number of atheists has trebled between 1972 and 2014 to 21 per cent. As has been rightly said, there are *no* atheists in hell.

Muslim Trust takes over non-religious secondary schools

Tauheedul Education Trust, a Muslim academy trust, is to take over three non-faith secondary schools in Blackpool and Bradford with a view to improvement. This is the first known case of a Muslim trust taking over such schools. Campaigners fear the trust could introduce its own religious education syllabus and influence other lessons and felt it to be a 'worrying trend.'

Letter in national newspaper

The Government is committed to making transgender equality a reality ('trans' people being those who have difficulties with their sexual identity). This led to the following letter appearing in a national newspaper: "What's all this nonsense about 'trans' people? Has no-one heard of the Y chromosome? If you've got it, you're irrevocably, indelibly, indisputably and for ever male, and that's that. Without it, well, you can be lots of things but male isn't one of them." *From a former Professor of Biological Sciences*. The holy Word of God says: "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; *male and female* created He them" (Genesis 1. 27).

CHALK STREAMS - A VALUABLE HABITAT

We read much in the Bible about rivers, brooks and streams, with 217 references to rivers, 49 to brooks, and 24 to streams. We have never been quite sure of the difference between a brook and a stream but remember once seeing a definition that you can step over a *brook*, wade through a *stream*, and swim across a *river*.

There are only around 200 chalk streams in the world, and 85% of these are found in England. A chalk stream provides a rare and important habitat that supports special wildlife and plants. As they are fed from groundwater aquifers (i.e. an underground layer of water-bearing rock), the water is of high clarity and chemically well-balanced. Sadly, these shallow and fast-flowing streams are frequently under threat caused by the extraction of water for drinking purposes, and bad land management which causes pollution. Older people can sometimes remember childhood chalk streams which are now little more than dried-up ditches. One of these is the River Beane which was once a famous trout fishing river, but is now classified as ‘over-abstracted.’



Another section of the River Lea chalk stream

Following a treaty made by King Alfred the Great, the River Lea formed part of the boundary between Saxon England and the Danelaw part of England where the law of the Danes held sway over Anglo Saxon law.

The name of the river derives from the old English ‘lug’ meaning ‘bright.’ Its source is found in Luton, originally ‘Lughton.’ It flows 42 miles through Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, eventually discharging into the Thames.

PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



“The land shall yield her increase, and the
trees of the field shall yield their fruit”
Leviticus 26. 4.

AUTUMN 2016

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EDITORIAL

“The gospel . . . by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain” (1 Cor. 15. 1 - 2.)

In this digital age there is a word that has taken on a meaning of great significance: *memory*. When we buy a new computer, or a tablet, or a smartphone, one of the most important items in the specification is its memory. Will its storage capacity be adequate for my needs, and will its RAM be sufficient for the kind of programs (or apps) I wish to run? I well remember my first business computer. It had no hard drive at all, but ran from two large floppy disks, one presumably to hold the program, and the other the data. The disks frequently corrupted, causing much frustration and lost time. Eventually the time came to replace the computer and we could hardly believe we were to acquire a machine that possessed a built-in hard drive of 10Mb. We thought this was wonderful, although, of course, in today’s terms it would be sufficient only to store three or four digital photographs.

In those early days of computers, people would often say, “Memory is very precious, you know.” What they meant was, “Don’t waste it.” File names would be as short as possible. I have on my system old files inherited from those days. One file, which today I would call ‘Legacies Received,’ remains as it was originally as ‘leg’ - just sufficient to identify its contents. No-one in those days would dream of using up precious memory with unnecessary words.

As evidence of how much God’s work exceeds man’s work, we have only to turn to the human brain. It has been estimated that the memory capacity of a human brain is around 2.5 petabytes, a petabyte being a million gigabytes. We are, of course, absolutely in the realms of speculation, but many scientists put the figure much higher, some even claiming the brain’s storage capacity is infinite. The folly and absurdity of a belief in evolution is here clearly put into focus. An almighty, creating God is subject to none of the restrictions under which man operates. But do intelligent, rational evolutionists *really* believe

that such a complex organ as the brain could simply have evolved? It is tempting to ask how many petabytes their own brains contain to believe such a monstrous, absurd lie! However, the real reason is that Satan, the god of this world, “hath blinded their eyes.”

In this editorial we wish to consider just a few things that the Word of God has to say about *memory*. The word itself does not appear frequently in the Bible, just six times in the Old Testament and only once in the New Testament. However, the word *remember* is closely connected, and there are hundreds of references to *remember*.

The only New Testament reference to memory is the text we have quoted at the beginning of this Editorial. The Apostle Paul is writing to the Corinthian church concerning the gospel he had preached to them. Had they kept in *memory* what he had told them? The truths he had preached to them were vital, and they were truths they could depend upon for salvation. One of our ministers at the end of the service frequently prays that “we might not leave it all behind on the chapel doorstep.” How necessary the prayer! The service ends. The gospel has been preached. We meet our friends outside. The conversation soon turns to other things. We discuss a hundred and one things - but have we kept in *memory* what has been preached to us?

Why is it so important? Well, the apostle Paul tells that it is through preaching we are saved. “It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” 1 Corinthians 1.21. So when we go up to the house of God, may we go not only to *hear* the gospel, but with a desire that it might be fastened in our memory and applied to our soul. John Berridge says in his hymn (886): “I seek and hope to find, A portion for my soul.” Just one aside here: have you ever wondered why the pulpit in our chapels is always in the centre? In many other churches the pulpit is on the side, and the altar is central. We put our pulpit in the centre because the preaching of the gospel is the Lord’s way of making known His salvation. “*It pleased God*” says the text. If it pleased God that preaching was to be His means of blessing His people, then it must have centre place in His house.

In the Old Testament a reference to *memory* is found in Proverbs 10.7: “The memory of the just is blessed.” First, what do we mean by “the just”? Who are they? In the book of Genesis we read that “Noah was a just man.” Does that mean he was perfect? When he drank wine

and became drunk before his children he was by no means perfect, was he? There is only One who is just in the sense of perfection. Moses, in his song recorded in Deuteronomy 32, speaking of the Lord says, “He is the Rock . . . a God of truth and without iniquity, *just* and right is He.” We have been struck that twice in the Acts the Lord Jesus is referred to as “the Just” - and notice the capital letter. Peter said, “But ye denied the Holy One and the Just”, and Stephen said, “The prophets . . . which shewed before of the coming of the Just One.” So the Lord Jesus was the One, the only One, who has ever been truly just.

Can we say the memory of *that* Just One is blessed to us? As we think of His love, His sacrifice, His work - do we feel it to be a blessing?

“Blessed are the eyes that see Him;
 Blest the ears that hear His voice;
 Blessed are the souls that trust Him,
 And in Him alone rejoice.”

The more usual view of this text is in reference to those we knew and loved for the truth’s sake in former days, who have now passed from time into eternity. Occasionally, the words are found on funeral hymnsheets. But if the one who has passed away can be described as *just* it is not because of any goodness in themselves - it is because of the grace that the Lord, the Just One, had given to them.

“No good in creatures can be found,
 But may be found in Thee.”

Finally, Psalm 145. 7: “They shall abundantly utter the *memory* of thy great goodness.” If the Lord has been good to us, may we never forget it. May we hold it in our *memory* to the end of our days. And remember that David in writing this Psalm said it is to be *uttered*, that is, we are to speak of it.

“Nor let His mercies lie
 Forgotten in unthankfulness,
 And without praises die.”

And if the Lord has done something for your soul, you will eventually want to speak of that, too.

With greetings and best wishes to you all.
 The Editor.

BUNHILL FIELDS - 'GOD'S ACRE'

Is it possible that 123,000 many people are buried in this ten acre plot? Yes, it *is* true! Discover more about this amazing place off City Road in the middle of London.

The origin of Bunhill Fields as a dissenters' burial ground

In the year 1498, in the reign of King Henry VII, records kept in the Guildhall inform us that land consisting of gardens and orchards on the north side of Chiswell Street, called Bone Hill (later Bunhill) within the manor of Finsbury, was converted into one large field containing eleven acres. Just over an acre of this was given over for training archers and other military men; today, after 500 years, that part is still the Artillery Company Headquarters.

Bunhill was intended by the Corporation of London to be used as a common cemetery for the poor during the dreadful Plague of 1665. It was enclosed with a brick wall at the expense of the Corporation. In the end it was not wanted for that purpose, and a lease of the land was granted to a man named Tindal, who converted it into a burying place for dissenters. It became known as 'Tindal's Burial Ground,' and is so marked on old maps. Dissenters were people who had separated from the Church of England, and could not be buried in consecrated churchyards. Today we are more likely to call them *non-conformists*.

The first burial, or, rather, the first legible stone, was in the year 1668, which was twenty years prior to the burial there of the celebrated John Bunyan. These were the days of the body snatchers, or grave robbers, who plied a gruesome but lucrative trade in supplying bodies to the nearby hospitals for dissection. The Corporation was forced to ensure the gate could not be climbed. Only relatively recently was the old spiked gate removed, though its position is still marked on maps.



The old spiked gate

Apart from Bunyan, many other well-known people are buried here: we can find the monuments of Daniel Defoe (author of *Robinson Crusoe*), William Blake (the poet), many relations of the Cromwell family including Henry Cromwell, the grandson of Oliver Cromwell.



Susanna Wesley

Susanna Wesley (mother of Charles and John Wesley and 17 other children) is also buried here. Exactly opposite Bunhill Fields is John Wesley's House and Chapel. It is said that John could see his mother's grave from his upstairs' bedroom window, which we were able to verify as true, but only in the winter when the plane trees are not in leaf.



*Bunhill Fields from
John Wesley's House*

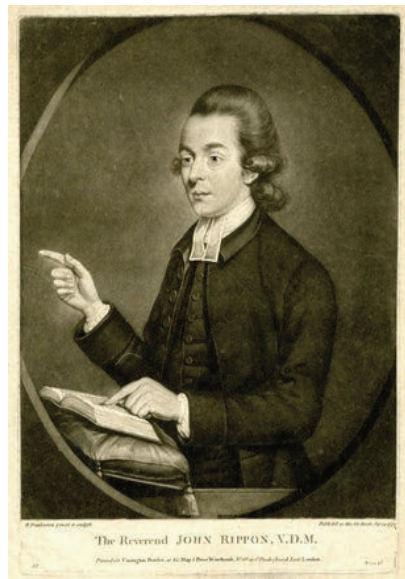
Today you can see 2,333 monuments and headstones, but it is thought that approximately 123,000 people are buried at Bunhill Fields. The last burial was in 1854. An Act of Parliament in 1867 preserved Bunhill Fields as an 'Open Space' and the City of London Corporation has maintained this place for the public to enjoy ever since. A

Conservation Management Plan was put together in 2006 to conserve the essential character of Bunhill Fields as a peaceful historic landscape.

Roaming through Bunhill Fields, one can understand why it has been given the title of ‘God’s acre.’ Many godly, gracious men and women are buried here, most names unknown to us, although many we *do* know. We hope in this and the next edition of *Perception* to mention just a few of the men buried here.

John Rippon (1751-1836)

We make no apology for introducing Dr. Rippon first. In his lifetime he spent much of his spare time attempting to produce a book recording every stone in Bunhill Fields. John Andrews Jones, who in 1849 produced a most valuable book entitled *Bunhill Memorials*, wrote: “The late Dr. Rippon had intended a more copious account, comprising the records on *every* stone. The worthy brother grasped at too much, and went down to his grave without accomplishing anything.” A visitor to Bunhill Fields recorded how she found him hard at work: “There we found a worthy man, Mr. Rippon by name, who was laid down upon his side tight between two graves, and writing out the epitaphs word for word. He had an ink-horn in his button-hole, and a pen and a book.”



*Image courtesy of
The British Museum*

In most people’s lives there is something for which they are specially remembered. In Dr. Rippon’s case it is undoubtedly his *A Selection of Hymns from the Best Authors, Intended to Be an Appendix to Dr. Watts’ Psalms and Hymns*. This hymnal first appeared in 1787, and was reprinted 27 times with over 200,000 copies coming off the

press. The remarkable feature of the book was the many original hymns appearing for the first time. Perhaps the best known of these is, “How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,” number 329 in *Gadsby’s Selection*. Rippon stated the author simply as “K.” This authorship appears in *Gadsby’s* followed by the date 1787. Some have thought the reference was to R. Keene, who was the singing leader in Dr. Rippon’s church and is known to have written a melody for the hymn.

Dr. Rippon was a Devonshire man. He was born at Tiverton, where his father, also John, was pastor of the Baptist church. It was here that he was baptised. In October 1771 the great Dr. Gill, pastor of the church at Carter Lane, Tooley Street, London, died, following which the pulpit was supplied by various ministers for twelve months. In October 1772 Dr. Rippon was invited to preach, and preached with great acceptance for seven Sabbaths. This led to an invitation to become their pastor, which was a great exercise to him. He wrote: “Often and daily have I laid it before the divine throne, and sought counsel of the all-wise and infallible Counsellor.” He was cautious in accepting the call and wrote to them: “I judge it proper, my dear and honoured brethren and sisters in the Lord, to spend some time longer amongst you before I return an absolute and decisive answer to the call you have given me.” He finally accepted the call to the pastorate in August 1773, an office he held for sixty-three years until his death on December 17, 1836.



The funeral took place exactly one week later. His body was brought into his chapel in New Park Street at one o'clock. Following the funeral service the procession made its way to Bunhill Fields, where an address was given to the large assembly by the Rev. Charles Room.

In addition to collecting together hymns for publication, Dr. Rippon also wrote a few of his own. One was a hymn on Death, "My thoughts that often mount the skies." We fear that his constant labours in Bunhill Fields might have affected his mind when penning verses 2 and 3:

The tyrant, how he triumphs here!
 His trophies spread around!
 And heaps of dust and bones appear
 Through all the hollow ground.

These skulls, what ghastly figures now,
 How loathsome to the eyes!
 These are the heads we lately knew,
 So beauteous and so wise.

He was said to be: "Affable in manner, affectionate in disposition, animated in the pulpit." He is buried with his beloved wife, Sarah.

THE ANVIL

Blacksmiths are highly skilled and can work iron to practically any shape once heated in the forge. Shaping takes place by hammering the iron on the anvil. Only once is an anvil mentioned in the Bible (Isaiah 41. 7) although there are many mentions of hammers.

A young boy in a village once became quite friendly with the village blacksmith. One day he noticed several broken hammers lying on the floor.

"Does the *anvil* ever break?" asked the boy. "No," replied the blacksmith, "the hammers break, but *never* the anvil."

Satan may use his hammers against the word of God, but he will never succeed in breaking it.



GEORGE MARSH, MARTYR

We hear of the *Sussex* Martyrs, the *Essex* Martyrs, and the *London* Martyrs. But we know of only one protestant martyr in the reign of ‘Bloody Mary’ who suffered in Chester, the county town of *Cheshire*. Here is his story.

Birth and education

George Marsh was born in Deane, near Bolton, Lancashire in the year 1515. He was well brought up by his parents, and at the age of 25 he married “an honest maiden of the country.” Together they earned their living on a farm, and children were born. Sadly, his wife died young. He now had a great desire to study, but first had to secure care for his children, which he successfully arranged. He was able to enter the university of Cambridge where “he much increased in learning and godly virtues,” eventually beginning to preach both at Cambridge and in his home parish of Deane, “earnestly setting forth God’s true religion.” Marsh, a tall man with a way with words, became a popular preacher.

His preaching offends the Bishop

It was not long before his preaching came to the attention of the Bishop of Chester, George Cotes. Realising the great danger he was in, he was advised by his mother and other friends urgently to flee the country. “To this counsel,” said Marsh, “my weak flesh would gladly have consented, but my spirit did not fully agree.” By earnest prayer he sought counsel of God what he should do that would be most to His honour and glory. In answer, the Lord sent to him a faithful friend, who advised him that he “should in no wise fly, but abide and boldly confess the faith of Jesus Christ.” These words so confirmed and settled his conscience that he determined patiently to bear such cross as it should please God to lay upon his shoulders. He therefore at once handed himself over to those who were searching for him.

Examined by the Earl of Derby

Twice he was examined before the Earl of Derby, the local vicar

and others, on his religious beliefs. He answered them wisely and carefully from Scripture. Eventually he was asked: "But what is thy belief in the sacrament of the altar?" "I believe," he answered, "that whosoever, according to Christ's institution, does receive the holy sacrament of Christ's body and blood, does eat and drink Christ's body and blood, with all the benefits of his death and resurrection, to their eternal salvation."

"But do you believe," asked his examiners, "that the bread and wine, by virtue of the words pronounced by the priest, are changed into the very body of Christ?" Marsh replied that he knew no more than he had said already. At this the Earl was much offended, and after many threatenings, ordered that he should be detained in custody until it was determined what should be done next. "I was kept," said Marsh, "in a cold, windy, stone house, where I lay two nights without any bed, saving a few canvas tent-cloths. I had no woollen clothes. No man was suffered to come to me but my keeper twice a day, when he brought me meat and drink."

The following Lord's Day, which was Palm Sunday, he was sent for after dinner by the Earl and his council, including the vicar of Prescott. After a long conversation alone with the vicar, the vicar reported that the answers given by Marsh "were sufficient for a beginner." With this the Earl was well pleased, and said he doubted not that by the help of the good vicar, the man would soon be conformable. "So," said Marsh, "after many fair words, he commanded I should have a bed, with fire, and liberty to go amongst his servants."

Troubled he had not more boldly confessed Christ

Marsh was now greatly troubled that he had not more boldly confessed Christ, leaving his enemies to think they would turn him round, "whereat I was much grieved. I cried more earnestly unto God by prayer, desiring Him to strengthen me by His Holy Spirit with boldness to confess Him: and to deliver me from their enticing words."

Seeing they could get no further with him, he was transferred first to Lancaster Castle, then to Chester. Here he was sent for by Bishop Dr. Cotes to appear before him in his hall, nobody being present but the two. The Bishop tried hard to persuade Marsh to submit himself to the Church of Rome, but when he saw that he could not prevail, he sent him again to the prison. After that, the Bishop sent to him one Massie, a

fatherly old man, another named Wrench who was the schoolmaster, then Hensham the Bishop's chaplain, and finally the Archdeacon. They questioned him using many crafty and subtle arguments, but the Lord upheld him with (in his own words) "His most Holy Spirit of comfort and patience who giveth us a mouth and wisdom how and what to speak, where-against all his adversaries were not able to resist."

Examined by the Bishop

A few days later the Bishop ordered him to be brought into the Chapel of Our Lady in the Cathedral Church of Chester at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. With the Bishop was the city mayor, a Dr. Wall, George Wensloe the chancellor, and John Chetham the registrar.

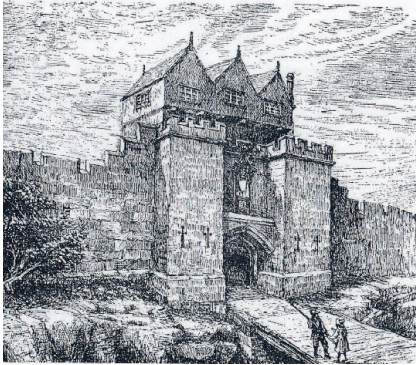


The Cathedral Church of Chester

The chancellor laid to his charge that he had preached and openly published most heretically and blasphemously within the parish of Deane, Eccles, Bolton, Bury, and many other parishes within the bishop's diocese, directly against the pope's authority and the catholic

Church of Rome, the blessed mass, the sacrament of the altar, and many other articles. George Marsh answered them very modestly, reminding them that what he had taught “all of you now present did acknowledge in the time of the late King Edward the Sixth.” His answers were noted and written down by the registrar. After this, the company brake up, and he was returned to prison again.

His last and final appearance



The old Northgate prison

He spent the three weeks before his final trial in the City Gaol built above the arch of the North Gate of the city. No trace above ground of this horrendous gaol exists today. However, electricity workers recently discovered underground remains of prisoners' cells below the present street level, including a *Little-Ease*, a cell too short to lie down and too low to stand up. He left the gaol to walk the 300 yards

to the Cathedral. He entranced through Abbey Gate and was taken to the Lady Chapel behind the high altar.



The Lady Chapel, unchanged from Marsh's time

AN ACCOUNT OF THE PROCEEDINGS FROM FOXE'S *BOOK OF MARTYRS*:**Questioned by the chancellor**

Then the chancellor first asked him, whether he were not one of the bishop's diocese? To the which he answered, that he knew not how large the Bishop's diocese was, for his continuance was at Cambridge. But then they replied and asked, whether he had not lately been at Deane parish in Lancashire, and there abode? And he answered, "Yea." Then the chancellor read all his answers that he made in that place at his former examination: and at every one he asked him, whether he would stick to the same, or no? To the which he answered again, "Yea, yea."

"How say ye then to this?" quoth the chancellor. "In your last examination, amongst many other damnable and schismatical heresies, you said that the church and doctrine taught and set forth in King Edward's time, was the true church, and the doctrine of the true church: and that the Church of Rome is not the true and catholic church."

"I so said indeed," quoth Marsh, "and I believe it to be true."

The bishop's response

"Thou art an arrogant fellow indeed then," said the bishop. "In what article is the doctrine of the Church of Rome repugnant to the doctrine of Christ?" To whom George Marsh answered and said, "O my Lord, I pray you judge not so of me: I stand now upon the point of my life and death; and a man in my case hath no cause to be arrogant, neither am I, God is my record. And as concerning the disagreement of the doctrine, among many other things the Church of Rome erreth in the sacrament. For whereas Christ, in the institution thereof, did as well deliver the cup as the bread, saying, Drink ye all of this; and Mark reporteth that they *did* drink of it: in like manner St. Paul delivered it unto the Corinthians. Now the Church of Rome doth take away one part of the sacrament from the laity. Wherefore, if I could be persuaded in my conscience by God's word that it were well done, I could gladly yield in this point."

Then said the bishop, "There is no disputing with a heretic." And therefore when all his answers were read, he asked him whether he would stand to the same; "being as they were," said he, "full of heresy, or else forsake them, and come unto the catholic church."

To this he made full answer, and said that he held no heretical opinion, but utterly abhorred all kind of heresy, although they most

untruly did slander him. And he desired all the people present to bear him witness, that in all articles of religion he held none other opinion than was by law most godly established and publicly taught in England at the death of King Edward the Sixth; and in the same pure religion and doctrine he would, by God's grace, stand, live, and die.

His condemnation

This being done, the bishop took a writing out of his bosom and began to read the sentence of condemnation. Then his popish priests, and many other of the ignorant people, called upon Marsh, with many earnest words, to recant; and, amongst others, one Pulleyn, a shoemaker, said to him, "For shame, man, remember thyself, and recant." They bade him kneel down and pray, and they would pray for him: so they kneeled down, and he desired them to pray for him, and he would pray for them.

Then the bishop put his spectacles again upon his nose, and read forward his sentence unto the end, and straight after said unto him, "Now will I no more pray for thee, than I will for a dog." And Marsh answered that, notwithstanding, he would pray for his Lordship.

Committed to the North-gate prison

After this the bishop delivered him unto the sheriffs of the city. Then his late keeper bade him, "Farewell, good George," with weeping tears, which caused the officers to carry him to the prison at the North-gate, where he was very straitly kept until the time he went to his death, during which time he had small comfort or relief of any worldly creature.

Being in the dungeon or dark prison, none that would do him good could speak with him, or at least durst enterprize so to do for fear of accusation: and some of the citizens which loved him in God, for the gospel's sake, (whereof there were but a few,) although they were never acquainted with him, would sometimes in the evening, at a hole upon the wall of the city, (that went into the said dark prison,) call to him, and ask him how he did. He would answer them most cheerfully, that he did well; and thanked God most highly, that He would vouchsafe of His mercy to appoint Him to be a witness of His truth, and to suffer for the same, wherein he did most rejoice; beseeching Him that he would give him grace not to faint under the cross, but patiently bear the same to His

glory, and comfort of His church.

Once or twice he had money cast him in at the same hole, about ten pence at one time, and two shillings at another time; for which he gave God thanks, and used the same to his necessity.



The Bridge of Sighs, originally with railings to prevent the prisoners escaping. The bridge led from the North Gate Prison to the Bluecoat chapel where condemned prisoners were taken for the last rites.

His last day

When the time and day appointed came that he should suffer, the sheriffs of the city, whose names were Amry and Cooper, with their officers and a great number of poor simple barbers with rusty bills [spears] and pole-axes, went to the North-gate, and there took out the said George Marsh, who came with them most humbly and meekly, with a lock upon his feet.

And as he came upon the way towards the place of execution, he went all the way unto his death with his book in his hand, looking upon the same; and many of the people said, “This man goeth not unto his death as a thief, or as one that deserveth to die.”

Now when he came to the place of execution without the city, near unto Spittle-Boughton, one Vawdrey, deputy chamberlain of Chester, showed Marsh a writing under a great seal, saying that it was a pardon for him if he would recant. Whereat Marsh answered, that he would gladly accept the same (and said further that he loved the queen); but, forasmuch as it tended to pluck him from God, he could not receive it.

After that, he began to speak to the people, showing the cause of his death, and would have exhorted them to stick unto Christ. Whereupon one of the sheriffs said, “George Marsh, we must have no sermoning

now.” So kneeling down he made his prayers, and then put off his clothes unto his shirt, and then was he chained to the post, having a number of faggots under him, and a thing made like a firkin [barrel], with pitch and tar in the same, over his head to drip thereon; and by reason the fire was unskilfully made, and that the wind did drive the same to and fro, he suffered great extremity in his death, which notwithstanding he abode very patiently.

When he had been a long time tormented in the fire without



moving, having his flesh so broiled and puffed up, that they which stood before him supposed he had been dead; notwithstanding, suddenly he spread abroad his arms, saying, ***“Father of heaven, have mercy upon me!”*** and so yielded his spirit into the hands of the Lord.

Upon this many of the people said that he was a martyr, and died marvellous patiently and godly: which thing caused the bishop shortly after to make a sermon in the cathedral church, affirming that the said Marsh was a heretic, burnt like a heretic, and was a firebrand in hell.

God’s judgment upon the bishop

In recompense of this this *good and charitable* sermon, within short time after, the just judgment of God appeared upon the said bishop, recompensing him that not long after he turned up his heels and died, and a report went out that was in all men’s mouths, that he died of a disgraceful disease.

George Marsh suffered on 24 April 1555 (a Monday). He was burned at the stake on Gallows Hill, Boughton just one mile outside the centre of Chester. Such of his ashes as could be found were gathered

together by his friends and buried in the nearby St. Giles Cemetery, just 100 yards away. St. Giles was founded as a leper hospital and chapel early in the 12th century and remained in use until 1645. Only the cemetery remains today. Access without a ladder is not possible, although, tantalisingly, a number of tombstones could just be seen through the long, uncut grass. (The locals still call it The Mount). Here also are buried a large number of royalist defenders from the time of the civil war who suffered great loss of life in 1644. It



St. Giles Cemetery

was also used for victims of the plagues which ravaged the city in the 16th and 17th centuries. The cemetery remains in the hands of Chester's church of St. John the Baptist where a memorial plaque can be found.



The Obelisk



In St. John's Church

The place where Marsh died is today marked by a commemorative obelisk of grey granite which bears the inscription, “George Marsh born Dean, Co. Lancaster. To the memory of George Marsh martyr who was burned to death near this spot for the truth’s sake April 24th 1555.” Also engraved are the words: “I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God” (Rev. 6. 9).

On 24th April each year Protestants in Chester gather outside the town hall to commemorate the life and death of George Marsh. Some of his personal letters and journals can be found at Smithills Hall Museum, Bolton, Lancashire.

CRYONICS - IS IT SCRIPTURAL?

Death is a solemn subject. It marks the irreversible divide between time and eternity.

Until recent years there was never much doubt about what was meant by death. There is, however, a growing body of people who believe that death is just one phase in the life of an individual. They believe that with advances in medical science the day is coming when it may be possible to revive the preserved bodies of those who, in the conventional sense, have died. Although it is tempting to dismiss this as nothing but science fiction, we need to remember that not much more than a generation ago to have put forward the idea that a person might be given a new heart would have been dismissed as an impossibility. It was only in 1967 that Christiaan Barnard, the South African cardiac surgeon, undertook the first heart transplant. The first successful double lung transplant was carried out in 1986.

First of all, what is Cryonics? Cryonics is the preservation of deceased humans by deep-freezing in liquid nitrogen at a temperature of minus 196° Centigrade. (The Greek word *kryos* means *cold*.)

Scripturally, the *burial* of a body after death seems to be right and proper. When Abraham lost his beloved Sarah in Kirjath-arba he asked for “a buryingplace, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.” Joseph’s desire was to be buried, and after they carried his coffin many miles up out of Egypt, we read, “The bones of Joseph . . . buried they in Shechem.” God Himself buried Moses: “And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor.” Samson’s brothers came and took up his lifeless body, “and brought him up, and buried him between

Zorah and Eshtaol.” John the Baptist was beheaded by King Herod, but “his disciples came, took up the body, and buried it.” Stephen was cruelly stoned, but “devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.” Some say that the Lord Jesus Christ was not really *buried*. However, when the woman who loved Him so much broke the box of precious ointment and anointed His feet, what did He say? “Against the day of *my burial* hath she done this.”

The first person to be cryopreserved was one James Bedford in 1967. However, the leader of the Cryonics Society of California, Robert Nelson, ran out of money to maintain the cryopreservation of existing patients and was sued for allowing nine bodies to decompose. It is estimated that around 300 people have so far been cryopreserved in the United States with 2000 more having made arrangements for cryopreservation after their legal death. In Britain there are currently no facilities for storing cryopreserved bodies, but a number of people have signed up to be flown to the US for preservation when they die.

So can there be any merit in what these people believe? Can there be any possibility of a dead person being brought back to life through medical means?

We do not normally need to concern ourselves too much with a precise definition of what death is. Occasionally this can be important in the legal profession. One generally accepted definition of death is found in Duhaime’s Law Dictionary: “Death is the irreversible cessation of circulatory and respiratory functions and of all functions of the entire brain, including the brain stem.” This is what must be certified by a doctor when someone passes away. In days past one way of ascertaining whether a person was truly dead was to hold a feather in front of their nose or mouth - if the feather did not move it was certain



Dr. Jerry Lemier, president of Alcor Life Extension Foundation. Each vat contains four bodies suspended headdown.

that respiration had ceased. An alternative test was to hold a mirror in front of the nostrils - if there was no misting the patient was not breathing. The stethoscope was not invented until the 1800's. These early stethoscopes were more like an ear trumpet and were consequently monaural. In 1940 an entirely new type of stethoscope was designed by Hewlett Packard (I expect many of us have an HP computer or printer). A diagnosis of death then became more a case of listening for a heart beat rather than whether there was still respiration.

Supporters of cryonics believe that today's medical criteria for death are flawed and inappropriate by the standards of future medicine. For example, when an otherwise healthy man dies of a heart attack, his brain (which is the seat of his memories, personality, and identity) is still intact. By placing him into cryopreservation immediately after death, they aim to preserve his brain until at some time in the future it is possible to cure him. They point out that today many heart-attack victims are successfully resuscitated despite the fact that only 50 years ago they would have been given up as dead. Today's doctors can often resuscitate people after cessation of breathing and circulation, sometimes even after an hour or more without heartbeat, breathing, or brainwave activity (as in cases of cold water drowning). They say that a person's memory, personality, and identity remain within the brain even after the person stops functioning.

But what happens to the souls of people while in a frozen state? The answer usually given by Christian supporters of cryonics is that the soul of a cryonics patient is in the same condition as the soul of a frozen human embryo or the soul of a person who is in a coma or unconscious. We believe this is beyond our Scriptural knowledge. The precise moment that the soul is breathed into an unborn baby is hidden from us. Some believe it to be at the moment of conception, others at the time the first breath is taken. We do not know. "As thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all" (Ecclesiastes 11. 5).

Others believe that the story of Elisha restoring to life the Shunamite boy (2 Kings 4. 18-37) has features in common with both cryonics and modern resuscitation technology. This story is used in an attempt to establish that God Himself approves of the desire to bring

back to life a person that has died. As a further argument they bring forward Paul's desire to continue living in his words to the Philippians: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. . . nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you" (Philippians 1. 21-25).

To us, none of these arguments carries any weight. Many scriptures show us that the soul leaves the body immediately after death.

First, we think of Jacob. He died, and his spirit left him. "And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people" (Genesis 49. 33). ('Ghost' here means 'soul.')

Second, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. The dying thief was told, "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." *Today* - his soul would immediately depart to heaven. And then the Lord's own death: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost."

Third, we think of Stephen. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7. 59).

We feel it is clear from these scriptures that the soul leaves the body at the moment of death. God has decreed that the days of our years are threescore years and ten. No advances in medical science can ever overturn God's decrees. God made man as a living soul, not just a body, but body *and* soul, and the two will never be reunited until the great resurrection day. "The body without the spirit is dead" James 2. 26.

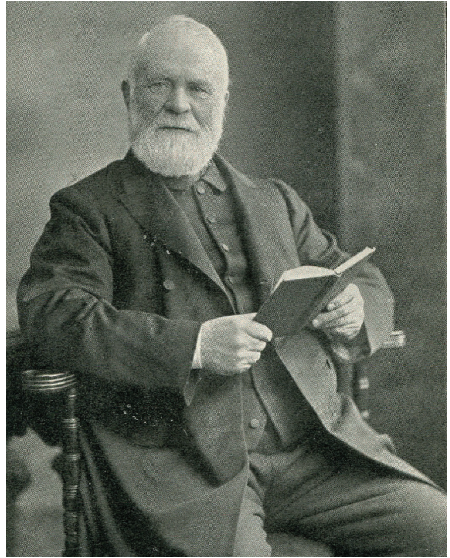
For these reasons we feel we must condemn cryonics as an unscriptural practice. We have no doubt that what has started slowly, will over the next few years escalate in the same way as cremation, which we feel is also unscriptural. The only thing that will deter many from taking steps to have their bodies preserved is the cost, which at the present time is around £90,000 for full-body preparation and suspension.

Two further texts to consider: And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni (Gen. 35.18).

In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be (Eccl. 11. 3).

WILLIAM SMITH - PART 3

Carried home drunk; workmates killed in the stone quarry; ensnared by worldly companions; hears his first gospel sermon and feels, If he is right, I am right. We continue the life of this dear man of God who afterwards became Pastor of Rehoboth Chapel, Tunbridge Wells.



(CONTINUED FROM SUMMER 2016 PAGE 23)

Leaves Birmingham

When I got to my last ten shillings I left Birmingham, and went back into the country, and engaged myself to a farmer at a place named Hurley. There I worked until the 10th of October, when I left and went to a place named Marston Jabbet, about six miles from Coventry, to work in a stone quarry, where the Lord had purposed to stop me in my mad career of sin and folly.

The first work I did there was to look after two horses, and draw coal from the mines to supply the engine that drew up the stone out of the quarry. Sometimes I drove a pony that drew stones along some rails up to the boats which were in the canal, where they were loaded. This would be at the latter end of 1852.

This calling I followed for twelve months. During this time I was drawn into all manner of sin and wickedness by a man I lodged with. Drink and gambling were my delight. The house I lodged at was about half a mile from Bedworth, and about two miles from Bulkington. I remember on one occasion I had been drinking until midnight. After I was turned out of the public-house I went down the road towards my lodgings, and being quite drunk I went and lay down under the fire-hole

of the engine, unconscious that there was fire above my head. I lay there for two or three hours. Then by some means I awoke, and seeing the fire above my head I sprang out, and to my great surprise not one spark had fallen upon me. Here I view the Lord's watchful care exercised over me in a remarkable way.

Carried home dead drunk

Soon after this, about Christmas time, I went out with my landlord. We called at a public-house in Bedworth, and began to play at bagatelle. We kept on with the game until eleven o'clock, when it was time to close the house. There was snow upon the ground and it was very cold, so we agreed to have a glass of neat rum each, as we said, to keep the cold out. But we drank four each instead of one, and then started to go home. As soon as we got out into the fresh air I was overcome, and fell down in the snow, and could not get up again. From that moment I lost sight of my companion, and did not see him until the next day. I lay there until my face was frozen to the ground, when a woman passed that way looking for her own son, and seeing me lie there, and supposing me to be her son, she walked across to where I lay; and just then a policeman came up to her and asked who I was. She told him, and then they got me to her house, and laid me on the brick floor without my knowledge, and there I lay until morning. When it was light I awoke, and when I got up from the floor I wondered where I was, and how I came there. I unlocked the door and went out to see what part of the village I was in, and when I had looked round I perceived where I was. I shut the door gently, and went to my lodgings, but how I got to that woman's house remained a mystery to me until I met her one day in the road, when she told me where she found me, and who helped her to get me to her house. I thanked her for her kindness, and left her. For some time after this event my face felt very numbed, and I could not think what was the cause; but when she told me how and where she found me I concluded my face was frostbitten. But through mercy after a little suffering the numbness passed away, and the proper feeling returned. Here I see, and must acknowledge, that had it not been for the long-suffering and kind forbearance of my covenant God in Christ, I should have perished that night, and hell would have been my portion. This incident gives me another proof that God prevents Satan from destroying His people, even in the days of their unregeneracy.

Works on the canal boats

I now began to go with the boats which carried stone to various parts of the country. We used to take a great many boat-loads to Coventry, and when we had no stone to take out I used to help the men that were employed to wheel the soil and clay off the top of the stone rock which was in the quarry. One Friday it was damp and a misty rain fell, so that the planks were rather slippery. We took all the precaution we could to keep from slipping off the planks, which were about forty feet above where the stone had to be got out, but as one of my mates was going across with an empty barrow, he fell and was killed. I did not see him fall, as I was a short distance away stacking up some stone. I saw the men running towards the top of the quarry, so I ran, and just as I got to the top I met three men smothered with blood, carrying him in their arms. The sight caused a thrill of horror to go through me. They asked me to assist them to undress him, but I could not. This dreadful incident revived in my mind the same kind of feelings I had when the young man died so suddenly from a fracture of the skull, through carrying the stone on his head up the ladder.

After my mind became a little calm I went and stood upon the plank where this poor man fell from, and while I stood there such an awful feeling came over me, that it was with great difficulty I was prevented from falling in the same place. But here again mercy prevented me from coming to such an awful end. After this I began to make vows and resolutions that I would reform my life. So I began to read my Bible and try to pray, but as it was performed in my own strength, I kept failing; so that I can say:

“The more I strove against sin’s power,
I sinned and stumbled but the more.”

Continues in sin

I used to think I was getting better because I had refrained from drinking, gambling, and swearing, which I was very much addicted to before; but the Lord was pleased to prove to me my weakness in a painful way, and it was in the following way and manner. One day I was driving the pony which drew the stones to the boats (as before named), and I had become so good in my own view that I pushed behind the waggon to ease the pony; and as I was running along with one load, I saw a lad cross the rails a distance before me. When I got up to where

I thought he crossed the rails, the waggon came off the rails. I instantly accused him of putting a stone on the rails on purpose to throw the waggon off. He said he did not, and I swore he did; and the oaths I used were awful. Some of the men came, and we lifted it on again with a large lever which we used for the purpose. This circumstance brought me into great trouble, but I thought I would try and do better in the future.

About this time I had to go a voyage to Weedon, to take some stone for the repairing of the roads. I had five men to help me unload, and they wanted some beer; so I fetched them some. I drank one glass with them, and after we were unloaded I sent one of the men for some more, but he never returned with either money or beer. This enraged me, but that did me harm, for the first public-house we came to we were influenced to go into it, and we had some more beer, and to my shame I say it, we got drunk. I tried to sing a song, but I could not, for every time I started I broke down. All of a sudden a light shone into my mind, which convinced me of my awful state as a sinner before God. I thought of my vows, and I felt dreadfully afraid the Lord would cut me off. I started out of the public-house instantly, and went and tied the boat up for the night; then I went and gave the horse its supper, and returned to the boat for the night full of awful forebodings.

Softness of heart

I cannot remember whether I had any sleep, but we started home early in the morning, and on the way I believe I was blest with the first feeling of the blessed Spirit's influence as I attempted to pray. While I was pleading for mercy I felt my heart drawn towards the Lord in a very remarkable way; the power and sweetness I felt in my soul greatly surprised me, as I had never felt the like before. My mind became more calm, and I wondered what it all could mean.

I soon lost the savour of this feeling, and again became greatly exercised about my sad state as a sinner before God. On another occasion I had to go on a voyage to Brentford, and from there down the Thames to Westminster Bridge with a load of paving-stone for Aldershot Barracks; this took me a fortnight to accomplish. When we arrived at Brentford, the tide was down, so we had to wait until the next full tide came, which was about one o'clock in the morning. We had to engage a waterman to take us along the river; these are men authorised

to take charge of boats and barges after they have served seven years' apprenticeship. We went on all right for a time. I was steering my boat; we had long ropes fastened to my boat, and the other end to the waterman's boat, which he rowed before us to see if there was any other boat or barge at anchor in the stream. At length he saw a sand barge at anchor just in the stream; he at once shouted as loud as he could, for their anchor chain lay just in the way of my boat. Just before my boat came up with it, a man came up on the deck with only his shirt on, and loosed the chain so that my boat went over it; if he had waited to dress, my boat would have struck the chain and sunk, because I was obliged to steer where I was told, or run the boat ashore. Here was another merciful escape from being drowned. When I saw the danger we were in, by taking our small boats down the Thames, I told my master of it; and after that he engaged a barge at Brentford to take the stones to the Westminster Bridge; so I was delivered from that danger.

Made tender in the fear of the Lord

While we were on the Thames it thundered and lightened very heavily, and what made it more solemn to me was the dreadful oaths and the cursing and swearing which came out of the mouths of the bargemen that lay near me. God had now made me tender in His fear, and I wanted to get away from the company of such people, and so I did as soon as possible. The wind was very rough when we started back, so that we were longer getting back to Brentford; but we got back quite safely. In coming from Brentford to home we took it in turns to go forward and get the locks ready for the boats to run in without hindrance; when it came to my turn I started forward in the dark, and on the Grand Junction Canal the locks are all double. As we were going up hill, the locks were sometimes full; if so, we had to empty them. I got to one that was full and drew the inside paddles up, and in crossing the gates on to the other side my foot slipped, and I fell, but I caught hold of the gate and saved myself from rolling into the water. Here was another wonderful deliverance, for had I fallen into the water I must have been drowned, for some of the paddles being up, I should have been drawn through the paddle hole by the force of the water. Nothing further occurred through that journey, so we got safe home.

The Lord's first promise

Up to this time I had never heard a Gospel sermon. I still kept

going to and from Marston and Brentford for several months, with a pair of boats. I had three men under me, but they did not like me because I would not work on a Sunday; this I was not compelled by my master to do, so I would not do it for them to get extra money to spend in beer.

On one occasion we started as usual. I left my landlady and her husband at home quite well in health. We arrived at Tring summit on the Saturday night, but because I would not work on the Sunday, the three men started away and left me to mind the boats and see to the horses myself. I felt very lonely, but all at once I thought of a little book which was in my cabin cupboard. It was called, "The Messenger of Mercy," and so it proved to me. I took it, and when I opened it, the first words which caught my eye were these: "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of Me." This broke me down in love and contrition at the feet of the Lord, and made me strong in Him, but very weak in body, so that I had to lie down on my bed to weep to the praise of the mercy I had found. This was a good day to me. The men did not come back until night, so I had a good Sabbath; and I never said a word of reproof to them for going away. This was the first promise the Lord gave to me.

We started on our journey early on Monday morning, and we got there safely, unloaded, and then returned home. When I arrived home, I found to my great surprise my landlady was dead and buried; she was a worldly woman, and I expect died as she had lived, in sin. After we had been at home a few days we loaded and started again, and all went on very well all the way.

Soul exercises

I was now brought into very great exercise of soul about my state and standing before God. I used, whenever I saw an opportunity to leave the boat, to get under the hedge or any other secret place to try to pour out my desires unto the Lord. Sometimes I used to get access, but sometimes my heart was as hard as a nether millstone. On our return we were detained half-a-day, if I remember rightly, through a boat being sunk; this loss of time we had to make up by working earlier in the morning and later at night. We had to pass through two tunnels, one at Branston and the other at Blisworth. There are men employed at each of these tunnels to leg boats through, but each boatman had to pay them. If you should happen to come to the mouth of the tunnel, and the men have gone through with another boat, you must either leg yours through

yourself, or wait perhaps three hours until they return with another boat. Through being hindered on our journey, we got to Branston tunnel very late, and there were no leggers there, so we had to send the horse over the top of the tunnel by a man who heard us coming, and who had sent his boat through by the men, and we had to leg ours through ourselves.

As some of my readers may not understand what is meant by legging the boats through these tunnels, I will try and explain it. On the top of the deck there is a large screw with an eye in it, fixed about a foot from the edge of the boat, and on each side there is a plank about half a yard wide at the bottom, and a foot wide at the top, and about five feet in length. There is a strong iron hook fixed at the top of this plank, and this hooks into the eye of the screw on the deck, and when put down on the deck it reaches from the side of the boat about two feet over the water on each side. The two men, one on each side, lay down flat upon these planks, put their feet against the wall of the tunnel, and using their feet together they get the boats slowly through. In this way we had to take ours through, which occupied us nearly an hour. When we got nearly to the end I saw the stars shining, and I told my mate we were nearly through, so we got up, and unhooked each one his plank. When I had laid mine down upon the deck I turned giddy and fell with my body upon the side of the boat, and dropped into the bottom. If I had fallen into the water I must have been drowned, because the movement of the boat would have drawn me under it, so that I could not have escaped. Here I again was preserved by my gracious God from a watery grave. It hurt my side, but after a time it got all right again, and we got safe home.

Convictions deepened

On another occasion, as I was returning from Northampton with the boat (we only worked one when we went short journeys), we stayed all night at the bottom lock, at a place named Hill Moreton. In the morning when I was preparing to start home, there was a boat passed by into the lock where I was, and I saw a woman in the cabin dressing a baby. I saw them pass out of that all right; her husband and son were getting the locks ready and working the boat through. The next lock was just round a bend of the canal. They went into it all right; there the boat sank, and the poor woman and her baby were drowned. I heard someone screaming, so I at once ran to see what was the matter, and saw the baby

whirling round in the water quite dead. They got the mother and baby out of the water and carried them into a house close by. This sad circumstance was a means of deepening my convictions, and I never passed through that lock without thinking about it.

Ensnared by worldly companions

As yet, however, I was not brought to forsake all my sinful companions. When one of these was about to be married, he asked me to attend his wedding, which I did, and remained there three days, trying to enjoy myself with worldly amusements. When I returned with two or three more, we called at a public-house to finish up; and there I felt suddenly convinced of my awful position. I said to my companions, "I must go," and I started out of their company a poor convinced sinner, never more to join with them again.

My soul trouble after this became very great, and I was noticed by all who knew me. One day the pony of which I have spoken died, and I had to take him on a cart down to Nuneaton, to a place where they bought dead animals. I went to the back gates, but could not make anyone hear. I then went round to the front shop, which was in another street. I told the man in the shop what I had brought, and he asked me to go through and down the yard, instead of going round the way I had come. I did so, and as I was going I saw a large Newfoundland dog chained up to the wall; he began to jump and bark, and looked very fierce. I kept walking on, as I saw he could not reach me, but when I got nearer to him he gave a sudden leap towards me, and the staple that he was chained to came out of the wall. He at once leaped at me with his two feet upon my shoulder, I caught him by the hair on each side of his face and held him until help arrived. One of the men came, took hold of the chain, which he put under the bottom of a door, then he went inside and held it in his hand, and told me to throw the dog from me. I did so and he went away very quiet. Thus the Lord preserved my life once more, for had the dog knocked me down I must have been mauled before any assistance could have reached me.

A religious professor

About this time they had a religious professor come to stay where I was lodging. This man tried to bring me over to his creed, which was a do and live system. He talked very nice about the love and mercy of God, but said nothing about His justice in a broken law. I was very

confused in my judgment, and I listened to what he said about the Scriptures and the interpretations he put upon various portions of them, and I wished I was like him. One day I went with him for a walk, and he told me that the Lord was so merciful that He would not lay upon us more than we could bear, even if we were lost. This greatly astonished me. I said I did not want to be lost. He said if I lived at Coventry he could make something of me; but he lived long enough to prove that he could not, for in that very place, or in a field near to it, the Lord helped me to confound him by the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit's gracious teaching in my soul, and from that time I had nothing more to do with him.

Delivered from novel reading etc.

As my mind became more enlightened I began to see that card-playing was a sin, and that novel-reading was as bad. This caused me some exercise of mind, as I had got in my possession a large basketful of novels that I had bought and read in the days of my unregeneracy. I thought at first I would sell them for half the money I gave for them, but my conscience said, Will you sell that to others that you are led to see is not the truth and only fiction, and altogether poisonous to the human mind? After a little consideration I said, No, I will not; so I fetched them down and began to cast them one after another upon the fire until they were all consumed! Oh, what peace of mind I felt after I had destroyed them. I wish every novel reader was obliged to do the same. I also threw my box of dominoes down a well. I had got no cards, or they too would have been destroyed; for all such amusements are vanity, and a tender conscience must give them up.

My soul-trouble after this began to be greater. I was striving to get better but seemed to get worse; sometimes I have fallen all my length upon the floor and could do nothing but weep. One night I went out of doors to seek a place where I could pour out my complaint unto the Lord. It was very dark and very lonely, as there was no house near the one where I lodged; and as I was walking along very sorrowful, these words were spoken very powerfully into my mind, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord." They caused me to stand quite still, then such a fearful trembling came over me, that my knees smote together. I put my hands over my head, expecting every moment the Lord would strike me dead for being so presumptuous as to go out

there to pray. I felt the words were applicable to me, because I felt to be the wicked person; but bless the Lord, He at once came and raised up faith in my heart, so that I was enabled to look to Him, and with love to Him I exclaimed, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Thus I proved the former words came from Satan, but the Lord helped me to vanquish him with the latter. I now returned into the house, and went up to bed thanking the Lord for His goodness thus manifested toward me in such a time of need.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE GOSPEL STANDARD TRUST - 50 YEARS

Most of our young people have heard of the *Gospel Standard* magazine, the Gospel Standard Aid and Poor Relief Society, and the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund - indeed, many young people attend the annual Gospel Standard meetings held each year at Clifton. Perhaps not so many have heard of The Gospel Standard Trust. The Trust has a different function to the other Societies, having two sides to its work: the first side is the publication and sale of books, and the second side is dealing with our chapel buildings.

This year the Trust is 50 years old, having been set up in 1966. The 50th Annual General Meeting was held at Clifton Chapel on Saturday, 14 May 2016 when a good number gathered together for this special occasion. The meeting began at 2.30pm and was conducted by the Chairman, Mr. D. J. Christian. Mr. D. J. Lawson was asked to seek the Lord's blessing on the meeting. After the business side of the meeting was finished, three interesting talks were given on various aspects of the work of the Trust. First, Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom gave a talk on the history of the books published, starting with the first book published in 1966 (Anne Steele's hymns) and finishing with some of the more recent publications. In 2015 over 7,000 books were sold with orders coming from Africa, India, Sri Lanka, Singapore and the USA. Mr. S. A. Hyde then spoke on the financial help and practical advice given by the Trust over the years on chapel buildings. When a chapel closes there is often much legal work to be done, especially if there is a graveyard. Finally, Mr. D. J. Playfoot, the Secretary of the Trust, gave an interesting general overview of the Trust's activities. We would not forget the tireless work of the Publications Manager, Dr. P. J. Skelton, who is based in the

bookroom in the grounds of the Harpenden Bethesda Home.



*After the meeting -
Mr. D. J. Christian, Chairman and
Mr. D. J. Playfoot, Secretary*

After the meeting, tea was served in the schoolroom at the rear of the chapel. It was thought there were about 120 people present. The theme of the meeting had been advertised as: “Thou shalt remember all the way.” It was indeed felt to be a day of much thanksgiving that the Trust had been enabled to continue its valuable work for 50 years, often needing much wisdom to deal with difficult situations as they arise. During the meeting three hymns were sung:

Gadsby’s 176: Now, dearest Lord, to praise Thy name (Tune - Farningham)

Gadsby’s 99: Blessed Jesus! Thee we sing (Tune - Buckland)

Gadsby’s 500: May the grace of Christ, our Saviour (Tune - Ebenezer Chapel)

The Trust always welcomes new members, and they will be especially pleased if some of our younger friends who have an interest in our denomination become subscribers.

A HUSBAND AND WIFE TAKEN TOGETHER

A few days ago I followed the remains of husband and wife to the grave. I had known them many years. As I sat in the chapel at the cemetery and saw the two coffins side by side, many thoughts passed through the mind. Ah, how little either of the departed thought when they stood side by side, and plighted their troth, thus becoming husband and wife, that they would lie in their coffins side by side and the funeral service be read over them at the same time. But so it was. It was quite an affecting sight to see both parents carried to the grave at the same time. They had lived in each other’s company for many years; both were seventy-three years old, leaving six daughters to mourn their loss. *(From Elijah Coe.)*

IS IT SCRIPTURAL TO SING HYMNS? (Part 2)

Graham Hadley

CONTINUED FROM SUMMER, PAGE 10

At the time of the Reformation, there was a division amongst godly people on the singing of hymns and psalms. You probably know that Martin Luther wrote quite a number of hymns, nearly 40, and they were sung in the Lutheran churches. Yet Calvin, also of the Reformation, a very godly man, frowned. He disapproved of hymns; he preferred the singing of psalms. Calvin produced the first Metrical Psalms, called the ‘Geneva Version of the Psalms’ to the ‘Geneva’ tunes. One of Calvin’s close followers in Geneva was John Knox who came back to Scotland. And there you have the reason why the Scottish churches hold very fast to the Psalms, because John Knox was even more fervent than Calvin, that only Psalms should be sung. In 1549 Knox produced the first book of Psalms in English called the ‘Anglo Psalter.’ There was a difficulty because he tried to use the Geneva tunes and the English words did not really fit. Later on in the 1600’s another book of Psalms was produced by ‘Tate and Brady’, to be sung mainly in common metre, the 8-6-8-6 metre of which we have many tunes in our own tune book. In fact a couple of verses of one of those psalms we have in our Gadsby’s hymnbook, number 936:

“Through all the changing scenes in life,
In trouble and in joy.”

In England there were those who advocated singing of hymns. Many of you perhaps have heard of Benjamin Keach, of the Winslow chapel in Buckinghamshire. The Winslow chapel is still there, a very primitive old chapel still in its format of the 17th century, and the seats very uncomfortable! A service is still held there once a year. Benjamin Keach compiled a hymnbook. At first the hymns were only sung at the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, and then at the end of each service. He had much opposition. Other churches sang hymns but only permitted church members to sing. Hymn singing gathered favour and Isaac Watts, as you know, wrote many hymns, some of them based on psalms. Many other hymn writers followed, John Newton, Augustus Toplady, Charles Wesley, William Gadsby - many. Many books have been produced on hymn writers and their hymns.

Now then, have these godly gracious men (Luther, Keach, Watts, Newton, Toplady and others) done wrong? Have they been deceived? Have the churches departed from the revealed will of God?

Now friends, if you have a Bible, can you turn to the prophecy of Isaiah 38. 20. These are the words of Hezekiah after he had been wonderfully delivered from his sickness: “The Lord was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord.” Hezekiah, saved by the Lord in that wondrous manner and delivered from the pit of corruption says, “therefore we will sing *my* songs.” Now that word ‘songs’ is the Hebrew word ‘neginah’, the heading of Psalm 61 and the word found in Psalm 77 and in other places. “Therefore we will sing my songs.” These were not the psalms of David, they were not the psalms of Asaph, they were not in the book of Psalms, the book of praise, as we know. They were his own songs, they were spiritual songs, because they were based on his spiritual experience - that which the Lord had done for his soul. “The Lord was ready to save me.” He said, ‘We will sing them.’ Where? “In the house of the Lord” - in the Lord’s house - in formal worship. And who were to sing them? Just himself? No. He says, ‘*We* will sing them’ - all those that were with him in the Lord’s house praising God. Just during the life of Hezekiah? No. ‘All the days of our life,’ not just his life, but all the days of the life of His people. These songs were to be sung for the praise and honour of God for what He had done in delivering Hezekiah.

There we have a description of our hymns, don’t we? A true hymn is a hymn written by a man of God based on his spiritual experience and written to the praise and the honour and glory of God. They meet what we see here in verse 16, “spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” How often the hymn-writers’ words meet our case. Their experience is in tune with our experience; their desires with our desires; their prayers with our prayers; their thanksgiving, with our thanksgiving. Now friends, I believe this verse here in Isaiah 38. 20 declares that there were songs other than just those found in the Scriptural book of Psalms, sung in the temple. And the Lord did not disown them. The Lord did not cast them out, because they were to His honour and to His glory. Such singing is in accord with verse 17 of the chapter we read, “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the

Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.”

It grieves me when I hear others vehemently criticise the singing of hymns. But let us be careful that we do not reciprocate this vehement criticism that many make regarding the singing of hymns. In Romans chapter 14 we have some gracious instruction, verses 4 - 6: “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.” There are some who are persuaded in their own minds, that it is thanksgiving to God to keep to the singing of the Scriptural psalms only. Before their Master they stand or fall, and so it is with us. We sing our hymns and we give God thanks, and before our God we stand or fall. Hymn and Psalm singing is not to be a point of contention, it is not to be a point of a solemn division. Satan loves to cause division, doesn’t he, between the people of God? Those who only wish to sing psalms, let them sing psalms, and the Lord bless the singing of those psalms unto their soul through the presence of the Holy Spirit. Dear friends, if you wish to sing hymns, then I believe we have the Scriptural authority to do so, providing we sing those hymns which are according to Scripture, based on the spiritual experience of the people of God. And if we sing them, seeking grace in our hearts to give thanksgiving unto God as humble sinners before Him, thanking the Lord for that mercy which is through Jesus Christ, that mercy which comes to the saving of our soul, then dear friends, that is acceptable unto God. How we need to live as these lovely verses declare in Colossians chapter 3: how we should forbear one another, “forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.”

As we read the third chapter of Colossians tonight I was struck by the beginning of it: “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.” Dear friends,

how do we set our affection on things above? Through the mercy and grace of the Lord revealed unto our never-dying soul, and that draws from our hearts songs of thanksgiving, songs of praise, songs of joy, unto Him who gave Himself for us. Those utterances from your heart, you probably will not find them in the book of Psalms, but they are hymns, they are spiritual songs, singing with grace and melody in your hearts, unto the Lord.

This chapter goes on to speak and exhort our relation one to another. Dear friends, let us not make contention over these differences. We are to pray one for another that the Lord may abundantly bless each soul, no matter what church, what denomination, what form they have in their order of service. My dear friends, if you are criticised for singing a hymn by another, I believe you have scriptural authority to continue in the way that you are. Hezekiah declared, based on his wonderful experience, “The Lord was ready to save me, therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord.” My mind goes to that hymn of William Gadsby which we sang at the Trinitarian Bible Society annual meeting, “Immortal honours rest on Jesus’ head.” O to make melody in our hearts unto the Lord through the knowledge of what He has done for our souls! “Immortal honours rest on Jesus’ head.” Dear friends, do continue to make melody in your hearts to the Lord. O, do continue with those hymns. Amen.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Our friend Miss Dinah Gibb, a resident in the Harpenden Bethesda Home, says that instead of the usual “Happy birthday to you” the following hymn was sung at her school each time a child had a birthday.

Another happy birthday	Oh may His love and mercy,
To one of us is given;	To this dear child be given;
Then let us thank the Father	And keep her safe and happy
For all His gifts from heaven.	Throughout the coming year.

When she told me, I thought how nice that must have been. It was sung to the tune Angels’ Story, which can be found in *Christian Hymns*, number 863. [EDITOR]

NATIONAL SERVICE DAYS (5)

Another of our esteemed ministers has sent the following account of his experiences while on National Service.

I began my National Service at the RASC Oudenarde Barracks, Farnborough on the 25th May 1950. As new recruits we arrived at North Camp Station where we were met by Army lorries and NCOs shouting: "Come on! Move! You're in the Army now." We seemed to be in a different world. On our second day we were kitted out with uniform, etc. and were issued with Pay Books containing our particulars. I was asked my religion and said: "Strict Baptist." The Clerk at the desk said: "So am I." Otherwise, I did not meet any more during my two years' service. On the first or second Sunday I wanted to find Aldershot Chapel, but a dress inspection caused me to leave late for the Chapel and I arrived after the service had begun. In my confused state I did not go in, which I afterwards regretted.

After two weeks 'Square Bashing' (drill) etc. an Officer (PSO) interviewed us regarding our future. Seeking a low profile job my choices were: (1) Clerical; (2) The Stores; and (3) A Driver. I was asked: "How would you like to join the Military Police?" to which I replied: "No thank you." However, I and one other were detailed to be transferred to RMP (Royal Military Police), Inkerman Barracks, Woking. On our arrival a large Parade was in process, it being King George VI's birthday. As I saw all these service personnel, I thought: "I shall never be like them." I was in 165 Squad 5'10" and over. So many of them were taller than myself.

On our fifth and tenth weeks we were given a 48-hour pass. One of our Squad - Angus McAuley - lived in the Outer Hebrides so no way could he go home and back. Another and myself invited him to come home with us, and for some reason he accepted my offer. I wondered what he would say when we went to Chapel. However, he said afterwards: "It's just like we have at home." That was nice. I think he was a Free Presbyterian. I did not see him after our 16 weeks' training as he was posted elsewhere.

My 16 weeks there were not without trouble. To me it was sore trouble, but I believe the Lord answered my poor prayers. We were on

our daily 8am Parade for inspection. I was unaware that I had a dirty mark on the back of my arm below the elbow. (I can only think I had leant or brushed on something to cause that dirty mark.) Being summertime we were in Shirt Sleeve order. One other and myself were subsequently marched to the Guardroom and put on a charge. The next day we faced an Officer, our Sergeant reading out the charge that, in my view, was disproportionate in relation to the offence. I was so indignant that, uncharacteristically, I said that I objected to the wording of the charge. Things got worse. We were to appear before the Commanding Officer (CO). In my opinion the Army personnel in charge appeared always to want to frighten recruits. On our second appearance, instead of the CO, it was a Captain Collins who took a friendlier attitude. Our punishment was three nights of extra fatigues, which was a relief. It meant three evenings peeling potatoes in the Cookhouse; but bear in mind that it took us all evening preparing for the next day's inspection.

On another occasion we were on evening Guard Duty and I was on the Main Gate with orders to stop any vehicle leaving the Barracks. Well, a vehicle did come out. I put up my hand to stop it, which it did not do. In it was the RSM (Regimental Sergeant Major) who shouted to me that he was going to Woking. I immediately reported this to the Guard Commander. Subsequently, I was to appear in the RSM's office on Monday morning. My fears returned. He loudly called me in to explain what happened that evening. When I had explained, he then loudly said: "Well done lad! Get out!" I did a quick left turn and marched out. I felt vindicated.

About three weeks prior to our Passing-Out Parade, I wrote to the appropriate authorities applying for a 'Home' posting as my dear godly mother had been admitted to hospital and was not expected to come out, owing to several breakdowns in her health over some years. I did not receive a reply so I concluded that my application had been rejected. With 24 others I was due to be posted to Egypt. Knowing the duties of an MP and the political situation in that country at the time, I felt somewhat apprehensive, as did others too. Prior to the posting we were going on leave. A Sergeant said: "You all know where you are going. Any questions?" I gave my name and, in response, he said: "Home Posting." You can imagine my relief. The others went abroad. I was posted to 193 (Ports) Provost Co, Southampton Detachment. Our duties

were embarkation and disembarkation when troopships were in port, otherwise mainly town patrols. When not on duty I was usually able to get home and visit my mother in hospital, and I could get to chapel. Occasionally I went to Southampton Chapel (Mordant Hall). Mr. and Mrs. Clark were very kind to me, having me to tea and, on one occasion I had tea with Mr. L. R. Broome. On completion of my National Service I still had to serve in the TA (Territorial Army) for 3½ - 4 years. That meant a two week camp every year plus some weekends, which I did not enjoy.

On completion of our training, we had our Passing Out Parade. There were 35 of us. That evening, 31 men went to the local public house to celebrate this event. They returned to our billet around 11pm. The four of us who had remained behind heard them coming from a long way off and were fearful of possible repercussions from them. Apart from being very noisy through being inebriated, at least one of them had to be carried as he was in a comatose condition and not able to stand. Those of us who had stayed behind were unceremoniously tipped out of our beds, which was very unpleasant. Sickness, which often follows excessive alcohol consumption, can cause death. I trust the inclusion of this incident will serve as a warning to our younger readers against the influence of drinking alcohol to excess.

In conclusion, I believe the Lord did watch over me though I was not then a firm believer, yet I did, I hope, possess the fear of the Lord. Perhaps it was a preparation for a more noble service in His name. "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." This I had had to prove, looking to "the Captain of their (our) salvation" made "perfect through sufferings." I realise my experiences were nothing to be compared to those who were called to the front line in the war; nevertheless, we were required to serve in HM Forces for our two years' National Service.

A FEW CURRENT MATTERS

Alcohol-related hospital admissions

The number of patients admitted to hospital with alcohol-related illnesses has doubled in the last ten years. There were a record 6,831 alcohol-related deaths in 2014.

The Christian Institute - 25th Anniversary

We cannot speak too highly of the wonderful work carried out by The Christian Institute. The Institute became a registered charity in 1991, which means that this year marks 25 years of their efforts to promote Christian influence on many current issues, both local and national. The Institute has just published their interesting Annual Review 2016 outlining many of the matters they have been engaged in over the years. One of the first was their opposition in 1996 to the Conservative Government's plans to introduce no-fault divorce. In 2000 they helped secure important religious liberty protections in the EU directive on employment. Without the protections, the freedom of churches to require staff to be Christians would have been jeopardised. The Institute has also supported individuals, most notably marriage registrar Lilian Ladele in her claim of discrimination in the workplace. We wish the Institute well in pursuing their admirable aims and objectives.

Diamond fails to sell



The largest diamond discovered for a hundred years has failed to sell at auction. Mined in Botswana, it weighed 1,109 carats and was the size of a tennis ball. Sotheby's expected it to fetch £70 million, but bidding reached only £46 million, below the reserve price. Joseph Hart in Hymn

803 wrote: "The diamond, that's for thousands sold, Our admiration draws," but goes on to compare it with the inestimable blessings that flow from the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bus advertising

Buses in London and other cities have recently carried the slogan 'Subhan Allah' which means 'Glory be to God' in Arabic. This comes at a time when cinemas have banned a one-minute advertisement featuring the Lord's Prayer. Former Tory MP Ann Widdecombe said: "If other religions are allowed to put their religious banners up, then so should Christians."



THE APPLE ORCHARD

The sight of an apple orchard in full blossom is a wonderful spring spectacle. Even more wonderful is the sight of the trees laden with fruit.

“Behold the bending orchards

With bounteous fruit are crowned;

Lord, in our hearts more richly

Let heavenly fruits abound.” (*Walsham How, 1823-97*)

As we enjoy an apple, we seldom stop to think of the many possible threats the fruit grower has to contend with - canker, scab, brown rot, honey fungus, bitter pit, blossom wilt, fireblight, silver leaf, aphids, moths, caterpillars, and sawflies, to name but a few. Late frosts at blossom time can also drastically reduce the crop.

In the Bible we read of similar problems. The prophet Joel complained: “That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten: and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten: and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.” Even Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, in his long prayer asked: “If there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar . . . then hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling place.”

What a parallel to life’s journey! The new born baby, the parents’ hopes for their dearly-loved child: but what will there be before the end of the road? What a wonderful promise that is: “They shall still bring forth fruit in old age” (Psalm 92. 18). How can that be possible after the dangers and perils all must pass through? John Newton answers:

“Through many dangers, toils, and snares,

I have already come;

Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,

And grace will lead me home.” (*John Newton, 1725-1807*)



*“And behold a basket of
summer fruit” (Amos 8. 1)*

PERCEPTION

A Quarterly Magazine for Young People



“Thou hast been a shelter for me”

Psalm 61. 3.

WINTER 2016

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PERCEPTION

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EDITORIAL

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” Isaiah 7. 14.

“An Englishman’s word is his bond.” This traditional English proverb can be traced back to the 1500’s although originally it probably began as “a king’s word is his bond.” Charles Dickens, considered to be the greatest of Victorian writers, made use of it in *The Old Curiosity Shop* where he has one of his characters saying: “A gentleman’s word is as good as his bond.”

First, what is a bond? By a bond we mean an agreement with legal force, a written and signed document between two or more parties. Without a written document, there is little an aggrieved party can do if whatever has been agreed is not performed.

Thankfully, there are still people today whose word we can trust. If they promise to do something, you can depend that they will do it. In the past, many business deals were done on the shake of a hand - there was absolute trust between the two parties. Of course, occasionally unforeseen circumstances will arise that make the fulfilment of a promise impossible. Years ago, when studying the law of contract, I remember learning about the English common law provision known as *subsequent frustration*, when a contract could become null and void when something arises that could not possibly have been known at the time the agreement was signed.

There are few people today who would dare to enter into an agreement of any magnitude just by word of mouth. Very sadly, so far as keeping promises is concerned, we have a very poor example from our politicians. *Perception* is not at all a political magazine, but just by way of example (and we could quote many) of how governments break their promises, the Conservative manifesto before last year’s election pledged that a cap of £72,000 would be placed on care costs from April 2016. But just two months after the vote, the Department of Health

announced it would not be introduced until 2020. In 2007 it was announced that if elected the government would increase inheritance tax to £1million. But fast forward nine years and the promise has not been kept. What sort of example in truthfulness and honesty is this?

But we wish to turn to something much more important. In the Bible, we find many promises God has made to His people. Peter, in one of his Epistles, describes them as “exceeding great and precious promises.” When God promises something, there is never the slightest doubt that He might break His promise. Paul uses a striking expression: he says that “the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen.” All the promises of God rest upon Christ alone, the one who in Revelation is called the Amen.

There is a most wonderful promise which we think of as we approach the end of the year, and that is the text quoted at the beginning of this editorial. A Son was to be born to a virgin! “Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things?” But Matthew tells us that it *was* “fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord by the prophet.” God’s promise had not failed. God’s promise *could not* fail, because it was an Amen promise.

When this Son was born, God separately directed both Joseph and Mary that His name was to be called JESUS. This precious name means a Saviour. “For He shall save His people from their sins.” O to be found amongst His people. Does this concern us? I sincerely hope that it does.

There is another “great and precious” promise God has given to His people, and it is found in John 14. 18. “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” “I *will* come to you.” Perhaps there are some who feel the Lord will never come to them. They hear of the Lord blessing others, (and it has been a time of blessing in our churches in recent months,) but time and again they feel themselves passed by. The cry of their heart is, “Lord, when wilt Thou come unto *me*?” When, when, when, they ask. Well, here is a promise you can plead: “Lord, Thou hast promised that Thou wilt come to Thy people: *do come to me.*” If that is how you feel, then in His own time and way, He will come. “Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come.”

So as the last month of the year comes once more, we can be thankful that there is still a throne of grace, there is still a gospel to

proclaim, and there is still a precious Saviour of sinners. May the gospel ever remain the centre of our churches, that “gospel of God” which Paul tells was “promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures.” (Romans 1. 2). It is the gospel “concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” Some years ago we heard a minister who said, “I am going to preach today about Henry Holland.” Now we have nothing against Henry Holland, in fact we have nothing but admiration for this Christian medical missionary credited with saving the sight of 100,000 people in India. But this is not the gospel. The gospel is “concerning His Son Jesus Christ.” The gospel is first and last that precious Baby born in Bethlehem.

Once, when Paul wrote to Titus, he referred to “God that cannot lie.” We have often admired those lines in hymn 340 YPH:

“Praise the Lord! For He is glorious;
Never shall His promise fail.”

Even Job, one of the oldest writers in the Bible said: “But He is in one mind, and who can turn Him” (Job 23. 13).

So it is a wonderful thing that God’s promise that a virgin should bring forth a Son was true. But all these wonderful promises in the Word of God - are they for *us*? We end with a prayer:

“My supplication, Lord, is this,
 That all my sins may be subdued;
 That all thy precious promises
 May be to me and for my good.”

With greetings and best wishes to you all for the coming year.

The Editor.

Andrew Bonar once preached a sermon on ‘The Pearl of Great Price.’ A young woman, whose heart was yearning for her father’s conversion, was greatly struck with it. When Mr. Bonar came one day to preach in her own village, she went to the door of the vestry to ask him to preach the same sermon again, hoping her father might hear it. Her courage failed her, and she went back into church without having asked him, but praying hard. Her prayer was heard; the sermon she so longed for was preached again, and was the means of her father’s conversion.

BUNHILL FIELDS - 'GOD'S ACRE'

Part 2 - Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

We continue our series with another great man buried in this ten acre plot off City Road in the middle of London. A Hampshire man - little of stature, delicate of constitution, unprepossessing in appearance - but an unequalled English hymnwriter.

Birth

Isaac Watts, was born prematurely on Tuesday, 17 July 1674 at Southampton, where his father (also called Isaac) kept a popular boarding school, receiving children from both America and the West Indies. As well as the school, he is variously reported as a shoemaker and a dealer in cloth. The family lived at 21, French Street, a thoroughfare leading down to the quay, and near to the medieval merchant's house, now owned by English Heritage. It was described as "a plain but roomy, substantial building, standing back from the road with its garden behind, full of lofty rooms and rambling nooks and passages." It was here that Isaac was born, and here that he spent his childhood years.

The plague

In 1665 the town had been decimated by the plague, and the memory that nearly 2,000 people were swept away remained fresh for many years. The shops were all closed, all who could fled the town, and the streets were overgrown with grass. Through the mercy of God, Isaac's parents had been spared.

Nonconformists

His father and the family were dissenters. Today, we are more likely to call them non-conformists, which includes anyone who is not

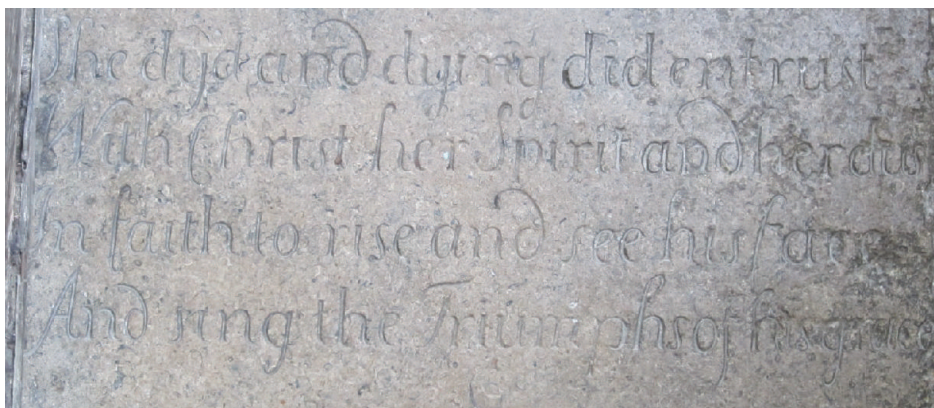


a member of the Church of England. To be a dissenter was a serious matter at the time. The reigning monarch, King Charles II, tried hard to encourage freedom of religion, but Parliament threw out his Royal Declaration of Indulgence. More than once his father was imprisoned for his non-conformity, including at the time of Isaac's birth. His mother (Sarah) nursed her baby son Isaac seated on a large stone outside the prison gates as a silent protest at the unjust treatment of her husband. Occasionally she would be granted admission.

Although non-conformists, the grave of Isaac's sister Mary, who died as a young girl, can be seen inside St. Michael's Church in the town centre. St. Michael's vicar, the Rev. Giles Say, was amongst those ejected by the Church of England at the time of the Act of Uniformity in 1662. This church is the oldest building in Southampton dating from 1070, and is the only church in the town centre to have escaped destruction in the 1940 air raids. The grave stone reads:

MARY WATTS DAUGHTER
OF ISAAC AND SARAH WATTS
DECEASED MARCH 14TH 1715.

She dyd and dying did entrust
With Christ her Spirit and her dust
In faith to rise and see his face
And sing the Triumphs of his grace.



We do not know for sure that her brother wrote this verse, but it is so 'Isaac Watts' he almost certainly did.

Childhood

Isaac was the eldest of nine children. From a very young age he displayed an interest in books. As a child, when he had any money given, he would run to his mother and cry, "A book! A book! Buy me a book!" At the age of four, he began to learn Latin. By the time he was 13 he had mastered Latin, Greek, French and Hebrew! Isaac's great interest in 'versifying' soon became apparent. His mother sometimes employed the pupils, after school hours, in writing a few lines, for which she rewarded them with a farthing. On one of these occasions her son Isaac, being required to do the same, wrote the following couplet:

"I write not for a farthing, but to try
How I your farthing writers can outvie."

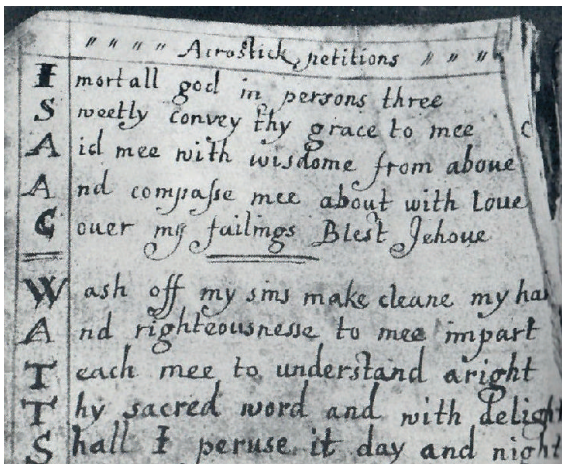
Once, either during family prayers or in church (nobody seems quite sure which) he began quietly to laugh to himself. His father asked him why, and he replied that he had opened his eyes to see a mouse climbing up a rope. The thought had immediately come to him:

"A little mouse for want of stairs
Ran up a rope to say its prayers."

His father accused him of irreverence, and began to punish him. Isaac called out:

"Oh, Father, Father, pity take,
And I will no more verses make."

When he was seven he wrote an acrostic spelling out his name.



Education

Isaac was placed under the care of Mr. Pinhorne, a clergyman, and master of the free school in Southampton. His early ability in learning was soon noticed. A local doctor, Dr. John Speed, proposed to raise a subscription for his support at one of the universities; but Isaac turned them down and chose rather to take his lot with the dissenters. Automatically he was barred from Oxford and Cambridge as these were restricted to Anglicans.



*Today, a restaurant of
the same name*

So instead, at 16 years of age, he was sent to the 'Dissenting Academy' in Stoke Newington, then a village north of London. His teacher was the Rev. Thomas Rowe, pastor of an Independent Church meeting at Girdlers' Hall, close to



Girdlers' Hall

Guildhall, near to where Moorgate tube station stands today. Isaac became a member of the church in 1693 when he was 18. (The original medieval Girdlers' Hall was destroyed in the Great Fire of London, but was rebuilt in 1681, only to be destroyed in the 1940 bombing raids.)

Isaac finished his academic studies at the age of 20, after which he returned to his father's house for two years to devote himself to study.

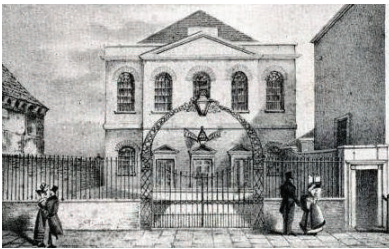
Hymnwriter

At this time, generally all that was sung in the churches were psalms or paraphrases of the psalms. The church at Southampton attended by Isaac with his parents was known as the Above Bar Chapel. His father was a deacon there for 48 years. Interestingly, the minister, Nathaniel Robinson, as a condition of his ministry, insisted that the Lord's Supper was to be administered on the first Lord's Day every month (just as we do today). The congregation, although of a very humble class, were in advance of their age, using a hymnbook edited by the Rev. William Barton, a nonconformist minister of Leicester. This was one of the first collection of hymns, as distinct from psalms, in the English language. Isaac had very little opinion of most of the

compositions. On the way home from chapel one Sunday afternoon, he spoke to his father about the matter. “Then give us something better, young man,” said his father. Isaac did so. His father was shocked to discover the following Sunday that Isaac had brought to chapel a brand new hymn:

“Behold the glories of the Lamb,
Amidst his Father’s throne;
Prepare new honours for His name,
And songs before unknown.”

Here was something not even a paraphrase of a psalm, but based on Rev. 5. 6 -12 (number 19 in Gadsby’s Hymnbook). Perhaps some of the congregation remembered the hard line taken by their forbears, some of whom had thought that singing hymns was nothing but a popish aberration, putting ‘human words’ on a par with Holy Writ - a seditious



Above Bar Chapel

and dangerous innovation. However, the hymn, “a new song,” proved so acceptable to the congregation that he was requested to write more, which he did during the two years he remained at home. The hymns were written out and sung in the chapel from manuscript. Of course, it had to be ‘lined out;’ that is, each line was read out and then sung. Furthermore, he

insisted the people stand to sing - another innovation. One hymn after another was produced until in time there was a sufficient number to fill a volume.

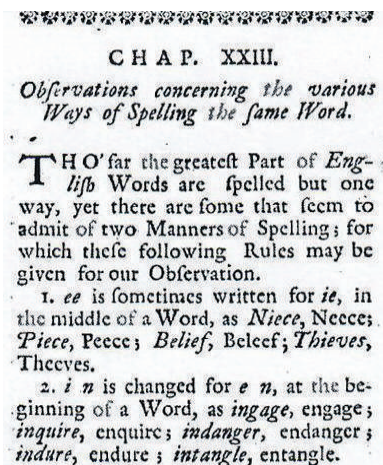
What motivated Isaac to write hymns? He felt strongly that the Christian church should sing of Christ. “Why,” he asked, “must I join David in his legal and prophetic language to curse my enemies when my Saviour has taught me to love and bless them? What need is there that I should wrap up the shining honours of my Redeemer in dark and shadowy language?” Christians, he said, should be permitted to praise God in song as did both Mary and Zacharias.

Tutor at Stoke Newington

After a while, at the age of 22, he was invited to live with the family of Sir John Hartopp at Stoke Newington as tutor to Sir John’s son (also

John) and six daughters. Sir John's wife, Elizabeth, was connected to the Cromwell family. The daughters were Anne and Helen (both died in infancy), Martha, Elizabeth, Anne (2), Bridget, Dorothy and Frances. Only one married - Frances. The other five lived and died in the family home. In this employment as tutor Isaac spent five happy years, saying, "I cannot but reckon this time among the blessings of heaven." Here he wrote a number of educational books for which he became well known. Later on he wrote an English grammar textbook titled *The Art of Reading and Writing English*. On the title page he wrote:

"Leave all the foreign tongues alone
'Til you can spell and read your own."



Isaac was an all-rounder: as well as an English grammar he also published books on astronomy and geography.

One by one the family died, and were buried in the family vault in Stoke Newington church. Later, the handsome, red-brick family home, standing on the north side of Church Street, was divided into houses, and part became a boarding school for young ladies.

Left: A page from his English Grammar

Enters the ministry

He preached his first sermon on his 24th birthday in the year 1698 at the church where the Hartopp family worshipped - Mark Lane, London. His ministry met with much acceptance, although the preaching was described as "rather solid but not shining." Over this church had presided in recent years none less than the mighty John Owen. The congregation contained a number of eminent men. It was a daunting prospect for the young preacher.

In the same year he was chosen assistant to the pastor, Dr. Chauncey. Isaac's ministerial labours, however, were soon interrupted by a painful illness which lasted five months. Gradually his health was restored.

He then received a call to succeed Dr. Chauncey as pastor (also

called Isaac), an invitation which he accepted the very day King William III died (8 March 1702). He himself wrote in the church book: “Your choice of me, and your affections toward me, seemed to be settled and unmoved. I have objected warmly and frequently that my indispositions of body incapacitate me for such service.” However, as the church professed edification through his ministry he felt “you have given me grounds to believe that the voice of this church is the voice of Christ by you to me. In hopes of being made an instrument in the hands of Christ, to build up this ancient church, I return this solemn answer to your call: that, with a great sense of my inability, in mind and body, to discharge the duties of so sacred an office, I do, in the strength of Christ, venture upon it, and, in the name of our Lord Jesus, I accept your call, so far as God shall enlighten and strengthen me.”

After the new pastor had administered the Lord’s supper for the first time, it is recorded that they “finished by singing a gospel hymn, suitable to the ordinance, taken from Revelation 5 verses 7 to 10 (Hymn One, Book One, Watts).” The union between pastor and people continued unbroken for almost 47 years.

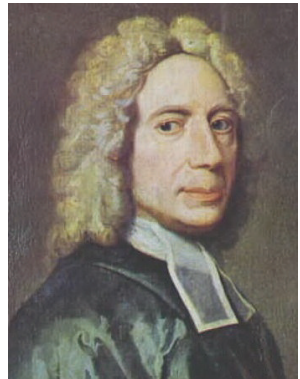
A pastor’s assistant provided

Isaac was a man short of stature, five feet in height we are told, always frail, and occasionally very weak. By character he was shy man. In conversation he would shrink as far as possible from taking any prominent part, and would never take the lead.

An anecdote may be related here. One day he happened to be in a coffee-house when he heard his name mentioned by one man to another, who said in great surprise, “What! Is *that* the great Dr. Watts?” Isaac wrote down a verse on a piece of paper and handed it to him:

“Were I so tall to reach the pole,
And grasp the ocean in a span,
I must be measured by my soul, -
The mind’s the standard of the man.”

After he became pastor he was visited by a painful and alarming illness, which threatened an early end to his usefulness. His recovery



By an unknown artist

was slow. It was, therefore, judged necessary to provide him with an assistant, and the Rev. Samuel Price (a Welshman) was chosen in 1703.

The Mark Lane congregation continued to grow, and twice moved to larger premises. However, persecution continued: in March 1710 Watts wrote: “Ye mob rose and pulled down ye pews and gallery of six meeting-houses, but were dispersed by ye guards at 2 in the morning.”

Hymns and Spiritual Songs

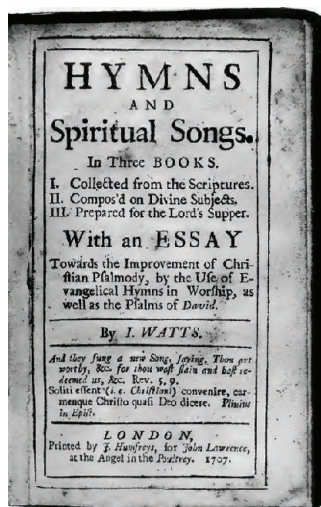
Isaac was continually pressed to publish his hymns. His brother Enoch particularly urged him to do so, but still he hesitated. It was not until 1707 he approached a publisher. The publisher bought the copyright for £10! Altogether 365 hymns were published under the title *Hymns and Spiritual Songs in Three Books*. The ‘three books’ were really three sections. The last hymn in the first section was “Join all the glorious names,” all twelve verses appearing in Gadsby’s (number 122).

Continued weakness of body

In September 1712, Isaac was again seized with a violent fever. He was left with a weakness affecting his nerves, from which he never wholly recovered. For more than four years he was entirely laid aside from the ministry, and it was not until October 1716, that he was again able to resume his public labours. The affection of his people during this trial was strikingly shown in their longing for his recovery. Particular days were set apart to intercede with God in prayer for him.

Proposal of marriage

Isaac was never married. However, an admirer of his poetry, Elizabeth Singer, described as “a haunting beauty,” was attracted towards a man who could write such words. Her father, like Isaac’s, had been imprisoned for non-conformity. When she eventually met him, and he proposed marriage, she was shocked. At the age of only 32 he was pale, pock-marked from earlier smallpox, and (to use his own expression in Hymn 120) of a “feeble frame.” She replied: “Sir, I only wish I could say that I admire the casket as much as I admire the jewel.” However, they remained firm friends. (Watts himself wrote: In “1683



I had ye small pox.”) In spite of his low stature, his appearance when preaching was said to be dignified.

Lives with the Abney family

The frail state into which Isaac was reduced engaged the sympathy of Sir Thomas Abney, formerly Alderman, Sheriff, and Lord Mayor of London. In 1712, Sir Thomas and his wife Lady Abney invited him to their magnificent home known as Theobalds at Abney Park, Stoke Newington for a ‘short stay.’ In fact, he stayed for thirty-six years! Here he was visited on occasions by the Countess of Huntingdon.

He continued to write hymns, and preached occasionally as health permitted. Enjoying the Abney children, he undertook another monumental task - the preparation of his *Divine and Moral Songs for Children*. This was published in 1715, selling 80,000 copies in the first year. “I endeavoured,” he said, “to sink the language to the level of a child’s understanding.” It is still on sale today. The only hymn in regular use today is “I sing the almighty power of God.” This can be found in the *Young People’s Hymnal*, number 86, although with only four of the original five verses.

In Victorian times, richly illustrated editions with a picture on every page were published. It is regretted that these editions included numerous pictures of the Lord Jesus, many of the songs being illustrated with New Testament scenes. We feel sure Isaac would not have approved. Very strangely, the site of this house where he lived for so long later became a vast public cemetery, and became a resting place of many Nonconformists from the city of London. (Here, after his death, a monument was erected in Isaac’s memory.)

Doctor of Divinity

In the year 1728, Isaac received from the Universities of Edinburgh and Aberdeen a diploma, creating him Doctor of Divinity. He had never sought it. Now, at the age of 54, he was Dr. Isaac Watts, or Isaac Watts, D.D.



Statue in Abney Park Cemetery

Closing years

The closing years of Isaac's pilgrimage were "labour and sorrow." The delicacy of his constitution, and repeated sickness, soon brought upon him the infirmities of old age. His midnight studies probably did not help him. Much of his life he was greatly distressed with insomnia. Often the only sleep he had was with the help of drugs, the effect of which was unreliable. Yet, through the goodness of God, and the kind attention of friends, his life was lengthened out, and he was able still to preach and to write. John Andrews Jones wrote: "The taper of life burned slowly to the socket, and its flame was brilliant to the last."

His death

He beheld his approaching death with composure and without dismay. In conversation with a friend he recollected an aged minister who used to say that the most learned Christians, when they come to die, have only the same plain promises of the gospel for their support as the common and unlearned people of God. On retiring to rest, he often said: "I bless God I can lie down with comfort; not being solicitous whether I awake in this world or another." For some while he hovered on the border-land of life.

Once he said, "I wonder why the great God should continue me in life, when I am incapable of performing Him any further service?" Another time: "If God has no more service for me to do, through grace I am ready." And again: "I trust all my sins are pardoned through the blood of Christ; I have no fear of dying."

Mr. Parker, who for twenty years was Isaacs amanuensis (i.e. one who wrote down what he dictated), wrote the day before his death, "He passed through the last night in the main quiet and easy; but for five hours would receive nothing within his lips. I was down in his chamber in the morning, and found him quite sensible. He told me, that he lay easy and his mind peaceful and serene."

Some half-hour before he died he was visited by George Whitefield. When he asked him how he was, he replied: "I am one of God's waiting servants." Whitefield assisted in raising him up in his bed that he might take his medicine.

He died in the afternoon of Monday, 25 November 1748, at the age of 74 years, four months and eight days. The day following his death, Mr. Parker wrote again: "At length the fatal news is come. The spirit

of the good man, my dear master, took its flight from the body to worlds unseen and joys unknown, yesterday, in the afternoon, without a struggle or a groan. It is a house of mourning and tears.”

Isaac was now in his “land of pure delight.”

Burial at Bunhill Fields

As requested in his will, his body was carried to Bunhill Fields by six ministers: two Presbyterian, two Baptist, and two Independent. He desired that the funeral should be conducted as quietly as possible, but an immense crowd gathered as was to be expected. Dr. Chandler spoke at the grave, and Dr. David Jennings preached the funeral sermon to his bereaved church, from Hebrews 11. 4: “He being dead yet speaketh.” In his sermon, the good Doctor said: “Though his voice is not any longer heard by us, yet his words are gone out to the end of the world. America and Europe still hear him speak, and it is highly probable they may continue to do so till Europe and America be no more.”

Isaac had found the truth of his hymn:

“There everlasting spring abides,
And never-withering flowers;
Death, like a narrow sea, divides
This heavenly land from ours.”



The inscription on his tombstone in Bunhill Fields is as follows:

Isaac Watts, D. D., Pastor of a church of Christ in London; successor to the Rev. Mr. Joseph Caryl, Dr. John Owen, Mr. David Clarkson, and Dr. Isaac Chauncey; after fifty years of feeble labours in the gospel, interrupted by four years of tiresome sickness, was at last dismissed to rest, Nov. 25, 1748.

IN UNO JESU OMNIA

[In Jesus alone is my all]

2 Cor. v. 8, *Absent from the body, present with the Lord.*

Col. iii. 4, *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, I shall also appear with him in glory.*

His legacy

Isaac Watts is the man credited with being ‘the father of all English hymnody.’ In all he wrote about 600 hymns. In the preface to his *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* he wrote: “I have aimed at smoothness of sound, and have endeavoured to make the sense plain and obvious.”

Probably most people think that “When I survey the wondrous cross” is his greatest hymn, possibly *the* greatest hymn ever written. When first penned, the opening lines were slightly different:

“When I survey the wondrous cross
Where the young Prince of Glory died.”

His hymn, “O God, our help in ages past” has acquired almost national anthem status.

Another of his well-known hymns is “Jesus shall reign where’er the sun.” There is an interesting story told about this hymn. When Tonga became a Christian land, the King of the island (King George) arranged a national act of worship on Whit Sunday 1862 in the open air under the spreading branches of the banyan trees. Old King George had been a cannibal in his younger days, and so were his chieftains, but now he was an earnest follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some five thousand Tongans attended the service. He sat surrounded by his chiefs and warriors, who, like King George, had lived in gross darkness and heathenism. Many broke down and wept as they sang these words:

“Jesus shall reign where’er the sun
Does his successive journeys run.”

How their hearts must have been touched as they sung:

“Blessings abound where’er He reigns;
The prisoner leaps to lose his chains,
The weary find eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blest.”

I am sure our older readers will remember this as a regular school hymn, invariably sung to the tune *Truro*. The whole hymn is in the Young People’s Hymnal (number 72).

Another hymn that has proved a great favourite is “There is a land of pure delight.” It is thought that this might have been suggested by the view across Southampton Water towards the green of the New Forest.

One little story handed down to us illustrates the effects Isaac’s verses had at the time of publication. A poor, wretched, girl, unmarried but with a baby girl, was abandoned to misery and want. One day she was struck with horror at hearing her infant daughter repeat some of the profane and bad language she had caught from her mother. She trembled at the thought that she was not only going to hell herself, but was leading her little girl there as well. She resolved that with the first sixpence she could get, she should buy a copy of Isaac’s *Divine and Moral Songs for Children*, of which she had some memory. She did so. The first verse she read was:

“Just as the tree cut down, that falls
To north or southward, there it lies:
So man departs to heaven or hell,
Fixed in the state wherein he dies.”

She lived and died a true child of God.

Shortly after his death, a monument was raised to this great man in the Poets’ Corner, Westminster Abbey. Dr. Samuel Johnson (whose *Dictionary of the English Language* was the standard for 150 years until the *Oxford Dictionary* was published) said of him, “He was gentle, modest, and inoffensive.”

CHRISTMAS EVE IN CAPTIVITY

Geoffrey Bull had an earnest desire to preach the gospel in Tibet. Towards the end of the Second World War the country was over-run by communist China. Mr. Bull was taken prisoner and held captive for three years. Escorted by his guard Chien, he was marched towards Hsing Ching in Szechwan.

December 24th. A long tiring day. We crossed the famous Ra Ma La, a three-headed pass. Midday we brewed tea at the top. As we descended the wind was very strong. Down and down we stumbled until, very exhausted, we arrived at a small group of houses about 4.30.

A Tibetan landlord had swept out an upstairs room. Rarely have I seen cleaner accommodation in a central Asian country. Chien, Wang and myself installed ourselves and were given a charcoal brazier, which was quite a luxury.

After a meal, and when it was already dark, it was necessary for me to go downstairs to give more hay to the horses. Chien permitted my going and I clambered down the notched tree trunk to the lower floor, which was given over in the usual manner to stabling. Below, it was absolutely pitch black. My boots squelched in the manure and straw on the floor and the fetid smell of the animals was nauseating. I felt my way amongst the mules and horses, expecting to be kicked any moment. What a place, I thought.

Then as I continued to grope my way in the darkness towards the horses it suddenly flashed into my mind. "What's today?" I thought for a moment. In travelling, the days had become a little muddled in my mind. Then it came to me. "*It's Christmas Eve.*" I stood suddenly still in that oriental manger. To think that my Saviour was born in a place like this. To think that He came all the way from heaven to some wretched eastern stable, and what is more, to think that He came for me.

How men beautify the cross and the crib, as if to hide the fact that at birth we resigned Him to the stench of beasts and at death exposed Him to the shame of rogues. May God forgive us.

How great is His love:

“Love to the uttermost, love to the uttermost,
 Love past all measuring His love must be;
 From heaven’s highest glory to earth’s deepest shame,
 This is the love of my Saviour to me.”

I returned to the warm clean room, which I enjoyed even as a prisoner, bowed down in thankfulness and worship.

OLIVER CROMWELL’S BOOTS

Oliver Cromwell stayed for a few nights at Rothamsted Manor, Harpenden. On departing, he left behind his riding boots. The boots appear in an early photograph of the house. Eventually the boots were put up for sale in 1936. They were bought by Bernard Scattergood and Denis Wilson who donated them to the local museum. They are typical heavy riding boots of the civil war period. They were probably made at Northampton.



Why did Cromwell stay at Rothamsted? The first recorded mention is in 1212 when in a land grant reference is made to a house with a chapel and garden. In 1623 the property was sold to the Wittewronge family. The Wittewronges were Calvinists from Ghent who fled to England to escape religious persecution in 1564. Cromwell was a friend of the family.

Today, part of the estate is well known as the Rothamsted Experimental Station, an agricultural research station.

Facts about Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland:

Born: 25 April 1599, Huntingdon.

Parents: Robert Cromwell, Elizabeth Steward.

Siblings: Jane, Joan, Robert (Junior) **Wife:** Elizabeth, married in 1620.

Children: Robert, Oliver, Bridget, Richard, Henry, Elizabeth, James (lived one day), Mary, Frances.

Died: 3 September 1658, Whitehall, London, aged 59 years.

THE SAFED EARTHQUAKE

Earthquakes are frequently mentioned in the Bible, some so severe that they were remembered for generations after.

Earthquakes are common in Bible lands. The Great Rift Valley fault runs all the way from northern Syria through Lebanon, Israel, the Jordan valley, and into eastern Africa.

When the Lord appeared to Elijah, “a strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks; and after the wind an earthquake.” Isaiah warned Ariel, the city where David dwelt, that God would send an earthquake as an awful judgment on the land. Both Amos and Zechariah speak of an earthquake in the days of Uzziah, King of Judah. Amos says he was with the herdmen of Tekoa “two years before the earthquake.” Zechariah says: “Yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah.”

In more recent times (2008), a severe earthquake with its epicentre in Lebanon caused much damage across Israel. Even the temple mount in Jerusalem was affected when a large hole appeared in the plaza.

Earthquakes are common in other parts of the world, including Europe. Only this year there was the terrible earthquake in Italy (August 24th) when the death toll reached almost 300. The disaster wiped out hillside communities in the Apennine mountains 85 miles north of Rome. The country declared a day of mourning for the victims when flags were flown at half-mast.



After the earthquake in Italy

Seismologists have warned that even London is overdue for a major earthquake. Severe earthquakes were experienced in the capital in 1382 and 1580, and a similar quake is to be expected at some time. A writer named Thomas Churchyard wrote immediately after the 1580 earthquake:

“There was a wonderful motion and trembling of the earth. Churches, palaces, houses and other buildings did so quiver and shake, that such as were then present in the same were tossed to and fro as they stood, and others, as they sat on seats, were driven off their places.”

It makes us think of that day when God shall arise to shake terribly the earth, a day when all hearts shall fail.

In the year 1837 a terrible earthquake struck in the Galilee area of northern Israel. Very severely affected was the town of Safed, often identified with “The city set on a hill” referred to by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 5.14.



Old photograph of Safed

It stands at an altitude of 900 metres (2,953 ft.), the highest city in Israel. The city commands a breathtaking view of Galilee with its green mountains and the white snow-capped peak of Mount Hermon, and the Golan heights. Since the 16th century, Safed has been considered one of Judaism's

four holy cities, along with Jerusalem, Hebron and Tiberias. Legend has it that Safed was founded by a son of Noah after the great flood. In the Bible (Judges 1.17) the city is referred to as Zephath, and the area where Safed is located was given to the tribe of Naphtali. Today the city is tremendously busy - visitors frequently get stuck in what they call a *balagan*, the name for a severe traffic jam. The 1837 earthquake was particularly catastrophic for the Jewish population, as the Jewish quarter was located on the hillside.

A vivid description of the earthquake is given by Dr. W. M. Thomson in his *The Land and the Book*. (For thirty years Dr. Thomson was a missionary in Syria and Palestine.) Here is his eye-witness account.

* * * * *

It was just before sunset on a quiet Sabbath evening - January 1, 1837 - when the shock occurred. A pale, smoky haze obscured the sun, and threw an air of sadness over the closing day, and a lifeless and oppressive calm had settled down upon the face of nature. These phenomena are, however, not very uncommon in this country, and may have had no connection with the earthquake.

The earthquake

Our native church at Beirut was gathered round the communion table, when suddenly the house began to shake fearfully, and the stone floor to heave and roll like a ship in a storm. "Hezzy! Hezzy!" (Earthquake! Earthquake!) burst from every trembling lip as all rushed out into the yard. The house was cracked from top to bottom, but no further injury was sustained. The shock was comparatively slight in Beirut, but still many houses were seriously shattered, and some on the river entirely thrown down.

We receive various reports

During the week after this Sabbath, there came reports from various quarters of towns and villages destroyed, and lives lost. But so slow does information travel in this country, especially in winter, that it was not until eight days had elapsed that any reliable accounts were received. Then letters arrived from Safed with the startling intelligence that the whole town had been utterly overthrown, and that Tiberias, and many other places in this region, had shared the same fate. Some letters stated that not more than one in a hundred of the inhabitants had escaped.

We set out to relieve the suffering

As soon as these awful facts had been ascertained, collections were made at Beirut to relieve the survivors, and Mr. Carter and myself selected to visit this region, and distribute to the needy and the wounded. Passing by Sidon, the work of destruction became very noticeable, and in Tyre still more so. We rode into Tyre at midnight

over her prostrate walls, and found some of the streets so choked up with fallen houses that we could not pass through them. I shall retain a vivid recollection of that dismal night while life lasts. The wind had risen to a cold, cross gale, which howled through shattered walls and broken windows its doleful wail over the ruined city. The people were sleeping in boats drawn up on shore, and in tents beside them, while half-suspended shutters and doors were creaking and banging in dreadful concert.

On the 17th we reached the village of Rumaish. It seemed quite destroyed. Thirty people had been crushed to death under their falling houses, and many more would have shared the same fate if they had not been at evening prayers in church. The building was low and compact, so that it was not seriously injured. After distributing medicine to the wounded and charity to the destitute, we went on to Jish. Of this village not one house remained; all had been thrown down, and the church also, burying the entire congregation of one hundred and thirty-five persons under the ruins. Not one escaped except the priest, who was saved by a projection of the arch over the altar. The entire vaulted roof, with its enormous mass of superincumbent stone and earth, fell inward in a moment, and of course escape was impossible. Fourteen dead bodies lay there still unburied.

We reach Safed

On the morning of the 18th we reached Safed, and I then understood, for the first time, what desolations God can work when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. Just before we began to ascend the

hill, we met the consular agent of Sidon returning with his widowed, childless sister. Her husband, a merchant of Safed, had been buried up to the neck by the ruins of his house, and in that state remained several days, calling in vain for help, and at last perished before he could be reached and set free.



Safed today - The city set on a hill

As we ascended the hill, we saw large rents and cracks in the earth and rocks, which gave a fearful indication of what was to be expected. But all our imagination was utterly confounded when the reality burst upon our sight. I had all the while refused to give full credit to the reports, but one frightful glance convinced me that it was not in the power of language to overdraw or exaggerate such a ruin.

We find utter desolation in the Jewish quarters

We came first to the Jewish half of the town, which contained about four thousand inhabitants, but not a house remained standing. The town was built upon the side of the mountain, which is so steep that the roofs of the houses below formed the street for those above. When, therefore, the shock dashed all to the ground, the highest fell on the next below, that upon the third, and so on to the bottom, burying each successive row of houses deeper and deeper under accumulated masses of rubbish. Many who were not instantly killed perished before they could be rescued, and others were rescued five, six, and even seven days after the earthquake, still alive. A friend of mine told me that he found his wife dead, with one child under her arm, and the babe with the nipple in its mouth: it had died of hunger, trying to draw life from its dead mother.



A rare print from the 1800's clearly showing the terracing which led to such widespread destruction.

Parents heard their little ones crying, Papa! Mamma! fainter and fainter, until hushed in death, while they were struggling to free themselves, or labouring with desperate energy to throw off the fallen rocks and timber from their dying children.

O God of mercy! my heart even now sickens at the thought of that long black winter's night, which closed around the wretched remnants of Safed in half an hour after the overthrow: four-fifths of the population under the ruins, dead or dying, with frightful groans, and shrieks of agony and despair, and the earth trembling and shaking all the while, as if affrighted at the horrible desolation she had wrought.

SAMSON'S RIDDLE AND ABRAM LYLE

Abram Lyle (1820-1891) is noted for founding the sugar refiners Abram Lyle & Sons which merged with the company of his rival Henry Tate to become Tate & Lyle in 1921. Abram was born on 14 December 1820 in the seaport of Greenock, Renfrewshire, in Scotland, and at



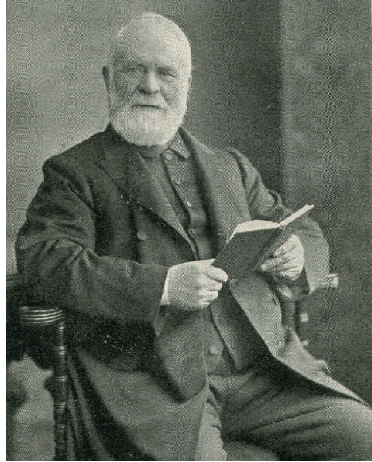
twelve years old became an apprentice in a lawyer's office. He then joined his father's business making barrels. In due course he entered into partnership with a friend, John Kerr. Together they developed a shipping business, making the Lyle fleet one of the largest in Greenock. The area was heavily involved in the sugar trade with the West Indies, and his business included transporting sugar. From this sprung the 'Golden Syrup' business for which he is best remembered.

He was an elder of St Michael's Presbyterian Church in Greenock, and Lyle himself chose the biblical quotation for the syrup tins: "Out of the strong came forth sweetness." He was a pious man and a strict teetotaller, who once declared that he would "rather see a son of his carried home dead than drunk."

WILLIAM SMITH - PART 4

Hears his first gospel sermon; condemned for laughing at sin; trials in married life. We continue the life of this dear man of God who later became Pastor of Rehoboth Chapel, Tunbridge Wells.

*(CONTINUED FROM AUTUMN 2016
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**Hears the Gospel of Free Grace**

About this time, I was, in the providence of God, led to hear Mr. Welland, who is now pastor over the Independent cause at Lewes; he was then pastor over an Independent cause at the village of Bulkington, in Warwickshire. I believe his text was Psalm 27. 10; and I must say I heard him gladly, but how he came to know so much about me I was puzzled to understand. I thought an old man of the name of Leader, that I once lodged near unto, must have been talking to him about me. Up to that time I used to go to church at the same village, and did not know that there was a chapel in the place. I could get no comfort under what I heard at the church, but I thought that was my own fault. This is the way I was led to the chapel.

One Sunday, I was very miserable, and was standing against the churchyard, when a man that I knew came along, and seeing me stand there, he asked me where I was going. I told him I did not know. He then asked me if I would go with him to chapel. I asked him what chapel; he answered, the Independent. The reason I asked him the question was because I knew what noisy people the Methodists were, and I did not want their creed nor their company, for the Lord had spoiled me to that kind of profession. The chapel where Mr. Welland preached, was about two miles from where I lived, but I continued to go every Sunday when I was not away with the boats. Sometimes I was cut up root and branch, then I thought I would not go again; and I don't

wonder at poor souls being perplexed when they first hear the truth preached. But when Sunday came I could not stay away, and sometimes I was greatly helped and encouraged.

I went one Sabbath praying and hoping he might say something that would comfort my soul. His text was Psalm 66. 2. When he read the words, I said within myself there will be nothing for me, as we shall only hear something about foreign parts. So you may see I was very ignorant of the spiritual meaning of the Scriptures at that time. But when he began to show what it was for a poor tried soul to get to the ends of the earth in soul feeling, and how such a soul cried unto the Lord in that very place, that he or she might be led to Christ, which is the Rock where all such will find shelter, and will be saved from all their foes and fears, and that with an everlasting salvation, it gave me great encouragement, and as I was going over the fields home, I said to myself, If that man is right, I am right. Almost directly this suggestion came, how do you know he is right? and I really could not answer the foe. So before I got home I was filled with confusion again.

Attends his first prayer meeting

I still continued to go to chapel; but I had never been to a prayer meeting. I used to wonder what was meant by it; but one Sunday evening, after the sermon was ended, Mr. Welland said he wished to make the prayer meeting on Monday evening a special service of prayer and thanksgiving to the Lord for His goodness and mercy in sending us such a good harvest, and such fine weather to gather it in. He then said, "All you that have anything to be thankful for I shall expect here." These last words were fixed upon my mind, for I knew I had much to be thankful for, so I made up my mind to be there. When Monday night came I started off, wondering how this meeting would be conducted.

When I got there I found it was to be in the vestry. I then concealed myself behind a wall close by until I thought there were no more friends to come. I then went and peeped through the keyhole, and I saw the vestry was nearly full; I then opened the door very softly and crept round behind it and sat down. They had just begun to sing. After the hymn was sung, Mr. Welland called upon one of the men to engage in prayer; and as he was in prayer it was suggested to me that I should have to pray next. I began to tremble, and could not listen to anything the man said, and in that way I was tormented until the service was

over. So I went home very much cast down; but it gave me an idea of what a prayer meeting was, and how it was conducted; and ever after I went when I could. This would be in 1855.

Freezing conditions make life difficult

I remember the weather was very mild up to Christmas, and the next week after Christmas day I was ordered to go on another voyage to Brentford. I had now become acquainted with her who became my beloved wife. On the morning that we started, it began to freeze a little, and it kept on for about a week. We got as far as Leighton Buzzard, and I left the boats there in care of the men, and came home by train on the Saturday, hoping to spend the Sabbath with the friends; but on Saturday night it began to thaw, and I had to return to the boats on Sunday about dinner time, at which I felt very much disappointed.

We started from Leighton Buzzard on Monday morning, and it began to freeze again the next night, and kept on for two months. We managed to get to Brentford and unload, and to get back as far as Berkhamstead, and there I remained until the beginning of March.

Condemned for laughing at sin

During that time I was greatly exercised about soul matters. My boats were among a lot more, and neither of us could move, for the ice soon froze more than a foot thick. I used to sit in my cabin and read my books and Bible that I had just before bought, and one Sunday as I sat reading, I heard a great noise in the distance. I got up and looked out to see what was the matter, when I saw in the distance a large heap of men one upon the other; they had been playing at football and had fallen down together. The sight made me laugh; no sooner, however, had I done this than these words entered my heart with condemning power, "He that laughs at sin, laughs at his Maker's frown."

I felt very cast down, and wished I had never looked at those men. After a time I reached my Bible, and opened on the 37th Psalm. The first verse quite melted me into tears, and as I read on, the whole psalm was greatly blessed to the comfort of my soul. After this I took my Bible and went into one of the other cabins, and asked them to let me read to them; they were willing for me to do so, and I read several chapters, to which they listened with great attention, and to the few remarks I made as I went on. At length I left them and went back to my own cabin, and never felt condemned for what I had done. I heard

afterwards that one of the number was converted. I hope it really was so, but that I must leave it to His judgment who is too wise to err and too good to be unkind.

Having to stay at this place so long through the frost, my master sent for the men and horses home, and I was left there by myself. I could get but little coal to burn, so that I used to walk about during the daytime, and make a little fire at night; but my cabin was very cold, for in the night it used to be white over inside with frost.

Here the Lord deepened His work in my soul, and I became very weak in body. Sometimes I had not sufficient food to eat, because as I could not work I was only allowed nine shillings a week, to attend to the boats. Once a week a lady used to come and give me a ticket to get two loaves of bread, which was a help to me.

The weather changes

About the latter end of February, the weather changed, and it began to thaw; then the canal company sent the ice boat with about twelve horses to draw it; and thus they broke the ice. When my master knew of this, he sent the men with the horses to fetch me and the boats home. I arrived there safely the first week in March, and was very pleased to meet with the Lord's people once more, to mingle my prayers and praises with them in the house of the Lord, and to hear His Word preached, which I very much enjoyed.

About this time my intended wife was deeply concerned about her soul's eternal welfare. Her father was a good man, but very afflicted for many years, and he died a very triumphant death on March 25th or 26th, 1861. I remember on one occasion when I was out with the boat, I had a very sweet time in prayer, and while my soul was under the sweet anointings of the blessed Spirit, I wrote a letter to my wife, stating the things my soul had tasted, handled and felt. She received it, and when she read it she was melted down at God's goodness manifested unto me. She read it to her father, and he was melted down also, so they both wept together under a feeling sense of God's goodness to them. This formed a spiritual union between us that can never be dissolved.

I still kept going with the boats, but my journeys were now confined to Northampton, Wedon and Coventry. I was still very much exercised about my soul's eternal safety, and sometimes my soul was melted because of trouble. I reeled to and fro and staggered like a

drunken man, and was at my wits' end. One day when I was in great distress, I had to take a load of stone to Coventry, and as I was driving the horse along the path by the side of the canal, I felt so oppressed by sin and Satan, that I was obliged to turn aside and go among some bushes that grew by the side of the path, and try to pour out my complaint unto the Lord. As soon as I knelt down such a horror of darkness came over me, that it made me get up without uttering a word. Great fear came upon me, and I was filled with confusion. I sighed, I groaned, and wept bitterly, fearing the Lord would never notice me any more.

A sweet manifestation of redeeming mercy

I walked in this sad state for about two miles, lamenting my sad condition. My sins stared me in the face, and I concluded I was lost for ever. Suddenly these words dropped into my heart with power: "Behold Me, behold Me," Isaiah 65. 1. This raised up faith in my heart, and I instantly said, "Behold Thee, Lord, in Thy agony and bloody sweat." I stood quite still with my eyes closed and my hands stretched out towards heaven; they came the second time with greater power, "Behold Me, behold Me." Then Christ was revealed to the eyes of my soul. He smiled upon me and disappeared, and I instantly exclaimed, "O Lord, I shall never doubt Thee any more." Oh how my soul glowed with love to the dear Son of God, while I mused upon this great mystery.

When we got to Coventry I worked as fast as I could to get the boat unloaded, that I might get back to tell my friends the joyful news; for I now understood what David felt when he said, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul." We got home earlier that day, and after I had seen to the horse I went up to Bedworth to do some business. As I returned, I met a woman who was a member of Mr. Welland's church, and I began to tell her how the Lord had met with me and blessed my soul, and how comfortable I felt. Whether she understood what I told her I am not able to say, for she never made any reply to what I told her; this filled me with astonishment. We parted, and I began to wonder what was the reason she made no reply to what I said to her, for I really thought all the members of the church would understand what I had told her, and would rejoice with me; but in this I was sadly deceived.

I had not gone far from the place where we parted, before it was suggested to my mind that what I had enjoyed, or thought I had, was only fleshly excitement, therefore I was out of the real secret of true religion. This threw me into great trouble again, and for several days I was sorely exercised about the matter, there being something in it I could not give up. On the other hand I was afraid I might be deceived. This gave me a fresh errand to a throne of grace, but the Lord kept me waiting for some time before He answered me, and I got so tried, that I would not walk where I thought I should meet any of His people.

One day I had to go to Bedworth on business, and on returning back to Marston quarry along the footpath where I first met the woman; thinking I might meet some of the friends, I got over the hedge into a field, and as I was walking along under the hedge asking the Lord to make this crooked thing straight, the following words were dropped into my heart with sweetness and power:

“If Jesus once upon thee shine,
Then Jesus is for ever thine.”

At once faith was raised up in my heart, and with gratitude, love, joy, and thanksgiving. I exclaimed, “He has then.” Thus I was delivered from that snare of Satan. I jumped back into the path, and was ready to meet any of the Lord’s people. This transpired in April, 1856.

I now began to get tired of travelling with the boats, and I made it a matter of prayer to the Lord, and He opened the way for me to leave it, as follows. One day as I was at work in the quarry, for at that time I was stacking stones in large heaps, my master came to me and said he understood I wanted to change my position and work in the quarry instead of going with the boats. I told him I did. He told me I could do so when I thought proper. I thanked him, and told him if they were very busy at any time, and were short of hands to go with the boats, I would go a voyage, and thus the matter was settled ; and the next week I began to work at stone-cutting in the quarry. I engaged myself to work with a man for small wages, with this agreement, that he was to teach me how to cut and dress stones, which he did.

TO BE CONTINUED

CHRISTIAN VALUES IN EDUCATION - 20th ANNIVERSARY

The Met Office's new computer consisting of 480,000 CPU's working in parallel - and which cost the tax payer £97million. Just one of the things we heard about at this interesting meeting.

The 20th Anniversary of Christian Values in Education (CViE) was held on Saturday, 24 September 2016 at Caddington Village School.

This was a special day in the history of CViE. Some of the older people present could remember attending the first meeting at Gower Street chapel, London to discuss the possibility of a Christian school. This has not proved feasible, but many aspects of education and the difficulties children face in the school are addressed regularly.

The title for the day was 'Grasping the Nettle,' with all-day workshops for different age groups. Altogether about 140 attended the day, which was very encouraging.

The meeting began with a welcome from the Chairman, Mr. Michael Ridout, with reading and prayer, and an update on the work. The morning workshops began at 11.30 when Mr. Luke Woodhams spoke to the 5-8 year olds on 'What does the Bible say about dinosaurs.' Simultaneously, Mr. Daniel Sayers ran a workshop on WW1 for the 9-13 year olds, and Miss Helen Skelton spoke to older young people on 'Challenges at School, College and University.' Whilst this was going on, the parents and adults were in the main hall with the visiting speaker, Mrs. Sandra Rome, from the charity Lovewise. This was a detailed talk advising parents and adults from a Christian perspective on promoting right Biblical relationships and coping with sex education in schools.



Lunchtime

After this, everyone met up for their packed lunches. Mostly the families and visitors ate outside as the weather was fine. The children really enjoyed letting off steam on the football pitch and the little ones on the adventure playground.

There were several bookstalls that one could browse - and many children enjoyed perusing the school's own bookshelves. During the breaks the children partook of the biscuits freely available throughout the day with great enthusiasm!



Children enjoying the books

After this, the youngest children had a time of recreation led by Miss Elizabeth Kingham. Mr. Trayton Pont spoke to the next age group on 'How old is the earth? What the Bible tells us.' The teenagers and adults joined together to consider the subject of 'Social Media, its uses and misuses.' This most helpful session was led by a panel consisting of Mr. Joe Kerley (a software developer), Mr. Richard Kingham who spoke from a teacher's perspective, and Mr. Graham Cottingham who spoke from a parent's perspective. Altogether this was an excellent combined presentation.

After another break for refreshments, Mr. Malcolm Lee of the Met Office spoke on 'Climate change - a Christian Perspective.' We hear a lot about global warming these days, but here were some facts (rather than fiction) and hard evidence that it was slowly happening. The Met Office's new computer, a Cray XC40, has been a great help - it can carry out 23 quadrillion calculations per second (23 followed by 15 zeros). It consists of 480,000 CPU's working in parallel - and cost the taxpayer £97million! Mr. Lee emphasised that God had promised that

seedtime and harvest, summer and winter should never fail, and that He alone was custodian of His own creation.



Then lastly, everyone reconvened for Bible reading taken by Mr. Michael Ridout, and Mr. Edmund Buss brought the day to an end at about half past four with a final prayer.

BIBLE WORDS - “INDITING”

My heart is inditing a good matter (Psalm 45. 1)

Inditing - the usual meaning of this word is ‘to compose or write as a poem or prose.’ Here it is translated from a Hebrew word meaning ‘to boil’ or ‘to bubble up.’ We once heard a minister who, when preaching from this text, said: “Is there something in your heart that bubbles up towards Christ?” This is the only occasion the word is found in the Bible.

NATIONAL SERVICE DAYS (6)

We are grateful to Mr. Peter Barnard for this interesting account of his experiences while on National Service. It is particularly interesting to learn of his surprise at meeting, so unexpectedly, the first editor of *Perception*, Mr. John Broome, also on his National Service.

I was called up for National Service in July 1955, to Oswestry. It was a very hot day, and on arrival there was a large tea urn of homemade lemonade. Lovely, I thought, but when I poured out a mug full, it was full of tea leaves, to which I complained, and was told, "If you don't like it mate, don't drink it - this is the Army!"

After being kitted out, I completed two weeks' training, and was posted to Tonfanau, in North Wales, which was a Training Regiment Royal Artillery Camp.

Whilst at Oswestry the NCO asked for a volunteer. I was told never to volunteer for anything in the Army, so, being me, I thought I would do the opposite! I enquired what the volunteer was needed for and he said follow me, when he took me to a Nissan Hut which was the 25 yard 2.2 rifle range. He gave me a rifle and five rounds of ammunition. I said, "What do you want me to do with these?" and he said, "Lay on that mat, and put it through that black circle." I scored 92 out of 100 and they automatically put me in their Royal Artillery rifle team.

Before leaving for Tonfanau, I met the PSO and was asked what I wanted to do in the Army. After we had gone through all the 'get out of it, sir' comments, I suggested driver or equipment repairer. "No, no, no," he said, "I have something else in line for you, a potential Number 1. I was from a farming background in Essex and I did not even know what a potential Number 1 was!

On arrival by steam train at Tonfanau, NCO's were waiting for us bawling out names. You had to listen carefully and join the queue with that particular NCO, who had called your name.

I was soon marching in earnest, practising on rifle ranges, and learning how to use an anti-aircraft gun, shooting at a big red sleeve towed by a Mosquito across Cardigan Bay.

On the rifle range, we were given targets to fire at six foot square, and five rounds, to shoot at the bull. My shot was all within a two inch circle, so they selected me to be a marksman.

The first weekend we were allowed time off, I went to Barmouth. My lips were really sore, so I went to the chemist which was Morgan's then. The pharmacist said to me, "I have something I would like you to see." He went to his living quarters and came back with a monthly issue of the *Gospel Standard*, asking if I had seen this before, to which I replied, "Yes, my mother takes it."

The usual practice was to do eight weeks' square bashing, and then you were posted to a regiment. I completed seven weeks and was then put on an NCO's course for six weeks, so after fourteen weeks in the army I came back home with my first stripe.

I continued at Tonfanau for a year as instructor on fire arms and light anti-aircraft guns, training other soldiers, who were then posted to regiments.

Tonfanau is known as the valley of wind and rain. It is surrounded by the Welsh mountains on three sides and the Irish sea the remaining side. Near Tonfanau there is a pack horse bridge, where soldiers carved their names on the slate, but I didn't, because I didn't even think I would live to come back again. I have been back with my family over fifty years later, but my name is not there.

On one occasion there had been a big function for the Officers, and at night, I was put on duty with one soldier, to guard the large canvas marquees this had been held in. During the night, there was a huge thunderstorm and gale force winds. I was scared and asked the Lord not to let the marquee I was in blow down. In the morning, the RSM gave me a dressing down, because every marquee in the field had collapsed, except the one I was in. I was now aware what the scripture meant when it says, "Lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes." What had happened was that the cords had shrunk and snapped, pulling the stakes out of the ground.

I had two narrow escapes from death. I had climbed one of the mountains, and leaned against a stone wall to look up, but the wall gave way on my leaning. I tumbled for about fifty yards, backwards over heels. If I had kept going I would have been killed, but something struck me on the back of the hand. It was a sucker out of a shrub. I

held onto it with all my might, and it pulled me into a sitting position.

The second occasion, on a very windy night, I was on guard duty, and getting the soldiers out of the NAFFI by 9pm, when the wind was so strong it blew off the apex of the building. I stood one side and it fell the other. This shook me right up.

During my time at Tonfanau, I was walking on a Sunday morning down the main road through the camp. A soldier came up to me and said hello, to which I replied the same. He then said, "What would you be doing today, if you were at home?" I was surprised he should ask that, and I said, "I would be going to Braintree Strict Baptist Chapel." When I looked up at his face, it was beaming. He replied, "I would be going to Southampton Strict Baptist Chapel." His name was John Broome. In later years, he told me he was apprehensive on joining the army, and asked the Lord to find him a companion and He found me.

On a Sunday, there was church parade, but as I was an OD - Other Denomination, I was not on it. I used to go to the YMCA in the morning, where a few of us used to read the Bible, and some of the soldiers engaged in prayer. One of them was John.

On a Sunday evening, I used to walk to a little Welsh chapel in the hillside. All the services were held in Welsh, but half way through the sermon the Pastor would change to speak English for me.

After John's training, he was then posted to Germany, and I was posted to Sheerness for intensive training, in preparation for a launch to Egypt to the Suez Canal Crisis in 1956. I had started a second NCO course in Tonfanau and at Sheerness received my second stripe. I felt embarrassed as I was now a Bombardier who was training regular soldiers a lot older than me. I was only 19, but the Officer said, "Get a grip and just get on with your job, Bombardier."

We could not fire anti-aircraft guns at Sheerness due to the noise and size of them, so we were sent up to Weybourne in Norfolk, where we could use them over the sea.

When it was time for Operation Musketeer to launch to Egypt, we were not told where we were going until we were on-board the ship. I wrote a hasty letter to my Mum as soon as I knew, but all letters were censored so I could not tell her outright what was happening. I invented an imaginary tale, using the first letter of every word, which was Put Out Ron's Track Suit As It's Dirty, which spells PORTSAID. At first

Mum could not understand it. She showed the neighbours. She knew it meant something and it was important. Then late at night she ran across the road in her nightie, as she had worked out the code, to tell them I was going to Portsaid.

It took eight days to get from Southampton to Portsaid by the Asturias Troop Ship. I asked the Officer-in-charge whether we were fighting against or with the Israeli's. He asked why, and I said, "Because I don't want to fight against the Israeli's, sir." "No, we are with them," he said.

The Egyptians knew we were coming, so they had mined all the beaches, but our intelligence told us to pull straight into the docks, which they did not expect us to do. We assembled on the streets of Portsaid, which had been heavily bombed, and we marched along the coast road, to take over six blocks of flats, from which the Egyptians had fled. This was a temporary measure, as our guns, lorries and provisions came by ship two weeks later, which was terribly poor organisation! When the ship finally arrived, we were driven further up the coast to an airfield, and our guns were deployed around every corner of it, to protect it, as we were using it for our supplies. When we opened our lorries to get out our rations there were not any. We were supposed to have rations enough for two weeks in the desert, but our comrades on the ship, had stolen all our rations! I happened to find in one discarded box, a tin of rice pudding, which I shared with an Officer.

We tried to dig our guns in, but we were below sea level, so we could only dig in a couple of feet, therefore we had to build up with sand bags instead. We took the canopies off the lorries and slept underneath these. We were issued with special soap that lathered in salt water, so we could wash in the sea. I cannot to this day stand being on a sandy beach with blowy sand!

Our presence in Egypt was political and the NATO forces were brought in, as an occupational force, and we had to leave. On leaving, my lorry and gun was bogged down in the sand, and the Officer came up to me bawling, "Get that out of here." It was pointless shouting at me - he could see we were trying.

A soldier from another regiment came across to me, and said, "He shouldn't be talking to you like that. Do you need help?" "Can you, then?" I said. "Yes," he said, "I've got a tank!"

It took thirteen days to get back to Southampton on the Troop Ship Dilwara just before Christmas 1956. It was so rough that the waves were as high as the South Downs. Most of the soldiers were sick, but I wasn't, so I had plenty to eat!

We were taken back to the Isle of Sheppey. I asked permission to bring my motorbike to camp and then was able to get to Chatham Strict Baptist Chapel. Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Hughes were at Chatham in those days. They looked after me, inviting me to their home whenever I wanted too. I used to go every week on a Wednesday for a fish and chip supper and hymn singing.

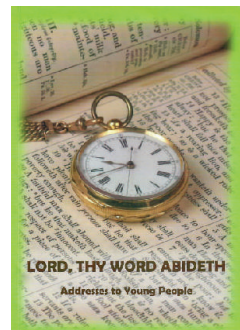
My final training was at Epsom, where we were trained in case there was going to be an atomic war. From here I was able to get to Tamworth Road Strict Baptist Chapel on a Sunday.

BOOK REVIEW

Lord, Thy Word Abideth - Addresses to Young People; paperback; 169 pages; price £5.45 plus postage £1.50; published by Croydon Strict Baptist Educational Society, and obtainable from Miss Alison Collins, 26 Gimble Way, Pembury, Tunbridge Wells TN2 4BX or email alicollins83@hotmail.com

The book contains twelve addresses to young people given by Strict Baptist ministers at meetings of the Society between 2002 and 2008. The subjects vary widely including, for example, The Ten Plagues, Caleb, Moves in Life's Journey, and Unthankfulness. The addresses run from 10 to 15 pages, and so each address is easily read in one session. An appendix gives an interesting history of the Society, and a second appendix contains the very first address given

in October 1920 by Mr. F. J. Farncombe, deacon and Sunday School Superintendent at Tamworth Road Chapel, Croydon. The book is attractively produced, lays reasonably flat for a paperback, and on the back has a photograph of the 1729 clock which hangs in the schoolroom of Tamworth Road Chapel. We wish the book every success.



A FEW CURRENT MATTERS

More believe in an afterlife

A survey by the Institute of Education has found that 49 per cent of Britons born in 1970 (now 46 years old) believe there is life after death. Yet only 31 per cent said they believed in God.

Killer hornets

The inch-long Asian hornet has been found in Britain for the first time. There are fears that this voracious predator could drive the British bee to extinction. A handful of Asian hornets can destroy a hive of 30,000 bees in a couple of hours. Hornets are mentioned several times in the Bible, when God sent them to drive out the Hittites, the Hivites and the Amorites, those inveterate enemies of the children of Israel.



Anti-abortion support in Poland

Polish MPs have backed a law that would almost completely ban abortions even in cases of rape. The Bill has cleared its first legislative hurdle and has been sent to the committee stage for further reading. Under the proposals, women who have abortions could be jailed for up to five years. Abortion would be permitted only if the mother's life was in danger.

Oldest fossil claim

A fossil discovered in Greenland is believed by scientists to be 3.7billion years old, the oldest ever. According to the journal *Nature*, the fossil has been discovered in a newly-melted part of Greenland on an ancient sea floor. This absurd claim is answered by God Himself: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" (Job 38. 4).

The Bible for Grown-Ups

A book bearing the above title has been published. Described as *A new look at the Good Book* 'it sets out to help intelligent adults make sense of the Bible.' Those who love and esteem the Bible as the very Word of God will have no time for this book. Speaking of Peter's denial of the Lord Jesus, the author, Simon Loveday, says, "It could be out of Eastenders or the Archers." We need add no further comment.

Original Bramley apple tree is dying

Amongst the huge variety of apples given to us by a creating God, the Bramley remains Britain's favourite cooking apple. The original Bramley apple tree was sown from seed in 1809 at Southwell, Nottinghamshire. It is now



dying from an incurable fungal infection. Bio-



scientist Professor Cocking from Nottingham University said the fungal infection gets into the water transport system of the tree and slowly kills it off. Bramleys are green, but get a red sheen on the side blushed by the sun. They are low in sugar and high in vitamin C.

The great flood

Scientists have uncovered evidence of a massive flood in China, known as 'China's Great Flood.' This marked the start of the Xia dynasty generally said to be in 2070BC. This equates remarkably closely chronologically with the Biblical account of Noah's flood. "This is the first time evidence of a flood of this scale has been found," said David Cohen of Taiwan University. God's word is always reliable.

"Humans will never live past age of 125"

As life expectancies rise, it is often thought that humans will continue to live longer and longer. After analysing the International Database on Longevity, scientists now believe that there is an upper limit of 125 years. No one has ever lived longer than 122 (we mean in recent times).

Three-parent baby born (See also *Perception* Summer 2013 page 36)

The world's first baby has been born in the US using a controversial 'three-parent' technique. The genetic engineering was carried out at a fertility clinic in Mexico as the procedure is illegal in the US. The boy carries genes from his mother, father and a third female donor. Dr. David King, director of Human Genetics Alert, branded the US team 'unethical and irresponsible.' Britain was the first country in the world to give legal approval to the technique, although it has not yet been carried out here. We believe children should be created through *one* man and *one* woman united in the loving and secure bond of marriage.

The Blue Tits' Home

The nesting box on our front cover is very ordinary - I expect many of you will have something similar in your garden. However, to one little family it has been something very special - their home! Through the spring and summer a pair of blue tits raised their young here, and have done so year after year. Earlier in the year, the nesting box was nicely camouflaged with an abundance of leaves. Now the winter is approaching and the young have left the nest, but none of the family could have survived without the shelter of this, their home. What a wonderful nest the female makes from moss, wool, dead leaves, spiders' webs, and lined with down. The large family (usually 7-13 eggs) will never move far from their birthplace - a blue tit spends its entire life close by.



All living creatures need shelter (cover) to survive, and God has given to His creatures a most wonderful instinct to find and build what is needed. But mankind has need of a shelter of another kind, a shelter that will save, not only from the storms of life, but from eternal death.

To Him, my only Hiding-place,
Let me for shelter fly;
The storm of death draws on apace,
And who can say how nigh?

Noah and his family found safety from the flood only inside the ark. The little blue tit family found safety only in the sanctuary of the nesting box. There is no safety for sinners outside of the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work. May God grant to us this great blessing.

I'd to this Rock for shelter flee,
And make my refuge, Lord, in Thee.

One final thought: "Yet your heavenly Father feedeth them."